PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT THEORY APPROACH

TO TEACHER RETENTION

By

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Abstract: Recent research suggests the United States is experiencing a nation-wide teaching shortage. Though the shortage appears to differ from state to state, patterns of shortages appear most often in urban, high-poverty, and high-minority districts across the nation and in specific subject areas including math, science, and special education. On average, 8% of teachers leave the profession every year (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016) and another undocumented percentage leave schools or buildings for other teaching positions. Beyond the immediate needs, trends indicate the shortage is likely to worsen. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs has decreased 35% between 2009 and 2014 (Sutcher et al., 2016) and the number of alternative or uncertified teachers in the classrooms of some states has sign ificantly increased (Associated Press, 2017).

Teachers often enter the profession with a passion for fostering student learning and the intent of maintaining a career in the field of education (Day & Gu, 2009; Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000). Despite their initial plans of a long teaching career, a disturbing number of individuals are leaving the profession or moving to another building. Olsen and Anderson (2007) believe that teacher satisfaction can be predicted through the "concept of 'fit,' the idea that most of the teachers had been able to find schools that were compatible with both their professional preparation and their reasons for entry" (p. 24). If teachers feel connected to the staff and administration within a particular building, they are more likely to be content in the career. This could increase teacher retention and job satisfaction and help to explain why some schools experience low teacher turn over while others in the same district struggle to retain teachers.

The purpose of this case study is to gain a better understanding of school factors that lead to high teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district while other schools in the same district experience high teacher turnover. The focus is to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building.

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CHAPTER I

PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT THEORY APPROACH TO TEACHER RETENTION

Recent research suggests the United States is experiencing a nation-wide teaching shortage. Though the shortage appears to differ from state to state based on local economics and working conditions, patterns of shortages appear most often in urban, high-poverty, and high-minority districts across the nation and in specific subject areas including math, science, and special education. On average, 8% of teachers leave the profession every year (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas, 2016) and another undocumented percentage leave schools or buildings for other teaching positions. Data show much of this internal mobility is out of high-needs schools (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Beyond the immediate needs, trends indicate the shortage is likely to worsen. Enrollment in teacher preparation programs has decreased 35% between 2009 and 2014 (Sutcher et al., 2016) and the number of alternative or uncertified teachers in the classrooms of some states has significantly increased (Associated Press, 2017).

Ferfolja (2008) speculates that the movement of teachers out of the profession stems from the fact that teaching is one of the few professions where early-career practitioners are

asked to become proficient in a short period of time, leading to a feeling of being overwhelmed by the many responsibilities associated with the position of teaching. Education has been referred to as one of the "most stressful professions" (Day & Gu, 2009, p. 1303) in part because reform initiatives have increased teacher workload and placed an emphasis on student and instructor performance. "There can be no doubt that reforms at least temporarily disturb the relative stability of teachers' work and, in some cases, their beliefs and practices and self-efficacy, and that in general they challenge existing notions of professionalism" (Day & Gu, 2009, p. 1303).

Teachers report four primary reasons for leaving the profession. These include such areas as heavy workloads, low salary, lack of administrative leadership, and student behavior (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Teachers also report conflict in attempting to balance their home life and their careers (Day & Gu, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Kersaint et al., 2007; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Early career teachers report that the workload is greater and more demanding than they anticipated and that the salary does not allow them to live a desired lifestyle (Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Heavy workloads limit family time and conflict with family responsibilities which "includes caring for young children or elderly family members" (Kersaint et al., 2007, p. 789). Some speak of little time for friendships outside of school and state that the stress and workload affects their health and fitness (Clandinin et al., 2015). Teacher attrition is higher among younger teachers and older teachers creating a U-shaped pattern in the retention of teachers (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Hughes, 2012). Attrition among younger teachers can be the result of job dissatisfaction or personal reasons such as starting a family and other family responsibilities. The high cost of insurance

premiums for dependents and the cost of child care can also contribute to young teachers changing professions or leaving the workforce (Hughes, 2012; Kersaint et al., 2007). Teacher attrition because of retirement is anticipated and is natural within any profession. However, retirement is a small portion of attrition in education (Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003).

Despite these changes, a number of teachers persist with their core beliefs intact and "do the best they can for the students they teach under changed and challenging circumstances" (Day & Gu, 2009, p. 1303). As indicated by national data, teacher shortages vary from context to context (Sutcher et al., 2016). This study attempts to explore this variation in teacher retention by focusing on one elementary school with a comparably low teacher attrition rate despite many of the same challenges faced by similar urban schools.

Problem Statement

Teachers often enter the profession with a passion for fostering student learning and the intent of maintaining a career in the field of education (Day & Gu, 2009; Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000). A Public Agenda report states that 86% of respondents indicated that teaching is a "calling" which demands a high level of energy and determination (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000, p. 10). According to Ashiedu and Scott-Ladd (2012), teachers enter the field primarily for intrinsic reasons such as working with children and contributing to society. They believe the positive impact they may make on a child or the intellectual fulfillment they receive will outweigh any struggle they may encounter in their career (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012).

However, despite their initial plans of a long teaching career, a disturbing number of individuals are leaving the profession or moving to another building. While the reasons may

vary, early-career teachers leave the classroom at alarming rates with approximately 20% leaving within the first three years and 46% within five years (Hong, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008). In addition to the estimated 157,000 teachers who leave the education field every year, 232,000 individuals change schools which constitute "an estimated 12% of the total teacher workforce" ("Teacher Turnover," 2008, p. 1). Attrition is higher in smaller schools than in larger schools, and there are almost twice as many movers in high poverty schools than in low poverty schools (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Kersaint et al., 2007). Despite the fact that many teachers leave the profession or shift to another building at disturbing rates, other teachers remain in their current building for extended lengths of time indicating that an anomaly may exist.

Olsen and Anderson (2007) believe that teacher satisfaction can be predicted through the "concept of 'fit,' the idea that most of the teachers had been able to find schools that were compatible with both their professional preparation and their reasons for entry" (p. 24). If teachers feel connected to the staff and administration within a particular building, they are more likely to be content in the career. This could increase teacher retention and job satisfaction and help to explain why some schools experience low teacher turn over while others in the same district struggle to retain teachers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study is to gain a better understanding of school factors that lead to high teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district while other schools in the same district experience high teacher turnover. The focus is to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the

profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building.

Research Questions

This study examines the experiences of teachers in an urban school focusing on the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in this building about the factors that influenced them to remain in the teaching profession?
2. What factors have influenced teachers to remain in their current building?
3. How does Person-Environment Theory explain teachers remaining in the profession as well as in their current building?

Epistemological and Theoretical Framework

The epistemological perspective in this study is social constructivism in which researchers rely on the participants' experiences to form meaning (Creswell, 2013). Constructivism is the process of making meaning of a situation based on personal experiences. As an epistemological framework, this view allows participants to interpret events within their environment through historical and cultural norms (Creswell, 2013).

Person-Environment Fit Theory is a personal satisfaction theory that takes into consideration the interests, abilities, and needs of an individual and matches it to those of the employer, organization, or another individual (Rehfuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2011). It "refers to the actual similarity of an employee and an organization on a fundamental characteristic such as values" (McColloch & Turban, 2007, p. 63). Person-Environment Fit Theory can help to predict job satisfaction when the needs, abilities and expectations of the organization are compatible with those of the employee (Rehfuss et al., 2011). Substantial

research appears to be based on the hypothesis that a connection is present between teacher attrition and conditions of teaching (Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008). It is believed that teachers who experience job satisfaction are more likely to remain in the profession and remain in their current school (Clayton & Schoonmaker, 2007; Perrachione et al., 2008). It is believed that teachers remain in a building because of intrinsic motivations such as working with students, personal teaching efficacy, and job satisfaction (Perrachione, et al., 2008). Applying Person-Environment Fit Theory to a case study of a school with high teacher retention could shed some light on why some teachers remain in a particular building while others in the same school district seek employment elsewhere.

Methodology

This study utilizes a case study design because case study is a method of research which attempts to answer how or why questions that is explanatory in nature (Yin, 2009). This form of investigation requires the researcher to take care in each element of research to ensure that the study meets the highest rigor. Yin (2009) defines case study as an investigation in which the researcher is immersed in contemporary events over which they have little or no control. Merriam states that case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p. xiii). In order to study the inner workings of one particular school, a case study was conducted to examine the perceptions of teachers within an urban school regarding what factors influence their decisions to remain in the profession and in the building where they teach.

Short Springs Elementary School is located in an urban area in a Midwestern state. This school has experienced high teacher retention within the past decade. Therefore, it was

selected to conduct this case study. According to the Ashley Public Schools district human resources office, Short Springs Elementary School experiences low teacher turnover each year while other schools within the district experience a higher rate of turnover. During the 2016-17 school year, a total of 235 teachers left the eighteen elementary schools in the district but only 7 of the teachers were from Short Springs Elementary School. The previous year only three teachers left Short Springs. The sample consisted of six teachers chosen through purposeful sampling. Certified teachers throughout the building were asked to complete a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale to examine the concept of fit within the school. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with staff and observations of school proceedings. Observations included professional development sessions, professional learning communities, team meetings, or general interaction with staff and students. Participants were also asked to provide an artifact that represents their perception of the school environment and a brief explanation as to the item's significance.

Data were coded as research was conducted and examined for common themes (Merriam, 1998). The number of categories was determined by the data collected and the emergent themes that arose. Merriam (1998) states that the number of categories should be "manageable" and that "the fewer the categories, the greater the level of abstraction, and the greater ease with which you can communicate your findings to others" (p. 185). Merriam recommends using Guba and Lincoln's approach to sorting data into themes by following their four elements of analysis. Merriam (1998) states a researcher should analyze the number of individuals who present a similar piece of information, the importance of the category to the audience, unique pieces of information, and a unique approach to a familiar topic. Merriam (1998) also recommends using pseudonyms for those interviewed or

observed to provide anonymity to the participant. Interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee, transcribed, and reviewed by the interviewee for content and clarification. Field notes were kept by the researcher to "keep track of thoughts, musings, speculations, and hunches" as research is conducted (Merriam, 1998, p. 165).

Significance of the Study

Through this research study, urban districts and schools may gain some insight into how to improve not only teacher retention within the profession, but also retention within a school building. This understanding will benefit educational leaders as they seek to recruit and retain qualified faculty particularly in an era of decreased applicants for positions. Additionally, students, teachers, schools, and communities could potentially benefit. When schools experience high turnover rates, the quality of education often suffers due to the number of inexperienced teachers (Ferjolja, 2008). However, providing a more stable faculty and more consistent educational opportunities for students may improve the overall educational outcomes of students. By conducting a case study in a building with little teacher turnover, comparable schools may implement similar supports to increase retention in their own buildings.

This study may contribute to theory and research by further examining the perceptions of veteran teachers regarding what increases teacher retention. The results could support or dispel previous theories regarding teacher retention or shed new light as to what elements of school should be examined further. This study examines perceptions of veteran teachers and what role Person-Environment Fit Theory may play in their decisions to remain in the same building. Theory will be further supported or dispelled as to the role, if any, environment plays in teacher retention.

Delimitations and Limitations

While a case study can provide insight as to the inner-workings of one school within one district, it may not be generalizable to other schools and districts. However, this study could provide a glimpse as to why one school experiences longevity of its staff. While the information could be extensive, the research was limited in time and scope. The participants are also chose what information was shared thereby choosing what data is gathered. The participants could have been completely honest and forthcoming, but they also had control over which stories were shared and how information was reported. The limited time also limited the amount of information that was gathered. Time constraints provided only a snapshot and not an exhaustive picture of the school environment. Because every teacher in the school was not interviewed, the participants could only speak from their perspective and may not be representative of all teachers in the building. While the participants had the opportunity to review the interview transcripts for accuracy, the researcher interpreted the data and may have viewed the experiences gathered differently than the participants. Data were gathered only from the teachers' perspective and did not take in to consideration other staff members in the building, parents, or students. This may skew the data to one perspective and not take in to consideration other individuals affiliated with the school. While the research may be limited in scope and depth, it could provide a foundation from which to build further research.

Definition of Terms

- Teacher Mobility – Migration from one building or district to another.
- Teacher Retention – The concept of teachers remaining in teaching positions and in the same school for an extended length of time, more than three to five years.
- Teacher Attrition – Teachers leave the education profession whether through retirement or to seek other employment.
- Teacher Turnover – The number of teachers that must be replaced in a building in a given year.
- Novice or Early Career Teacher – An individual who has three or less years of experience as a teacher.
- Experienced Teacher – An individual who has been teaching for an extended period of time.
- Administrative leadership – Assistance from the principal or assistant principal in a school. This support can be in the form of professional development, assistance with classroom management or student discipline, collaboration time with colleagues, access to resources, or protection from central office mandates (Boyd et al., 2011; Buchanan, 2010; Doney, 2012; Haar, 2007; Hong, 2012).
- Intrinsic Motivation – Internal motivation to remain in education. This can be motivated by a person's personal philosophy of education, the positive feelings generated by working with students, or intellectual fulfillment (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Hong, 2012).
- Extrinsic Motivation – External motivation to remain in education. This can be job security, salary, regularly scheduled vacations or breaks away from school, working

conditions or availability of resources, (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Hong, 2012; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

- Person-Environment Fit Theory – Personal satisfaction theory that takes into consideration a person's interests, abilities, and needs and matches those elements to that of the employer, organization, or another individual.

Summary

Chapter I provided a brief overview of the research and data related to the national teacher shortage and teacher retention and mobility. Chapter I also included a statement of the problem, the research purpose, and research questions that will guide this study. The epistemological and theoretical frameworks as well as the research methods were also described. The significance of the study to practice was explained and terms relevant to the study were defined for clarification.

Chapter II provides an extensive review of the literature regarding teacher mobility, teacher motivation to remain in the profession, and the importance of fit in job satisfaction. Chapter II also includes a more in-depth review of Person-Environment Fit Theory explaining why this theory is important to the study. Chapter III provides an overview of the research design and methods including an explanation of the population and sample and data collection and analysis techniques.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of the literature related to teacher retention and mobility in the United States. Examining the literature also provided perspective when considering the topic of teacher attrition and retention as it related to the specific case in this study. This chapter will provide literature related to teacher career choice, reasons for leaving the teaching profession, reasons teachers remain in the profession, and teacher resiliency. A more in-depth explanation of the theoretical framework for this study, Person-Environment Fit Theory, is also provided.

Introduction

Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd (2012) emphasize the importance of understanding the "peculiar nature of teachers' motivations and how these differ from other professions" (p. 18). While teachers are tasked with developing the skills and talents of future workforce, the education profession is not always held in the highest regard (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). "Teachers are praised for their dedication and commitment to education, but, on the other hand, they can be ridiculed by claims that teaching is easy work" (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012, p. 18). While the education profession is frequently regarded in a

negative light, many new teachers enter the vocation with the intent of being a teacher until retirement. Many new teachers enter the profession in search of "a job where they can make a difference and that they have committed to teaching as a lifelong choice" (Farkas, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000, p. 9) Teachers regard the profession as a calling that requires a high level of dedication and enthusiasm (Farkas et al., 2000).

Despite teachers believing they have been drawn to education as a calling, the rates of teachers leaving the classrooms are at crisis levels around the world (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). Some estimate that shortage levels world-wide will exceed 18 million elementary teachers by 2016 (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) examined the rates at which individuals were entering the teaching profession over a course of ten year period. They estimate that the United States had its lowest number of new teachers enter the profession in 2016 with only 113,000 new entrants. When considered with educators who re-entered the profession, the number of new teachers in 2016 was estimated between 180,000 and 212,000 individuals. However, this did not cover the 280,000 positions that needed to be filled (Sutcher et al., 2016). Research indicates that 40 to 50% of novice teachers leave within the first five years (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Ingersoll, 2003; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Plunkett & Dyson, 2011; Rinke, 2007). However, while a large portion of teachers leave the profession, a number remain in the classroom and continue teaching in the same building for a significant amount of time. A review of the literature regarding what factors increase teacher retention could be beneficial to this study and to the vocation. It is important to understand why teachers leave the profession but it is equally essential to understand why teachers stay. The following is a review of

the literature regarding teachers entering the profession, what factors may contribute to teachers leaving the profession, and what factors influence their decisions to stay in the profession and their current building.

Lifelong Career Choice

Individuals enter the teaching profession for a variety of reason. For some, intrinsic motivations such as a sense of calling or contributing to society provide fulfillment by "doing a job they love" (Farkas et al., 2000, p. 10). Research indicates that education is not a profession that a person "falls into by chance" but rather "something they had been hoping to do for quite some time" (Farkas et al., 2000, p. 11). Of those who indicated they had always wanted to be a teacher, 91% believe that their skills and interests are suited to the job (Farkas et al., 2000). Teachers list intrinsic motivators such as teaching efficacy, working with students, and job satisfaction as reasons for choosing the profession as well as extrinsic rewards such as time off for holidays, working environment, and salary (Farkas et al., 2000; Hughes, 2012; Perrachione et al., 2008). Teachers are often attracted to the profession because of their personal philosophy about education. An individual may hold education in high regard believing that it is an important factor in encouraging student growth which contributes to the good of society (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Brunetti, 2006; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). Whether an individual chooses education for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, a majority of teachers believe they will remain in teaching throughout their career (Farkas et al., 2000).

Researchers place teachers in one of three categories: teachers who intend to stay in the profession for the length of their careers, those who are uncertain about their futures, and those who plan to leave the classroom or the profession (Olsen & Anderson,

2007). According McIntyre (2010), teachers who stay for the length of their career find comfort in the school environment through professional and personal support. Teaching is regarded as intensely personal work where there is a "blurring of the physical and emotional boundaries between home and school life" (McIntyre, 2010, p. 601). Supports from colleagues enable teachers to find success in the classroom as well as camaraderie (McIntyre, 2010). School environments are "reconceptualized as notions of belonging, and school, colleagues and pupils take on a role of extended family" (McIntyre, 2010, p. 611). Teachers' perception of their environment may play a significant role in job satisfaction and could be linked to teacher retention (McIntyre, 2010; Olsen & Anderson, 2007).

Some Teachers Leave the Profession

Teacher shortages are evidenced across the United States as schools attempt to staff classrooms. However, administrators struggle to find qualified applicants to fill vacancies (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Sutcher et al., 2016). The teacher shortage is credited to four primary factors: "A decline in teacher preparation enrollments, district efforts to return to pre-recession pupil-teacher ratios, increasing student enrollment, and high teacher attrition" (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 1). A number of school districts are attempting to reestablish programs that were cut during the recession. However, administrators report there are few qualified applicants especially in the areas of math, science, special education, and English Learners (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Sutcher et al., 2016). State governments throughout the US are significantly expanding the number of teachers who receive emergency certifications in order to fill positions at all levels of education which is a significant indicator of a shortage in the labor market

(Sutcher et al., 2016). Emergency certification frequently indicates that an individual with little to no training is placed in a classroom to fill a position (Sutcher et al., 2016).

While the concept of a teacher shortage is cause for concern, of greater concern is the number of enrollments in teacher preparation programs. Sutcher et al. (2016) reports that university enrollments in education programs "dropped from 691,000 to 451,000 from 2009 to 2014" (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 25). This represents a 35% reduction in enrollments. In order to reduce the teacher shortage, it is important to attract new teachers to the profession as well as retain the teachers that are currently in the classrooms. Through the efforts expended to retain quality teachers, the United States could reduce the teacher shortage and ensure that qualified teachers remain (Sutcher et al., 2016). Some speculate that public opinion of education as a career has been negatively affected. Layoffs during the recession, lack of education funding by state and federal governments, and poor teaching conditions have caused teaching to not be viewed as a viable career path for a number of potential teacher preparation students (Sutcher et al., 2016). Further concern is that if individuals choose education as a career, they do not appear to be choosing hard to fill areas such as math and science or to teach in high-needs schools (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Ingersol and Perda (2010) examined teacher attrition in math and science during the twenty year period from 1988 until 2008. The focus of their research was to determine if there is a sufficient supply of math and science teachers compared to that of English (Ingersol & Perda, 2010). By examining National Center for Educational Statistics data as well as data from the Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow-up Survey, researchers determined that while there are a number of sources available to

staff classrooms, administrators struggled to fill vacancies in any given year. Ingersol and Perda (2010) identify initiatives created to increase the availability of teachers. These include such programs as "'troops-to-teachers', alternative certification programs, overseas teacher recruiting initiatives, financial incentives, such as scholarships, signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement" (Ingersol & Perda, 2010, p. 565). Additionally, researchers indicate that there are a number of trained teachers who have chosen not to immediately enter the education workforce or who have chosen to leave the profession but intend to return to teaching at a later date (Ingersol & Perda, 2010).

Teachers who leave the profession before retirement is "a significant factor behind the need for new hires and the accompanying difficulties that schools encounter staffing classrooms with qualified teachers" (Ingersol & Perda, 2010, p. 566). Data indicates that teachers shifting from one building to another comprise the largest number of new hires in education and that changing buildings has the same negative effect on a school as a teacher who leaves the profession (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Ingersol & Perda, 2010; Sutcher et al., 2016). Overall migration patterns of teachers are from less affluent to more affluent schools thereby creating difficult to fill positions in lower socio-economic schools. Filling these vacancies places a number of burdens on the school to ensure continuity of instruction as well as creating a cohesive academic culture (Sutcher et al., 2016). Lower-income schools often experience higher teacher turnover and are frequently staffed with inexperienced teachers (Boyd et al., 2005; Ingersol & Perda, 2010; Sutcher et al., 2016). Ingersol and Perda posit that there does not appear to be a shortage of teachers overall when considering the number of teachers needed each

year as compared to the number of potential teachers available. However, they discovered the location of the teaching position made a significant difference as to whether or not potential teachers applied for the position (Ingersol & Perda, 2010). In fact, they indicate the "teacher shortages are not national but vary by location and are geographically based" (Ingersol & Perda, 2010, p. 584). Geographic preferences of teachers frequently place urban schools at a disadvantage with teachers choosing more familiar locations closer to home (Boyd et al., 2005; Ingersol & Perda, 2010; Sutcher et al., 2016). Entry year teachers choose teaching positions within 15 miles of their hometown and prefer to teach in schools that are similar to the ones they attended (Boyd et al., 2005; Ingersol & Perda, 2010; Sutcher et al., 2016). However, there are significantly fewer teacher candidates from urban areas than the number of positions available in difficult to staff schools (Boyd et al., 2005; Ingersol & Perda, 2010; Sutcher et al., 2016). Urban areas must rely on importing teachers which is a challenge since "teacher candidates coming from suburban or rural hometowns strongly prefer to remain in those areas" (Boyd et al., 2005, p. 127).

Some Teachers Remain in the Same Building

Despite the fact that many teachers leave the profession or shift to another location, other teachers remain in their current building for extended lengths of time. Some researchers attribute decisions to remain in the classroom to teacher's resilience which is defined as "their ability to recover and stay on course, despite the serious problems and setbacks that they encountered on a daily basis and despite their feelings of heartache, discouragement and frustration" (Brunetti, 2006, p. 821). Other researchers credit intrinsic motivations of the teacher and support from administrators and colleagues

as well as family and friends as potential reasons teachers remain in the same building for extended periods of time (Boyd et al., 2005; Brunetti, 2006; Doney, 2012; Hong, 2012; Stanford, 2001).

Teacher Resiliency

Research indicates that if a teacher experiences difficulties in the classroom and is provided the supports necessary to be successful, the teacher will develop a resiliency to the various struggles of the classroom (Brunetti, 2006; Day & Gu, 2009; Doney, 2012; Haar, 2007; Stanford, 2001). Through pre-service training and induction programs, novice teachers will be provided the opportunity to "understand and embrace the resilience process" which could increase teacher retention (Doney, 2012, p. 660). Developing a strong support system, or as Doney (2012) refers to it "protective safeguards" (p. 646), allows a new to teacher to transition to their new role easier (Brunetti, 2006; Stanford, 2001). Coping strategies and methods for recovery are essential to navigating a stressful situation. The relationships created amongst colleagues and administrative leaderships provided to new teachers are necessary elements for continuation in the educational profession (Brunetti, 2006; Day & Gu, 2009; Doney, 2012; Haar, 2007; Stanford, 2001). It is through the coping mechanisms and social relationships of a strong support system that a new teacher can adjust to the expectations of being an educator. Doney (2012) points out that "resilience is not an innate personality trait but rather a process that is both internal and external resulting from positive adaption to adversity" (p. 653). The support system created around a new teacher is one of the determining factors in the teacher's resilience which is created through the challenges of teaching, the teacher's personal reactions to a particular

situation, and the teacher's protective safeguards in place (Doney, 2012). Only through adversity can a new teacher become stronger and more skillful but in order for this to happen, the teacher must have a strong support system. The process of adversity and recovery will enable a novice teacher to learn from experience and prepare for the next difficult situation. Preparing novice teachers for the classroom should also include an understanding of the concept of developing resiliency (Brunetti, 2006; Day & Gu, 2009; Doney, 2012; Haar, 2007; Stanford, 2001). The relationship between "stressors and protective factors constitute the driving force of resilience process and stimulate response to help counteract negative effects of stress… without stress, the resilience building process cannot occur" (Doney, 2012, p. 659).

While it is essential for a novice teacher to form relationships with colleagues, a teacher's perception of school administration could be predictive of a teacher's willingness to remain in the same building (Boyd et al., 2011). Administrative leadership can come in many forms from professional development, assistance with behaviors in the classroom, or protection from district office directives (Boyd et al., 2011; Day & Gu, 2009; Doney, 2012; Haar, 2007). By tending to the needs of teachers, the actions of principals may increase the likelihood that a teacher would remain in the same building. This can be facilitated by providing time for teacher collaboration, valuing teacher opinion in the operation of school business, and promoting a positive school environment for teachers and students (Boyd et al., 2011; Day & Gu, 2009; Haar, 2007). Simply stated "they (principals) can pay attention to teachers' needs, establish a culture of trust and support, and provide teachers with opportunities to grow" (Haar, 2007, p. 34). Prather-Jones (2011) emphasizes the importance of administrative leadership when

working with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders. Special needs students frequently require more attention from teachers which in turn requires stronger support. Administrators must be keenly aware of the responsibilities of special education teachers and what their positions entail if schools are to retain teachers in these difficult to fill positions (Prather-Jones, 2011).

While the process can be lengthy, it is essential pre-service training and induction programs include building resilience to the stressors of the classroom (Doney, 2012; Hong, 2012; Le Cornu, 2008). Teacher resiliency fosters a connection to the school and its inhabitants. Forming supportive relationships enabled novice teachers to connect on a personal level and created a bond to those within the building (Doney, 2012; Hong, 2012). Teachers who had remained in the same building for extended periods of time indicated that the spaces of the building took on qualities of home and their colleagues the roles of family (Hong, 2012; McIntyre, 2010). The connections made to the school environment as well as developing collaborative relationships with colleagues instill a sense of belonging and emotional support (Hong, 2012; McIntyre, 2010). Strong, supportive relationships enhance teacher self-efficacy and increase novice teachers' confidence in the classroom thereby increasing the likelihood a teacher will remain in the same building (Hong, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

Historical Perspective

Person-Environment Fit Theory is a personal satisfaction theory that takes into consideration a person's interests, abilities, and needs and matches those elements to that of the employer, organization, or another individual. If there is fit or congruence between

the employee and the work environment, the employee and the organization are more likely to be satisfied (Caplan, 1987; Rehfuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2011). The concept of fit or congruence is multifaceted and takes into consideration the relationship between person and organization, demands and abilities, and needs and supplies (Caplan, 1987; Doney, 2012). Frank Parsons is credited for beginning the vocational guidance movement through his trait and factor theory which promoted the concept of matching abilities or traits of a person to a chosen vocation and the factors required within the job (Spokane, Meir, & Catalano, 2000; Su, Murdock, & Rounds, 2015). Parsons contended that if a person's talents were considered during the hiring process, a person was more likely to find satisfaction in their work and increased likelihood of remaining in that particular field (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). During the early 1900's, trait and factor assessments were used to select tramway drivers and to determine typing efficiency in secretaries (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015).

Person-Environment Fit Theory was introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1936 in *Principles of Topological Psychology*. He stated that a person's satisfaction in any given situation could not be determined without also considering the environment (Lewin, 1936). He presented the argument that a person's behavior was influenced by the person's interests, abilities, and needs as it related to the environment (Lewin, 1936). "Every psychological event depends upon the state of the person and at the same time on the environment, although their relative importance is different in different cases" (Lewin, 1936, p. 12). This relationship is represented in the equation $B = f(p*e)$ and opened the door for Person-Environment Fit Theory as it relates to behavioral psychology (Lewin, 1936). Stated in more plain terms, Lewin's approach promotes the

concept that a person's behavior is determined by the person's reaction to the environment. He used the term psychological life space to "indicate the totality of facts which determine the behavior of an individual at a certain moment" (Lewin, 1936, p. 12).

John Holland developed a Person-Environment Fit Theory by applying the concept of individual personalities and matching them to an environment or employer. Holland's theory states that people are attracted to work environments that coincide with their personality traits creating congruence between the employer and the employee (Donohue, 2006; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Environment Fit is measured by the similarities between the personality types within the organization and the organization itself (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Holland's theory of Person-Environment Fit Theory states that there is a negative relationship between P-E fit and interpersonal conflict at work, indicating that as P-E fit increased, levels of interpersonal conflict at work decreased (Pseekos, Bullock-Yowell, & Dahlen, 2011). In other words, if an employee's personality and belief systems are similar to that of the organization, the person will have less conflict and higher job satisfaction. Holland and Lewin's theories indicate that if a person works in a particular job that does not match with his/her abilities, the person may become frustrated and may not find the contentment that he/she might otherwise experience (Donohue, 2006; Rehfuss et al., 2011). Holland created an interest inventory that enabled individuals to determine their personality type across six categories. Completing an interest inventory enabled individuals to identify what organizational traits best met their needs and potentially find greater job satisfaction (Gottfredson & Johnstun, 2009). However, Lewin and Holland agree that there are a number of extenuating circumstances that cannot be accounted for through a personality

inventory. While a person may be most interested in a particular vocation, extenuating circumstances could limit a person's options. Caring for aging parents or young children or a lack of education may preclude an individual from pursuing a career in a particular field (Gottfredson & Johnstun, 2009; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). The whole situation must be considered when determining overall satisfaction. Lewin represented this through the equation $B = f(S)$ where B equals any mental event or behavior and S equals the entire situation including the individuals represented (Lewin, 1936).

The personalities of the individuals within a group are directly tied to the overall culture of an organization. Donohue (2006) applied Holland's theory to compare congruence in career change and persistence. The results indicated that career persisters scored significantly higher than career changers in personality-work environment congruence (Donohue, 2006). Results also indicated that career changers were seeking a greater congruence with their work environment (Donohue, 2006). Holland's theory demonstrates the fluidity of culture within the environment taking on the personality traits of the people within it (Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). In other words, the dominant characteristics of an occupational environment will be determined by the typical traits of employees in the environment (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). "P-E fit is a reciprocal and ongoing process where by people shape their environments and environments shape people" (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015, p. 83). While the people who make up the organization shape the environment, the organization also has methods for controlling the outcome through the selection process as well as professional development and training (Caplan, 1987). Improving policies and

procedures of an organization and continuing education can change the behaviors of workers to be more efficient thereby changing the overall environment of the group.

Multilevel Construct

Person-Environment Fit Theory is a multilevel construct that can be used in all areas of an organization. The theory can be applied to recruiting and hiring as well as to explain organization climate, culture, and staff retention (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Environment Fit Theory encompasses demands-abilities fit and needs-supplies fit (Donohue, 2006; Rehfuss et al., 2012). When considering this theory in relation to the workplace, a person must be compatible on some level in order to find job satisfaction. If a person's abilities far exceed the job requirement, the person could become disinterested and frustrated by their work. If the job requires more work than the employees perceive to be warranted for the pay received, the employee may become dissatisfied. There must be a balance between the benefits the employee receives and the effort expended in completing the task (Donohue, 2006; Rehfuss et al., 2012).

Person-Environment Fit Theory can be broken in to a variety of levels to examine how individuals and the organization interact including Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). The relationship between each of these entities can help in determining job satisfaction. Person-Organization Fit considers the compatibility between the employee and the organization as a whole. If a person enjoys the vocation but does not believe they are being appropriately compensated for the effort, there is going to be discord between the employee and the organization. A person has to believe they are receiving something in return for the efforts they are expending (Caplan, 1987; Su,

Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Job Fit considers how the individual feels about the job for which they have been employed. If the skills required to complete the task are in keeping with a person's abilities, they will find fulfillment in their work. On the other hand, if a person believes the work is not in their skill set or if they have more skill than is required, they may become disenchanted and look for work elsewhere (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Group Fit attempts to find cohesiveness amongst the employees as a whole. In order for an organization to develop a well-rounded staff, employee strengths, weaknesses, goals, and interpersonal styles need to work in harmony (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Supervisor Fit examines the interaction between the employee and the supervisor and Person-Vocation looks at the employee's perception of the type of work required. If a person is not fond of working with numbers, a job as an accountant would probably not appeal to them. Person-Organization fit matches the overall climate of the workplace with the belief systems of the employee (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). If a person's beliefs do not match or coincide with that of the organization, the employee will be at odds with their own values (Rehfuss et al., 2012).

Chuang, Shen, and Judge (2016) developed a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale to consider fit from a multilevel perspective and is based on several fit theories. The scale considers Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit. "The results of correlational analysis and discriminant validity testing of the measurement model suggest that the four measures are related but distinct" (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016, p. 88). This scale will enable researchers to make determinations regarding the multidimensionality of Person-

Environment Fit Theory and have a clearer picture as to the variety of fit within a given organization (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016).

Person-Environment Fit can also be viewed in two distinct categories: needs/supplies and demands/abilities. When considering fit from this perspective, a person examines what they need from the organization and how that need is being met (Caplan, 1987; Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015). At the same time, the person must also consider the demands of the job and whether or not they have the ability or qualifications to meet those demands. Needs and supplies encompass pay, benefits, and work training (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Demands and abilities pertain to the details of the job and how those compare to the employee's talents and expertise (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). A person must feel they receive something in return for their efforts. Employees will accept low pay if there is a perceived benefit in experience that will result in higher pay later in their career (Rehfuss et al., 2012).

Person-Environment Fit is a large umbrella that encompasses all of the above areas. The levels may overlap and may make it difficult to pinpoint the reason an individual stays with a particular organization or seeks employment elsewhere. Edwards and Billsberry (2010) considered two "models that conceptualize how dimensions of fit combine to influence the individual-level outcomes of commitment, intention to leave, and satisfaction" (p. 488). Edwards and Billsberry compared the multi-dimensional construct to the under-constructed type of fit known as perceived fit. This theory considers a person's general sense of fit within an organization and uses a subjective approach through self-reporting instruments to determine the amount of fit. Edwards and

Billsberry (2010) discovered that the multidimensional model does not give a clear indication of fit and that after one year of employment, the employee does not have an overarching sense of fit within the organization. The employee may believe they fit within certain elements of the organization but may not perceive their fit to be in all aspects of the multidimensional model. Considering each element of fit can provide a clearer indication as to an individual's potential job satisfaction and in what areas they believe they experience congruence (Caplan, 1987; Edwards & Billsberry, 2010; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015).

Objective and Subjective Fit Components

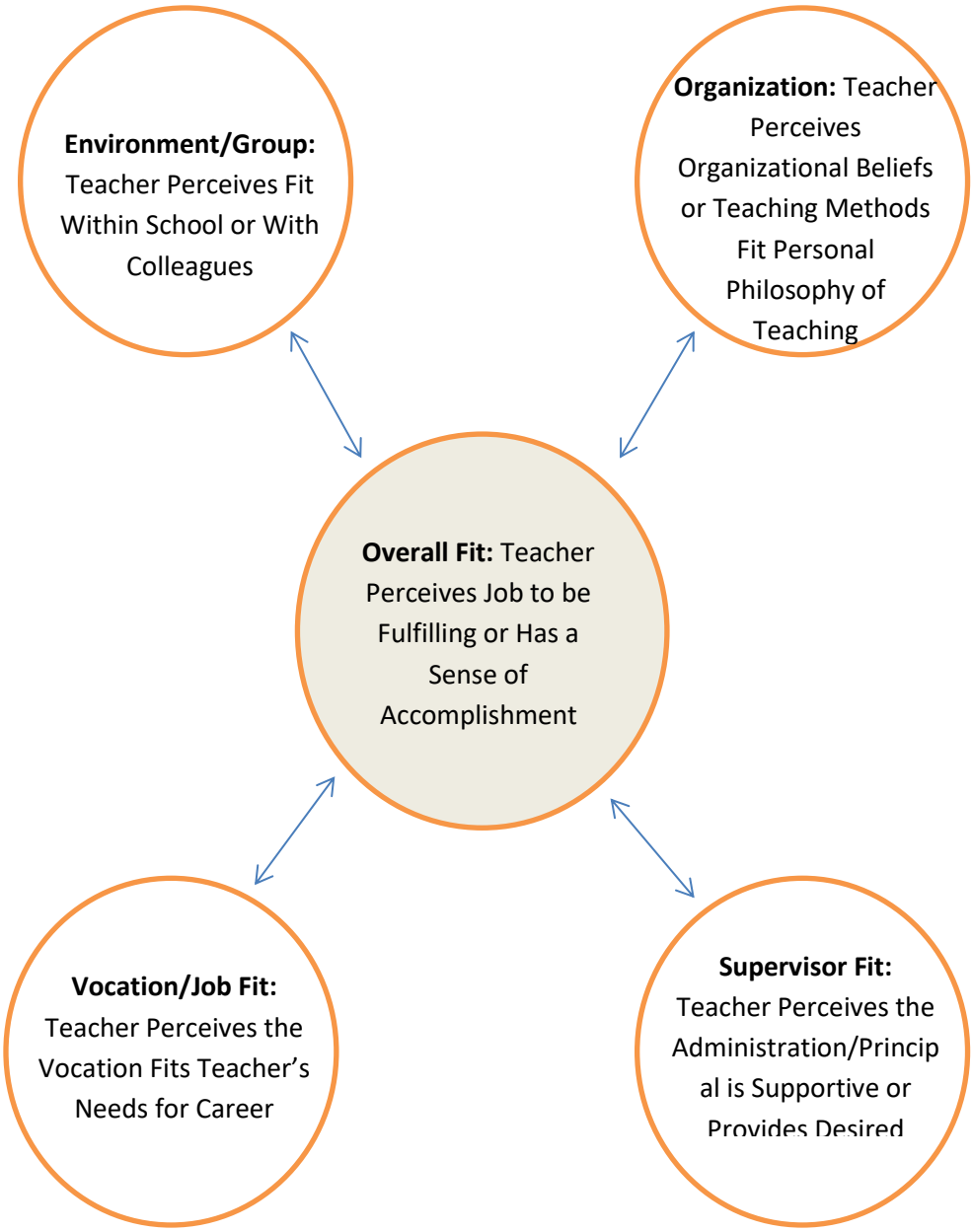
Person-Environment Fit Theory is frequently presented in terms of attitudes and behavior which produces satisfaction (Yu, 2009). A person develops particular feelings or attitudes toward a situation which in turn creates positive experiences such as job satisfaction or intent to remain in a current employment position. However, Yu (2009) demonstrates that the same emotional experiences that are used to determine fit can influence changes in environment fit. "This relationship is consistent with the idea that behavioral and cognitive processes in organization contexts often take place under significant affective influence" (Yu, 2009, p. 1211). Yu extends Person-Environment Fit Theory beyond recruitment and selection and discusses it in terms of a psychological construct.

Person-Environment Fit Theory is generally presented in objective and subjective ideas. An objective person could be described in terms of abilities, goals, and values while a subjective person could be described through perceptions of characteristics (Yu, 2009). An objective environment indicates that actual state of conditions whereas

subjective environment refers to experiences or perceptions within the environment (Yu, 2009). In Person-Environment Fit Theory, objective fit indicates compatibility between objective person and objective environment whereas subject fit refers to compatibility between subjective person and subjective environment. Modern Person-Environment Fit Theories postulate that subjective fit "mediates the relationship between objective fit and individual outcomes" (Yu, 2009, p. 1211). Yu contends that individuals are motivated to adjust their objective selves or their environments to foster balance between the two elements. In other words, if an individual believes they are not given enough independence in their job, they could negotiate more freedom within their work or engage in a self-study to alter their perception (Yu, 2009). People as a general rule want feel good about their environments. Yu (2009) states that an individual naturally seeks to have positive feelings about a situation. If a subjective person is not happy in their job, they can adjust their perceptions of the subjective environment to overcome the negative feelings. For example, if a person is dissatisfied with their job because their boss is difficult to please, they can cognitively adjust their perceptions of the job by focusing on their perceived job security. In order to reconcile objective person and environment, an individual could engage in increased professional development or skill building to find better congruence in the work space (Yu, 2009). Simply stated, when environment misfit arises, a hedonistic person will naturally work toward bringing the situation to a state of resolution. Yu indicates several possible outcomes from subjective-objective fit components. If fit is approached from an affect perspective, fit adjustment will be determined by the individual's perception of the situation. If misfit is experienced but there is a positive feeling toward the environment, a person will work to

congruence. However, if positive feelings are not in place, a person may not be compelled to change. From the hedonistic perspective, a person with positive feelings has no need to change while a person with negative feelings will automatically want to find a resolution.

Figure 1. Person-Environment Fit Theory



Summary

Teacher retention and attrition have reached crisis levels. Each year school administrators attempt to staff classrooms but have difficulty finding qualified applicants despite the fact that the number of potential applicants exceed the number of jobs available (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Sutcher et al., 2016). Teachers enter the profession for intrinsic reasons such as contributing to society and wanting to make a difference. Education is viewed as a calling that they had longed to fulfill for a length of time (Farkas et al., 2000). However, the job often requires more than some are willing to give. Teacher attrition could be evidenced by individuals leaving the profession or by shifting to another building. Migration amongst teachers produces the same difficulties in a building as a teacher who leaves the profession. The staff must go through the same rebuilding and retraining process for both types of attrition. Review of the literature indicates that the teachers who remain in their buildings for a length of time do so because they find a fit within the building (Boyd et al., 2005; Brunetti, 2006; Doney, 2012; Hong, 2012; Stanford, 2001). Teaching is deeply personal work that results in a blurring of environmental lines between home and profession with teachers finding comfort and support among the colleagues. Building teacher resiliency in challenging situations could stem the flow of individuals from the profession (Boyd et al., 2005; Brunetti, 2006; Doney, 2012; Hong, 2012; Stanford, 2001). Examining data through the lens of Person-Environment Fit Theory may provide some insight as to why teachers choose to remain in the profession.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section outlines the method and design used to conduct this study. It will discuss the research design, participants, data collection, and data analysis. This chapter presents the research questions, a description of the research setting, and the criteria regarding the selection of research participants.

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to gain a better understanding of school factors that lead to high teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district. The focus is to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in this building about the factors that influenced them to remain in the teaching profession

2. What factors have influenced teachers to remain in their current building?

3. How does Person-Environment Theory explain teachers remaining in the profession as well as in their current building?

Research Design

The research questions drove the research design of this study. Because this study seeks to answer how or why questions (Yin, 2003) a case study design was employed. Case study is the examination of a bounded system and is applied when a researcher seeks to "gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Case study answers the questions why and how which may be beneficial in determining why some teachers stay in the same building for an extended period of time (Yazan, 2015). Case study may provide a researcher with an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" and thus an opportunity to examine a particular individual or body in its natural setting (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). Case study methodology enables the researcher to concentrate on a specific phenomenon to uncover what factors or characteristics make the entity unique. Employing the case study method allowed the researcher a glimpse in to the inner workings of a school from the perspective of those who live it every day. This approach may provide information as to what is exceptional about the school or its inhabitants that encourage longevity of career in the same building.

Population

Research Site. Short Springs Elementary School sits in the heart of Ashley Public Schools, an urban school district in a Midwestern state. This district is comprised of eighteen elementary schools, five middle schools and three high schools as well as two

pre-kindergarten centers and one alternative high school/middle school academy. Of the more than 19,000 students who make up the district, nearly 900 students attend the elementary school that was studied. Short Springs Elementary experiences a number of the challenges of an urban school: 98% of its students living in poverty, as identified by free/reduced lunch status, and 42.7% of the students are identified as English Learners. Of the student body, 11.4% qualify for special education services. The school has a diverse student population with the following demographics indicated in the table below.

Table 1. School Demographics

Indicator	**Percentage/ Number**
Caucasian	9.9%
Hispanic	63.2%
Black	17.9%
Asian	0.8%
Native American	2.4%
Total Student Enrollment	877
Free/Reduced Eligibility	98.0%
English Learners	42.7%
Special Education	11.4%
Number of Teachers	51.0
Average Years of Experience	17.4
Total Certified Staff	59.3
Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees	13.7%

(Office of Education Quality and Accountability, 2018)

Sampling. Purposeful criterion sampling was used to identify participants for this study. Teachers within the building were ranked in order according to seniority. Teachers with the most seniority were recruited first. If these teachers chose not to participate, the teachers with the next longest tenure were asked to participate. The

recruitment process resulted in a sample of six teachers; five female and one male. Teachers who participated in interviews for this study have a collective 81 years of experience in teaching and 64 years teaching in this particular school. Their individual teaching experience ranges from 8 to 26 years and the length of service in this particular school ranges from 5 to 19 years. Specific information regarding each of these participants is provided in Chapter V.

Data Collection

Data were collected through interviews, observations, collection of artifacts, and document analysis to gain a better understanding of teacher perceptions of factors that have influenced teacher retention in this school (Patton, 2002; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

Survey

Chuang, Shen, and Judge (2016) developed a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale (PPEFS) to measure an individual's fit within an organization through four separate perspectives: Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit. This survey was developed in Qualtrics and a link was sent via email to 57 certified staff members at Short Springs Elementary. Eleven individuals began the survey, but only eight individuals completed the survey in its entirety. Responses to the survey were returned anonymously so there is no way to connect survey responses to interview participants. Because of the low number of responses, survey data were used as descriptive data and were triangulated with other data collected for this study.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview protocol allowing the researcher to ensure continuity, yet flexibility, if information emerged that was not anticipated in interview questions. Follow-up questions were used to provide clarification so that the voice of the participant was represented (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Patton, 2002). Interview questions included gathering background information of the teacher, and interviews were conducted at a location that was convenient to the participant ensuring that the participant was comfortable in his/her surroundings. Additionally, a comfortable setting allowed for rapport to be established quickly. Interviews were audio recorded with permission from the participant, and a fictitious name was used for each participant to allow for anonymity. Interviews were transcribed and reviewed by the participant for accuracy. Each interview was approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length.

Interview questions served as a structure for the interview but allowed for a conversational style interview. These questions included:

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. How long have you taught in this building?
3. Why did you become a teacher?
4. What has kept you in the profession?
5. Why have you stayed in this building for ___ years?
6. Have you taught anywhere else? Why did you leave?
7. What has made this building different from teaching in other buildings?
8. What are some strategies buildings could use to retain high quality teachers?

Observations

Observations were conducted during various school events or activities. As the researcher, I conducted observations in three separate Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings in pre-kindergarten, second, and fifth grades, in a faculty meeting, in a classroom of a research participant who was implementing Whole Brain Teaching to present a lesson, and general interactions of administration, teachers and students throughout the building. A variety of observation settings allowed the researcher to observe interactions between teacher colleagues, professional development leaders, administration, and students. Observations were a primary means of data collection and were used in conjunction with interviews and document analysis. Gathering data from multiple sources provided the researcher with a "holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated" (Merriam, 1998, p. 111).

Document Review

Documents were collected in two ways, during the interview and through email. Four study participants provided an artifact during the interview process without hesitation and two required more time to think about the item and emailed me at a later time. During the interview process, participants were asked to provide one artifact that they believed symbolized or described why their school has low teacher turnover. Each interview participant was asked to describe the artifact and reflect on why he/she selected that particular artifact. The participant's explanation for choosing the artifact was collected via audio recording as part of the interview process, and physical artifacts were collected for analysis.

Data Analysis Process

Merriam describes data analysis as "the process of making sense out of the data" and as "a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). It is through this method of constant comparison that information was analyzed and synthesized into emergent themes that shaped the final product of research (Merriam, 1998).

Organization of Data

The process of data analysis began with the recording of participant interviews. For convenience, I used a tape recorder app on my cellular phone which allowed me to record the interview in its entirety. To minimize interruptions, my phone was placed in "Do Not Disturb" mode to ensure no calls came through during the interview. Since the interview took place during the school day, interruptions were common to each interview. The interruptions were noted and interactions between the participant and any other persons were recorded in my field notes. Each interview followed the same protocol using the same basic questions. Interview proceedings were conducted in a conversational manner that allowed the participant to embellish on a response or for me to include additional questions as seemed appropriate. Field notes were taken during the interview to record the participants' reactions, mannerisms, and emotions that may have been displayed.

Following Merriam's (1998) constant comparative method, data were analyzed as they were collected, and an ongoing process of organization and coding was followed. This process included transcribing interviews and field notes, reviewing descriptive statistics of survey results, and typing researcher notes. I transcribed the interviews by listening to pieces of the interview and rewinding when needed to clarify a word or phrase. The text was typed using my personal computer and Microsoft Word as the word processor program. If transcription of an interview

could not be completed in a single sitting, a note was made on the transcript as to the spot that playback was stopped. A hard copy of the transcript was printed and placed in the binder in order of the occurrence. Storing the transcripts in the order that the interviews took place helped me to retain and process the information. I was able to picture the participant as I listened to the interview giving me the opportunity to remember the mannerisms and emotions.

During the coding process, I initially read the interview and highlighted any word, phrase, or paragraph that described a specific incident, event, or occurrence. The code was identified and written in my notebook and assigned a highlighter color which allowed me to easily find similar information across transcripts. A variety of highlighter colors was used to identify similar information. As a new topic appeared, an additional highlighter color was used to signify a new potential code. This process assisted me in searching for patterns by creating a code map to allow similar pieces of information to stand out in the same color. I listened to the interview recordings multiple times making notes in the margins on the transcripts. I was able to listen for voice inflection and sometimes emotion of the participant.

After all interviews were transcribed, the participant responses were sorted into a single Microsoft Word document using the interview questions as the guide. I printed the responses in hard copy form and added the document to my data binder. This allowed me to read the participant responses to the same question in succession and identify codes based on common information, words, or phrases. Peer review of data was conducted by a cohort member who enabled me to view the data through the eyes of another individual. Ongoing discussions took place between the cohort member and me as a continual check to ensure emergent codes were true to the data.

After multiple readings and the data were coded, patterns and categories began to emerge based on commonalities of information. Microsoft Word documents were created using the name of the potential categories. I copied and pasted individual words or quotes from interview transcripts that seemed to form a group. I pasted these words or quotes into a document labeled

with the category name. As the category grew, I was able to review the strength of the category. I printed a hard copy and made notes in the margins. Categories evolved through the reflective process creating new categories and at times, combining others. If data appeared to belong in two separate categories, the data was copied and pasted into both categories.

Themes

Through construction of categories and subcategories of data, I was able to decipher meaning from incidents, participant interviews, and participant explanation of artifacts. During this process, "units of data – bits of information – are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common…as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling or phenomenon, or as large as several pages of field notes" (Merriam, 1998, p. 179).

Constructing Themes

Through reflection of categories and comparison to other units of data, recurrent themes emerged. Data were read for themes that align with the research questions and were organized according to each separate research question. Multiple rounds of analysis were used to ensure data themes were not missed and to guarantee emergent themes were true to the data. Administrative leadership was a common theme throughout the process. Frequently, the data highlighted the vast difference between leadership styles of the prior administration and the current administration. Administrative leadership was described as professional development, mentoring of new teachers, and high quality hiring practices. Teacher teams and teacher collaboration was also a strong theme of the study. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations were also a reoccurring theme. Intrinsic motivations were described as the internal or emotional reasons teachers remain in the professions. Such words as calling and phrases as "making a difference" frequently appeared in the data. Extrinsic motivations were described as the resources outside of the teacher that made their job easier or more engaging. Extrinsic motivations included 1:1 iPad Initiative, common building procedures such as Whole Brain Teaching program, and wrap around services for students.

Research questions were answered by examining the themes that developed. Themes revealed that teachers remain in the profession and their current building for much the same reasons. Administrative Leadership was a strong indicator of teacher decisions. Providing teachers with an opportunity to voice opinions and participate in professional development that is relevant to the teacher were primary themes in answering research questions. New teacher mentoring programs that provide opportunities for veteran teachers to share in teacher training were important to participants as well as hiring practices were forthcoming in the expectations of the new teacher. Including potential teaching team members on the hiring committee was also an important subtheme. Teaching teams and teacher collaboration were strong themes in answering research questions as well as intrinsic motivations and extrinsic motivations.

While participants referred to teacher fit throughout the interview process, I did not use pre-set codes to analyze the data through the lens of P-E Fit. The concept of "fit," in its varying forms, emerged organically through the interview process, observations that were conducted, and the artifacts that were gathered. Participants used descriptors that led back to fit as a potential theme. Fit was mentioned by each participant and was stressed by participants to be essential to a teacher's success in their building. The organic reference to the tenants of the theoretical framework by the participants supports the overall premise of the research. The theoretical framework was intentionally applied to the final round of analysis by considering the four types of Person-Environment Fit categories. Separate readings were used to determine if data existed to support Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit. This process supported the themes that emerged.

Survey data were analyzed for frequency of response and compared to the themes that emerged. Survey results were used to inform the answers to research questions and

provide triangulation in identification of themes that emerged. Once themes were constructed, data were triangulated with other data sets, and member-checking was also employed allowing participants to review interview data to ensure what was transcribed was what the participant intended to say. Peer review of coded data provided for accuracy of emergent data themes.

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness in qualitative research can be found in the researcher and the research methods. Since the researcher is the instrument, it is imperative that the researcher was credible and trustworthy. Patton (2002) states "words such as objectivity, subjectivity, neutrality, and impartiality will have to be worked out with particular stakeholders in specific evaluation settings" (p. 570). It is through "methodological rigor" that trustworthiness is established in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Therefore, trustworthiness was established through triangulation of multiple methods of data collection and through member checking.

Table 2
Trustworthiness Criteria and Examples

Criteria/Technique	Result	Examples
Credibility		
Prolonged engagement	• Build trust • Developed rapport • Built relationships • Obtained wide scope of data • Obtained accurate data	I was in the field from June to November and used email, telephone calls, face-to-face appointments as a means of communication.

Persistent observation	• Obtained in-depth data • Obtained accurate data • Sorted relevancies from irrelevancies	I observed participants during one faculty meeting, three professional learning community meetings in three different grade levels, and general interactions between staff and students.
Triangulation	• Verified data	I collected multiple sources of data through interviews, observations, and artifacts.
Peer examination	• Tested	I engaged my colleagues and cohort members in discussion about my research study.
Member Checking	• Verified documentation and conclusions	I provided copies of interview transcription to the participant who ensured accuracy of information provided and gave an opportunity to provide any clarification. No changes were made to the after participant review.
Purposive sampling	• Generated data for emergent design and emerging hypotheses	I purposely selected participants for my study based on teaching experience and length of time in school being studied.

Transferability

Referential adequacy	• Provided a comprehensive picture	Through the study, I collected information that indicated what factors influenced participants' decision to remain in the same school.
Thick description	• Provided a data base for transferability judgment. • Provided a vicarious experience for the reader	I provided a detailed description of the site and participants selected for the study.
Dependability/Conformability		
Access to an audit trail	• Allowed auditor to determine trustworthiness of study	Face-to-face interview recordings, transcripts, jottings and notes, documents, coding note cards, peer feedback notes, email correspondence.

Summary

Teacher retention is critical to improving the educational opportunities of students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). Through stability of teaching faculties, schools will be able to address the challenges within the classrooms and student learning (Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). If the turnover of teachers within a building is significant, the administration must begin anew every year to train faculties in best practices and increase student learning. Conducting research to examine the perceptions of teachers as to what elements are present in their schools could be beneficial to better understanding what can be done to stem the flow of teachers from the profession and from more challenging teaching positions. A qualitative case study could provide insight into the needs of urban teachers

and as to how educational leaders can retain qualified faculty. Additionally, students, teachers, schools, and communities could potentially benefit by providing a more stable faculty and providing more consistent educational opportunities for students.

This section described the methods and design that was used to conduct this study. It demonstrated the research design, participants, data collection and methods for data analysis. Chapter IV will present the findings of this case study. It will discuss the interviews with the participants and describe the observations conducted.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this case study was to gain a better understanding of school factors that lead to high teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district. The focus will be to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building. Data were gathered through individual interviews with six participants, observations of the faculty and staff during Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and faculty meetings as well as general interactions within the building. Participants were also asked to provide an artifact that they believe symbolizes or describes why their school has low teacher turnover and their personal choice to remain in this particular school. A survey regarding perceived fit within the organization was sent to all faculty members to determine their perception of fit within the school. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the context in which the school is situated and participants that provided data through survey collection, faculty interviews and observations. Providing a detailed description of the context helps to "situate" the reader within the study and provides a more thorough understanding of the case.

District Context

This study examines Short Springs Elementary School in the heart of Ashley Public Schools, an urban school district in a Midwestern state. Ashley Public Schools covers 43 square miles and is comprised of eighteen elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools as well as two pre-kindergarten centers and one alternative high school/middle school academy. Of the more than 19,000 students who make up the district, nearly 900 students attend the elementary school that was studied. The Ashley district has an enrollment of 19,515 students with 81.4% qualifying for free/reduced lunch status, and 13.6% of the students are identified as English Learners. Of the district student body, 16.1% of the students have been identified as qualifying for special education services. Population living within the Ashley district enrollment area is 126,989 with an average household income of $66,533. Approximately 9.4% of residents did not receive a high school diploma, and 31.1% of residents possess a bachelor's degree or higher. The district has a diverse student population (See Table 2.)

The Ashley Public Schools district was founded in 1915 through the consolidation of four one-room country schools. The original school building was comprised of six classrooms for primary through secondary students, an auditorium, a superintendent's office, and a basement. The structure did not include a cafeteria, but it did have a stable for the students' horses. The district is named for the original owner of a 2,000 acre tract of land that was platted as a township, but incorporation papers were never filed. As a result, the school district exists, but the city by the same name does not. The district is, instead, encompassed by a larger, urban city.

Table 3. District Demographics

Indicator	**Percentage/ Number**
White	29.7%
Hispanic	29.4%
Black	25.6%
Asian	4.2%
Native American	2.4%
Total Student Enrollment	19,515
Free/Reduced Eligibility	81.4%
English Learners	13.6%
Special Education	16.1%
Number of Teachers	1,070.7
Average Years of Experience	9.5
Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees	24.3%
Highest Educational Level for Adults Age 25+	
Without H.S. Diploma	9.4%
H.S. Diploma Only	25.8%
Some College Education but No Degree	25.7%
Associate's Degree	8.1%
Bachelor's Degree and Above	31.1%

School Context

Short Springs Elementary School is located in the southeast quadrant of the Ashley Public Schools district. The blonde brick structure spans the length of two city blocks with the main entrance facing south. The school layout is a large oval with two additional buildings on the north side. One building is connected by an additional hallway. However, the second is connected to the main building only by a portico

requiring individuals to exit the main building and walk outside. The school is bordered by residential housing on the south and west sides with the main road running along the south side of the campus. A city park and a large apartment complex are located on the north side of the school and vacant lots with several trees on the east side by the playground. The principal indicated that this presents potential dangers to the students stating that the school had to take lockdown precautions on occasion as the local police searched for suspects in the area.

The school appears to be in good physical condition and is well-maintained. It is clean and bright with long, rambling hallways to accommodate its ever growing population. Long hallways painted in green and white are wide and well lit. Lines are painted on the floor in the hall to indicate where students should walk in a line. The school has implemented Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), a behavior intervention program that rewards positive behaviors, and a method for implementing hallway and common area procedures. PBIS posters hang on the walls indicating to students the proper behavior in a designated area. As a part of the program, the school has a monthly student assembly to celebrate student awards such as Student of the Month for each class. This has been a part of the school culture for a number of years. The focus on positive behavior is an effort to demonstrate the desired behaviors in students and to encourage good choices.

The office is the gateway to the school with each visitor entering through its main doors and requiring permission to enter. Security doors for the building are fitted with automatic locks and buttons that must be pressed by a school official before a person can gain access to the building. The outside doors open into a narthex with security doors

that lead to the office and one to the main building. No one without permission is permitted into the main section of the building. Visitors were required to sign into the school's visitor management systems and wear a name tag printed through the system. Individuals use their driver's license or state-issued identification to sign into the visitor system. The system checks the visitor's driver license data against the national sex offender registry as well as the student information system to determine if the individual has been indicated as someone who is connected to a student's legal guardianship papers. This allows office staff the added security to ensure a student is released only to individuals with proper authority. Preset notifications can also be sent to school officials if a particular individual is on campus.

The students wear uniforms that are provided by the school, which consist of collared knit shirts in hunter green or black and khaki or black pants, skirts, or shorts. The school has experienced significant growth in recent years. The school's 2017 profile indicates enrollment was 822 students. During data collection for this study indicated that the enrollment number in 2019 was closer to 900. Due to the increase in enrollment, the school has experienced larger than normal class sizes prompting additional classrooms to be added to accommodate the growth. One teacher spoke of having 30 students in each fifth grade classroom until additional staff could be hired and new classrooms established. It was reported this issue was not resolved until the beginning of the second semester. The school's population is designated as Economically Disadvantaged with 98.0 percent of its enrollment qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch Program.

According to the State office of accountability, the school has 51 certified teachers, one counselor, two full time and one part time special education teacher as well as 4.8 individuals listed as "Other Certified Professional Staff." When data were gathered, the school principal and one assistant principal were in their second year at the school, and there was one principal intern who was in her first year at the school. The previous principal had been at the school for five years but accepted a position with another district just prior to start of the school year. The remaining demographics of the school listed in the following table are from the 2017-18 school year.

Table 4. School Demographics

Indicator	**Percentage/ Number**
White	9.9%
Hispanic	63.2%
Black	17.9%
Asian	0.8%
Native American	2.4%
Total Student Enrollment	877
Free/Reduced Eligibility	98.0%
English Learners	42.7%
Special Education	11.4%
Number of Teachers	51.0
Average Years of Experience	17.4
Total Certified Staff	59.3
Percentage of Teachers with Advanced Degrees	153.7%

Participant Profiles

The six teachers interviewed for this study have a collective 81 years of experience in teaching and 64 years teaching at Short Springs. Their individual experience ranges from 8 to 26 years in education and 5 to 19 years in the school. The

following table provides as overview of the participants' teaching experience and the number of years in their current school.

Table 5. Participants Years of Experience

Participant	Years of Experience	Years in School
Stacey	8	8
Elaine	10	9
John	9	8
Melissa	8	5
Angela	20	15
Linda	26	19

Stacey

At the time of this study, Stacey had been in education for eight years and had taught first grade the entirety of her career at Short Springs Elementary. During her time at Short Springs, Stacey earned a national teaching award as an early career teacher who had demonstrated outstanding educational talent, showed leadership beyond the classroom, and who had the promise of impacting education in a significant manner in the future. Currently at Short Springs, Stacey serves as the team lead for first grade and co-chairs the school's New Teacher Committee.

Elaine

Elaine has taught for a total of ten years, nine years of which have been at Short Springs Elementary. She began her career as a pre-kindergarten teacher in the town where she graduated from college. Her initial position in that district was established with grant funds. The following year, her school did not receive the grant, and her

position was eliminated. She moved to Short Springs to continue her teaching career and was placed in a fourth grade classroom where she remained for six years. She is currently in her third year teaching fifth grade. She is also the fifth grade team lead.

John

John has held positions at Short Springs Elementary for nine years and has taught first and fifth grades. He started his career in the Ashley Public Schools as an In-School Restriction teacher at a nearby middle school where he worked with students placed in in-school suspension.

Melissa

Melissa has eight years of experience teaching kindergarten, five of which have been at Short Springs. Prior to her starting at Short Springs, Melissa spent three years teaching kindergarten for a charter school.

Angela

Angela has twenty years of teaching experience, fifteen years of which have been at Short Springs Elementary. Angela began her teaching career in another state before she and her husband relocated for his job. When she arrived in Oklahoma, she was hired to teach fourth grade at Short Springs through a grant that was intended to lower class sizes. Angela started work two months after school started and was assigned five students from each of the other fourth grade classrooms. In the following years, Angela taught at both the second and third grade levels, and has served a special education teacher at Short Springs for the past ten years.

Linda

Linda has 26 years of experience in education. When she received her certificate, she taught for one year at a rural school after she graduated from college but did not return to that school the next year. Instead, she chose to stay at home for a number of years to raise her family. When she did return to education, she taught ninth and tenth grade English Language Arts for six years. Then, she moved to Short Springs Elementary School as the librarian where she has served for the past 19 years

Paths to Teaching

Although the teacher's path to teaching was not determined to be a theme within the research, it is important to gain a complete picture of the data collected. While Stacey, Elaine, and John chose to become teachers in order to make a difference in the life of a child or a difference in education as a whole, Melissa, Angela, and Linda did not consider a path other than to become a teacher.

Stacey's Path

Stacey's initial plan when entering college was to be an engineer because she enjoyed math and science. However, during her freshman year, she worked as an intern at an engineering firm and discovered that she did not enjoy the tasks that she was being asked to perform. "I just realized that I didn't like the job of being an engineer, and that it was not life giving to me," she said. "I wasn't feeling like I was making a difference with my work." While she used the words 'hard', 'stressful', and 'overwhelming' in her interview to describe her current position as a teacher, she also said of teaching "it doesn't feel purposeless…I feel like I get to make a difference in lives every day, and I look at a lot of friends who don't have a job like that and it is work to them," Stacey

regards her job more as a “calling” and while she stated that she is exhausted at the end of the day, she knows that the effort expended is worthwhile. Stacey said,

> I think I like it so much because all the kids have such high needs so it's never boring. There's always something to improve on. I don't ever feel like I've got it all together. I don't know that anyone feels that way here. But then too, everyone that I work with is so positive and looking to improve their practice that it spurs you on within your colleague group. (Stacey, 2018)

Elaine’s Path

Elaine’s college career began with the intent of being an emergency room pediatrician. However, the potential long hours as a pediatrician and the love for the education department at her university turned her attention to being a teacher. “My mom was a teacher,” she said, “and I always wanted to have an impact on student’s lives like she did. I always knew I wanted to work with children.” Her mother taught a variety of subjects and grade levels from first and second grade to business and music. Elaine stated that she grew up in her mother’s classroom and that watching her mother work was always an inspiration. “I knew I would have to work long hours at school, but I knew I wanted to do for kids what she did for her students.”

Elaine has never regretted her decision to become a teacher. “There have been hard days for sure and harder years but I've never really questioned my passion as a teacher and know that that's what I'm supposed to do,” she said. Her team has always been a positive influence on the difficult days. “You can come together and talk it

through and that helps," she said. "I've never questioned 'do I want to be in another profession?' I've always known I'm going to be a teacher."

John's Path

John served in the Navy and then began his career in maintenance at a tire plant. He stated that he became a teacher for two reasons. First, in 2004 his church conducted a book study of Rick Warren's book *A Purpose Driven Life.* The book asks readers to complete an interest inventory to examine various areas of an individual's talents. During this time, he stated that he volunteered at his son's school, taught pre-kindergarten age students in Sunday school, and was a Cub Scout Den Leader. He eventually became a Scout Master. The interest inventory indicated education as a possible career path for him. "It opened my eyes to exploring working with kids but teaching doesn't pay. I was making much better money at the tire plant so I pushed God aside and said 'I'm not doing that.'" Additionally, he stated his colleagues at the plant complained frequently and were critical about the state of education "but they weren't doing anything to change it. That put a fire in my belly. I knew I wanted to go where there was the greatest need."

He believes he has a personal connection to the population that he serves because his childhood was similar to some of theirs.

> My father was an alcoholic and my mother was negligent. I teach fifth grade because the fifth grade is where I learned I was in charge of me. I started making mistakes in fifth grade and I failed the fifth grade twice because I ditched so much school. I was crying out. There's a whole litany of things but once DHS took me out and put me in a children's home for four years, I learned the importance of

> rules and boundaries. Once I had structure in my life, I thrived. That's what I loved. I love having rules and boundaries and I think that's what a lot of my kids need. (John, 2018)

John stated that he stays in his current school because he fills a role that students need. "You need a tough male at times," he said. "People don't want to step into that role but I'll do it because I love these kids. I know that it is not helping them to let them act the way they're acting." He stated that he chose to be in his current school because he wanted "to go where there was the greatest need".

Melissa's Path

Melissa's mother is a teacher, and as a child, Melissa enjoyed spending time pretending to be a teacher. After high school, she spent time in Argentina as an exchange student where she learned to speak Spanish and developed an appreciation for Latin culture. When she began teaching, she sought a school with a higher Spanish-speaking population. She stated that her time at Short Springs Elementary School has provided opportunities to foster relationships with students and colleagues and that she has found support from administration and fellow teachers which she did not find at her previous school.

Angela's Path

Angela has always loved school and always been drawn to being a teacher. She stated that when she was young, she enjoyed the structure of school and appreciated the atmosphere of admiration her principals and teachers created. Angela also played school for fun with her ten brothers and sisters. "I always wanted a chance to be the teacher and be the person in charge," she said.

Linda's Path

Linda comes from a long line of teachers and is not sure she ever considered another career path. She did participate in a career counseling process when she was younger which recommended she enter "church work, teaching, or a librarianship". She went into teaching because she "hates the administrative paperwork," and she has a deep love for reading. To Linda, reading can "change lives" and reading fiction can teach children how to relate to one another. She regards books as an opportunity for students to learn about the world. Because of her feelings about reading, she has tried to foster a love of reading in the students of Short Springs and make the library a place where students want to spend time.

This is Linda's last year at Short Springs; she plans to retire at the end of the school year. Linda became emotional several times during the interview process as she discussed memories of her time at Short Springs and the field of education as a whole. She spoke fondly of her years in the school and stated that her time there will always be special to her.

> I think most of the people that stay here honestly feel like they are called. I guess that's why it is so emotional for me because this is my last year. I'm retiring after this year. You can't change every kid because some kids have such terrible situations but you know, the things that you do and the smile that you get and the hugs and all of that kind of stuff and the lightbulbs that go on, that just makes it worthwhile. (Linda, 2018)

Artifacts of Short Springs

Participants were also asked to provide an artifact that they believe symbolizes or describes why their school has low teacher turnover and their personal choice to remain in this particular school. Each participant was quick to respond as to what they believe symbolized why Short Springs has low teacher turnover.

Stacey's Artifact

When Stacey was asked what artifact represented the school's ability to retain quality teachers, she stated that she "would hold up a kid" as the primary reason people stay. She provided a picture of students sitting in an assembly dressed in school uniforms and stated that the school's personnel focuses on nurturing the whole child, tending to physical and emotional needs as well as the students' academic needs. She stated she believes the reason that teachers remain in the school is the impact they have on a child's life. The school is rated at 98 percent economically disadvantaged so every student is provided meals at no cost. "If they bring their lunch and they are still hungry, they can get a tray. It doesn't matter if they don't have any money on their account because nobody has a lunch account," she chuckled.

Elaine's Artifact

Elaine provided a picture of a doll she received from a student as a gift. The doll sports a school spirit shirt and jeans and is moved about during the course of the school day. "My students and I refer to her daily and 'teach' her things throughout the day." Students frequently use the doll to review content and to discuss any difficulties they may be having. Despite the fact that students are in fifth grade, they enjoy using the doll as a teaching tool. Elaine stated for her the doll represents why she stays. "I had the ability to

make an impact on a student and her family. It is so neat to get to stay for a long time and truly get to know the families." The relationships that Elaine develops with her students and their families are crucial to her. "I love having a student in my class and years later having their sibling. I see them grow and mature and it is nice to see that progression. That is a huge reason I stay – stability for our families."

John's Artifact

When John was asked about an artifact that represented a characteristic of why their school retains high quality teachers, he immediately pointed to a teddy bear at the front of the classroom. The teddy bear has a prominent home in the classroom balanced on the American flag holder. He indicated that it represented why he teaches and represented the continued effort that is required to develop relationships with students. Despite the fact that some students appear closed off and distant, the efforts a teacher makes are always important to students and their learning. He spoke of the difficulty he had developing a relationship with a student and how it was much later that he discovered the strength of the relationship that he had developed with her even though it was not readily apparent. The teddy bear was a gift from a student with whom he had developed a bond. The student struggled academically but persevered to find success. He stated that when students know their teachers care about them, the students "will work harder than anybody. I feel that is one of the things about our school that makes a difference is our kids. Our teachers love our kids, we really do."

Melissa's artifact

Melissa provided a picture of one of the school's Action-Based Learning (ABL) Labs as her artifact. According to Melissa, it is innovative teaching practices such as the

ABL Labs and the encouragement and support to try new strategies that motivates teachers like her to remain at Short Springs year after year. Beyond the ABL Lab, Melissa cited the school STEM program and the Maker Space class as additional instructional elements of Short Springs that entices her to return each year. She stated that she takes her kindergarten class to the ABL Lab additional days each week because the movement has proven to be beneficial to her students. She has seen an increase in content retention in her students since she has added time in the ABL Lab. "The kids love the movement. They don't even realize they as learning. They just think they are playing and having fun!"

Angela's Artifact

Angela presented her Whole Brain Teaching book as her artifact. She stated that the staff had used the book as a book study and that the school was in the process of implementing the program building-wide. For her, the book represents two elements of the school that makes Short Springs different. First, the book and the book study represents the voice teachers are given within the school to lead school-wide initiatives. Second, she stated that Whole Brain Teaching program provides a common language that enables those within the school to be able to communicate effectively.

While there have been years during her 15 year tenure at Short Springs that the school did not have a common language, she stated that the years with a formal program in place have been the most successful. Whole Brain Teaching has given the staff and students a common understanding of school expectations, has created an inviting environment, and has assisted new teachers in implementing quality classroom management techniques. Angela stated that classroom management is one of the more

difficult skills for a new teacher to master, and the common language and procedures of Whole Brain teaching provides a new teacher a guide to follow and, as it is implemented school-wide, creates a team of built-in mentors within the staff to support new teachers in the process.

Linda's Artifact

Linda found the task of defining an artifact to be especially difficult. Initially, she jokingly mentioned her many school t-shirts as an artifact. However, she stated that items such as t-shirts do not have the depth necessary to describe the school properly. "I don't really think of Short Springs Elementary in terms of things. It's more esoteric than that." She stated that she had processed and pondered the question, but could not identify an item that adequately represented the school. She stated the most important element of the school to her could only be described as "esprit de corps". To Linda, it is the spirit of the school that promotes enthusiasm for teaching and it is the group as a whole that brings teachers back year after year. In fact, a number of retired teachers still volunteer at the school so they can remain connected to the environment. Linda explained that it is the relationships that are created among the staff and with the students that affords the school their success in retaining high quality teachers; it is the level of devotion and regard that teachers have for the overall school environment that keeps teachers coming back. "Teachers are mission minded," she said, "and are looking to make an impact in the life of a child."

Presentation of Survey Data

Chuang, Shen, and Judge (2016) developed a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale (PPEFS) to measure an individual's fit within an organization through four separate

perspectives: Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit. This survey was developed in Qualtrics and a link was sent via email to 57 certified staff members. Eleven individuals began the survey, but only eight individuals completed the survey in its entirety. Responses to the survey were returned anonymously so there is no way to connect survey responses to interview participants. Because of the low number of responses, survey data were used for triangulation with other data collected for this study. A detailed explanation of survey results is provided in Chapter V.

Survey Results

Person-Group Fit

Person-Group Fit attempts to create cohesiveness amongst employees as a whole. Administrators promote group fit when creating teaching teams (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). If teachers do not have a connection with their teaching partners, it is likely that they will not find the fit desired to be successful. When individuals with similar personalities, values, goals, and work styles are placed in groups, there is a higher likelihood the individuals will find job satisfaction (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016). Similar traits within a group facilitate connections and can help predict how an individual will react in a given situation (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016). This provides a level of comfort with a teammate and can increase communication between the two individuals. Job satisfaction and retention have been linked to Person-Group Fit (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016).

Survey Results. Tables 6, 7, and 8 show the results of the survey in the areas of Person-Group Fit. While over 50% of respondents rated the perception of match in

relation to values (Table 6) at a six or above on a seven point scale, 25% of respondents rated the match in the area of honesty at a four, 25% rated the match in area of Fairness at a four, and 25% rated a four or below in the area of helping others. Although respondents perceived that the match was high between themselves and the group was high on amount of effort expected, they answered at the lower end of the scale on the areas of reward and competition with other groups. Additionally, the lowest survey scores in Person-Group Fit Scale were reported on the match of attributes or characteristics between groups; participants did not perceive there was a strong match between themselves and the group in the areas of personality, work style and lifestyle.

Table 6. Person-Group Fit Scale

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
1. Honesty	0	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%
2. Achievement	0	0	0	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%
3. Fairness	0	0	0	2 25.00%	0	4 50.00%	2 25.00%
4. Helping Others	0	0	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	0	1 12.50%%	5 62.50%

Table 7. Person-Group Fit Scale Goals

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
1. Reward	0	0	0	3 37.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%
2. The Amount of Effort Expected	0	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%
3. Competition with other Organizations	0	0	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	2 25.00%

Table 8. Person-Group Fit Scale Attributes

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
1. Personality	0	0	0	2 25.00%	4 50.00%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%
2. Work Style	0	0	0	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	2 25.000%	2 25.00%
3. Lifestyle	0	0	0	5 62.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%

Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit refers to how compatible an employee is with their organization. Person-Organization Fit takes into consideration the climate and culture of the building and the district and how the teacher perceives it matches with their personal belief systems. Higher Person-Organization Fit indicates a higher match between the beliefs of the individual and those of the organization (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Additionally, Person-Organization Fit includes the perception of compensation of an employee. In order to 'fit', an employee has to believe they are receiving something in return for the efforts they are expending (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015).

Survey Results. The eight survey respondents in this study indicated that they perceived a relatively high match with their organization (See Table 9 and 10). Particularly, the respondents perceived a high match between their emphasis and their school's emphasis on values. The survey participants rated the areas of honesty, achievement, fairness, and helping others at a five or above on the seven point scale indicating a strong match in values. Survey respondents also rated their match with

amount of effort expected and competition with other organizations as high, rating each at five or above on the seven point scale. Interestingly, the respondents scored the perception of match in the area of reward lower, with one respondent rating a three and one respondent rating a four. This indicates that while the values and beliefs of the survey participants align with Short Springs in most areas, two teachers do not perceive as strong of a match in receiving reward for their work. This was also mentioned by the interview participants, particularly in the area of salary. Stacey and John explicitly mentioned the low pay of teachers in Oklahoma as a key variable in teacher mobility. While the pay has not yet deterred the interview participants in this study, the lower rating indicates teachers perceive the compensation they desire and the compensation provided to not match. In terms of Person-Organization Fit, this could indicate that teachers would leave the building or the profession in search of a better compensation fit. However, the themes of this study, as described below, provide other means of compensation, besides monetary, that may be providing the teachers at Short Springs benefit and, therefore, motivating them to stay.

Table 9. Person-Organization Fit Scale

		1-Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
1.	**Honesty**	0	0	0	0	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	4 50.00%
2.	**Achievement**	0	0	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	3 37.50%
3.	**Fairness**	0	0	0	0	2 22.22%	4 44.44%	3 33.33%
4.	**Helping Others**	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

Table 10. Person-Organization Fit Scale Goals

	1-Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
1. Reward	0	0	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%
2. The Amount of Effort Expected	0	0	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	3 37.50%
3. Competition with other Organizations	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

Person-Supervisor Fit

Person-Supervisor Fit examines the relationship between the employee and the supervisor (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Person-Supervisor Fit takes into consideration the leadership style of the supervisor and the teacher's perception of how it matches with the teacher's desired leadership style. A higher rating in Person-Supervisor Fit indicates a higher match between the leadership style and the values of the supervisor and the teacher. If a person's beliefs are not compatible with that of the supervisor, the employee will be at odds with his or her own values (Chuang, Shen, & Judge, 2016).

Survey Results. For all respondents, the lowest scores on the surveys were reported in the area of Person-Supervisor Fit. Respondents rated the match between things they value and things their supervisor values as a four or above on the seven point scale. Only one respondent rated a perfect match on values. The ratings were even lower in the areas of personality match, work style match, and lifestyle match. In regards to lifestyle match, five of eight respondents rated a four or below on the seven point scale.

Two respondents reported no match between supervisor's leadership style and the leadership style they desired.

The data in this study provided an interesting juxtaposition between two leaders of Short Springs. Although Mr. Reid, the former administrator, had been gone from Short Springs for two years at the time of data collection, teachers interviewed for this study consistently referred to Mr. Reid as an exemplar of strong school leadership. The initiatives shared by the interviewees, including technology and behavior programs, were all adopted under the leadership of Mr. Reid. All interview participants shared personal and sometimes emotional stories of Mr. Reid, his ability to build relationships, and the impact his leadership had on their teaching. John and Linda both shared that while Mr. Reid was serious about the work of school; they highly respected him and trusted him.

At the time of data collection, Mrs. Parker was in her second year as principal of Short Springs. Though Mrs. Parker had made no major changes during her tenure, the teachers interviewed for this study perceived a significant culture change and attributed the higher than normal teacher turnover at Short Springs to this change in leadership. Specifically, the teachers perceived that Mrs. Parker was less effective at discipline and behavior management and did not support teachers in their efforts to manage students. The survey results could be a reflection of the perceptions of these teachers and the leadership of Short Springs in the past two years.

Table 11. Person-Supervisor Fit Scale

	1-Does Not Match	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7-Complete Match**
1. The match between the things you value in life and the	0	0	0	2 25.00%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%

	things your supervisor values.						
2.	**The match between your personality and your supervisor's personality.**	0	0	2 25.00%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%
3.	**The match between your work style and your supervisor's work style.**	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%
4.	**The match your lifestyle and your supervisor's lifestyle.**	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%
5.	**The match between your supervisor's leadership style and the leadership style you desire.**	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	0	1 12.50%	0	4 50.00%	1 12.50%

Person-Vocation Fit

Person-Vocation or Job Fit considers how the individual feels about the job for which they have been hired. The tasks required must match an individual's abilities and they must feel they are being properly compensated for the effort. If the skills required and compensation do not meet with the individual's expectations, there will be discord and the individual may become dissatisfied and seek employment elsewhere (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015).

Survey Results. The Person-Job Fit Scale showed that survey respondents perceived a strong match between their knowledge, traits, and attributes and their current teaching position. Teachers reported a rating of six or higher on the seven point scale in

match of professional abilities and the job and five or higher on each of the questions related to personality traits, interests, and job characteristics. These scores were the highest overall scores of all the scales on the survey indicating that respondents saw the most complete match with vocation over organization, group, and supervisor.

Table 12. Person-Job Fit Scale

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
1. The match between your professional skills, knowledge, and abilities and those required by the job.	0	0	0	0	1 9.09%	4 44.44%	4 44.44%
2. The match between your personality traits e.g. extrovert vs. introvert, agreeable vs. disagreeable, dependable vs. undependable) and those required by the job.	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%
3. The match between your interests (e.g. social vs. unsocial, artistic vs. inartistic, conventional vs. unconventional) and those you desire for a job.	0	0	0	0	2 22.22%	4 44.44%	3 33.33%
4. The match between the characteristics of your current job (e.g. autonomy, importance, skill variety and those you desire for a job.	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

Summary

In order to ascertain what factors contribute to the high teacher retention rates that have existed in this school, I conducted a case study to examine from the perspective of the teachers what has influenced them to remain in the profession and in their current building. Chapter IV presented the context for the school and district in which the study took place as well as provide background of the study participants. Chapter V will present the analysis of data and the major themes that emerged.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to answer the research questions for this study, multiple data sources were collected including interviews, participant artifacts, observations, document review, and a survey regarding perceived fit within the organization was sent to all faculty members to determine their perception of Person-Environment Fit within the school. A description of the data school and district context was presented in Chapter IV as well as a description of the participants within the study and the results of the survey. Data were gathered through individual interviews with six participants, observations of the faculty and staff during Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and faculty meetings as well as general interactions within the building. Participants were asked to provide an artifact that they believe symbolizes or describes why their school has low teacher turnover and why they have chosen to remain in the school. Findings for this study are organized by research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of teachers in this building about the factors that influenced them to remain in the teaching profession?

"There have been hard days for sure and harder years but I've never really questioned my passion as a teacher and know that that's what I'm supposed to do" (Elaine, 2018).

Although each teacher interviewed for this study had a personal story to explain a call to the teaching profession, two themes emerged from these stories: ***to make a difference*** and to ***be part of something bigger***. Stacey and John both referred to their role of teacher as a calling. When asked what factors influenced participants to remain in the teaching profession, they responded that it is the work they do with the students. Each described the job as overwhelming and stressful, but it is valued and does not feel purposeless.

Theme: To Make a Difference

The participants in this study entered the teaching profession because they were seeking a career to make a difference. Stacey's original career path was leading her to become an engineer, but she did not find that path to be "life giving". She spoke of friends who did not have a career where they impact lives "and it is work to them." Prior to becoming a teacher, John served in the Navy followed by a career at a tire plant. His colleagues at the plant complained about the state of education "but they weren't doing anything to change it. That put a fire in my belly. I knew I wanted to go where there was

the greatest need." Elaine, Melissa, and Linda followed the example of family members on their path to teaching. Angela dreamed of being a teacher when she was a child because she loved the structure and the appreciated the atmosphere of admiration her principals and teachers created. Each of the interview participants told stories of wanting to make an impact on students' lives. "There have been hard days for sure and harder years, but I've never really questioned my passion as a teacher and know that that's what I'm supposed to do," Elaine said.

Linda described teachers as "mission-minded" while Elaine and Stacey stated that they wanted to "make a difference" by impacting the life of a child. Stacey is a teacher because of the difference she can make for her students. Even though teaching is stressful, she finds teaching rewarding. John teaches because he sees himself in his students, and he finds fulfillment in providing structure, caring, and direction for them, and Melissa teaches because of the relationships she builds with her students and families. She enjoys watching students learn new things and building connections with their parents. Elaine and Angela teach because they've always known they wanted to be teachers; they enjoy helping children. Linda, with 26 years of experience, teaches because she still has the enthusiasm to teach and impact the life of a child. Each interview participant mentioned that the teachers with the greatest longevity were in the profession to impact student lives. For example, Linda referred to teachers as being "mission-minded or service-oriented and feel drawn to this type of work." John stated he had never worked harder in his life "but I've never felt that I've been doing something more worthwhile than being here." Stacey enjoys the challenge of always looking to improve her craft describing the work as "never boring. There is always something to

improve on." Angela described the role of a teacher as "all encompassing." She told of a teacher who had worked in several different capacities throughout the day. "I've been a doctor, a counselor, a lawyer," they said. "Yep, I did it all today."

Theme: To Be Part of Something Bigger

John initially chose a career as a teacher so that he could be a part of something bigger. "What am I doing to make it better?" was the question he posed to himself regarding education. As John stated it, "It is something personal and something intrinsic I think that would drive why anyone would want to stay in this profession".

John and Linda chose careers in education after participating in an interest inventory that pointed toward teaching as a career path. Linda described teachers as "mission-minded" and John pointed to intrinsic motivations as factors to remain in education. The teachers interviewed for this study selected the teaching profession, and at some level remain in the profession, because they do feel teaching is a calling and they are fulfilled by the opportunity to contribute to a cause larger than themselves. Each teacher interviewed also reported a number of factors that influence their decision to remain in the profession. In the eyes of the participants, teaching is a calling and allows them to be a part of something larger than themselves. Overall, it appears from the data in this study that, for these teachers, the decision to remain in the profession is intertwined with the opportunity to affect societal change. They see teaching as a means to make a difference in the individual lives of students, but also in the larger society.

Research Question 2: What factors have influenced teachers to remain in their current building?

You don't feel like you are in it alone. You have support so when you have that support and you build that relationship, you are less likely to leave those people that you are working with (Melissa, 2018).

According to the data, the following two over-arching themes influenced participants to remain in their current building with a number of supporting subthemes.

Theme 1: Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative Leadership

a) teacher-led and job-embedded professional development,
b) teacher voice in the interviewing and hiring practices,
c) responsive new teacher mentoring that is tailored to the needs of the teachers,
d) teacher voice in faculty meetings;

Theme 2: Esprit de Corps among the faculty members which included

a) social-emotional support for colleagues and
b) individual growth through team collaboration;

Theme 3: Ample Physical and Social-Emotional Resources; and

Theme 4: Teacher Fit at Short Springs for choosing education as a career path.

Each of the participants stated that administrator and colleague support are key to retaining quality teachers. Through collaboration, mentoring and onboarding programs, teachers are provided support that eases the burden of teaching. Teachers in this study

spoke of collaboration as not just a time to work together with colleagues, but also as integral to their growth as a professional. According to Melissa, her team is invaluable to improving her practice. She stated that her team focuses on innovative teaching practices to keep the content engaging which motivates her to improve and gives her the courage to try new things. Even John, who considered himself a loner, admitted that collaboration with his team had made him a better teacher. Elaine stated that the new teachers on her team "have fit right in" and work well together. She stated that her team shares teaching practices and compares student achievement. While the vulnerability that she felt was uncomfortable in the beginning, the circle of trust that she built with her team gave her the courage to openly examine her own teaching practices. She indicated that the team layers new teacher mentoring in their collaboration so that they are helping each other become better teachers.

Without a working knowledge of Person-Environment Fit Theory, the teachers in this study overwhelmingly referred to "fit" when discussing what factors influenced them to remain at Short Springs--fit with the profession, fit with colleagues, and fit within the organization. As evidenced by the artifacts presented by participating teachers, survey responses, and interviews, teachers expressed that their internal motivations and goals were a fit with teaching. Stacey, Elaine, and John each presented artifacts that linked directly back to the students at the school. Both Elaine and John indicated a doll and a teddy bear that were gifts from a student. Stacey used a picture to represent the student body overall. Each of these symbolized the connections the participants have with their students and the teachers' level of fit within the school. John stated that he chose to be in a school with challenges and has found his place at Short Springs providing structure to

the students. Stacey and Elaine herald the relationships that they have formed with students and families. Teaching in this building allows these to feel passion for a job, make a difference, and help children. Melissa's and Angela's artifacts represent innovative teaching practices and common procedures provide a connection to the school. Linda's artifact, *esprit de corps*, sums up the culture and climate of Short Springs as an overall positive regard. Participants also shared that a sense of 'fit" with their colleagues that was imperative in staying in the profession. Participants reported that strong relationships with colleagues increased their sense of efficacy in their job, created a sense of belonging within a group, and created an environment where teachers can be vulnerable to one another while growing and learning to improve their practice.

Theme: Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative Leadership

In order to provide a complete picture of the theme Administrative leadership, it is important to describe the leadership within the school. Mrs. Parker was the Head Principal at the time of the study. She had two assistant principals, Mr. Cain and Ms. Andrews. Mrs. Parker and Mr. Cain were placed in Short Springs during the 2017-18 school year, which was the year prior to the initial data collection for this study in Fall 2018. Ms. Andrews was a new addition to the administrative team at the time of the study. Mrs. Parker and her administrative team replaced a long-time, well-respected and well-known administrator, Mr. Reid, known for his passion for education and seemingly endless support for educators. While Mr. Reid was not an administrator at Short Springs during the time of this study, his name and his legacy were referred to throughout the interviews and his mark on the school was evident in observations and document review.

For that reason, both Mr. Reid and Mrs. Parker and her new team are included in the data presentation for this study.

It was apparent through interviews, observations, and documents that administrator leadership is a key aspect of Short Springs. The teachers interviewed stated that this support strengthens the staff and encourages teachers to return each year. Melissa shared this quote about administrative leadership,

> Just show them that you will back them up and that you will listen to their ideas and make them feel that they are heard and that they are not in it alone. That is the one thing that made me leave my old school. Feeling like I was in it alone and feeling like I didn't have any support.

Mr. Reid's Leadership. When describing Mr. Reid's leadership, the following statement was made:

> There was always a reason behind what [Mr. Reid] asked us to do. He didn't make us do a lot of things that the district wanted because he didn't see them as beneficial to us or our students. I think he took a lot of flak from his bosses. I just feel like he was in it for us and for our kids. It made you want to work for him. (Stacey, 2018).

According to the teachers in this study, Mr. Reid was "awesome," "a dynamic leader," and "a visionary." He was also described as the teachers' "biggest champion." Mr. Reid was head principal of Short Springs for 5 years, 2012-2017. Mr. Reid has over 40 years of experience in education, and when he left Short Springs, he was hired as the Executive Director of Elementary Education in a neighboring district. During his time at Short Springs, he was known for this grant writing and his community relations. It was

Mr. Reid who secured the funding for the ABL labs, the 1:1 iPads, and the Makers Space. Additionally, he fostered relationships with community leaders to provide smaller funding sources and met with legislators to provide them with a first-hand look at the state of education and communicate the needs of students in his community. School supplies, mentoring services for students, and holiday meals and gifts were all obtained through partnerships with a number of local churches and businesses secured by Mr. Reid.

He also had the reputation of building strong relationships with students. Although Mr. Reid was the voice of authority within the school, he established relationships with students that encouraged positive behavior. According to Stacey, "[Mr. Reid] had a workout group with some of our more challenging fifth grade boys. They would meet in the ABL Lab in the morning and work out before school." The teachers at Short Springs perceived the connections he established with students as vital to improving student behavior, and, in turn, improving teacher morale.

Most teachers interviewed for the study had a personal, and sometimes emotional, story to represent Mr. Reid. To Stacey, Mr. Reid was especially good at including teachers in solving school-wide issues and understanding the stress and pressure teachers were under. She shared that Mr. Reid did things "Like checking on me and asking if there was anything I needed. He was truly interested in knowing what teachers needed to help them feel successful and supported." John described his first ever faculty meeting with Mr. Reid. In his story, John recounted being shocked by Mr. Reid's demeanor. John initially thought Mr. Reid was "very authoritarian" because he spoke emphatically of non-negotiables. According to John, "I thought 'that's gonna be rough'. But he came

in, he worked tirelessly. He's an awesome man. He's an awesome administrator. I have great respect for him. He worked tirelessly for this." Linda became very emotional when speaking of Mr. Reid. In her interview, she described one of the faculty meetings Mr. Reid had scheduled over the summer prior to the beginning of the school year. Although Linda remembered that the meeting as a whole was mostly informational with a few opportunities to get to know one another, she began to cry when she specifically recounted what Mr. Reid said during one of the sessions.

> He said 'you may not always like everything that I do, but I guarantee you that everything I do will be for the purpose of doing the best for the kids.' I knew right then that I was going to be okay with him. Because I really think everybody that is here, that stays, that is their main goal. They care about the kids. (Interview with Linda, 2018).

Mr. Reid started the new faculty meeting process during his tenure as principal. According to Elaine, "[Mr. Reid] was very open in our faculty meetings. If there was an issue, he would create a committee to solve the problem or address it in faculty meetings." As a result of his philosophy on shared decision-making, faculty meetings at Short Springs evolved into a time of discussion and seeking solutions to any problems identified throughout the building. Topics of discussion were emailed to the principal in advance of the meeting. Teachers would then divide into groups during the meeting to brainstorm solutions to the problem. Many problems at Short Springs over the years were solved through a community approach with teachers collaborating and working together to find a solution.

Although Mr. Reid is no longer at Short Springs, the spirit of his faculty meetings lives on. At a faculty meeting held during the course of this study, Mrs. Parker used a faculty meeting to crowd-source solutions to three school-wide problems. During the faculty meeting time, Mrs. Parker posed the problems. Then, she, an Assistant Principal, and a teacher facilitated discussion by the teachers in small groups. While the facilitators kept the discussion on topic and answered questions as needed, the time was used for teachers to provide input and use their voice to address the issues. As the meeting came to a close, suggestions and solutions for the topics of concern were presented by each group to the rest of the faculty. Follow-up information, further questions, and suggestions were added to an electronic document that was shared throughout the building. According to Elaine, at Short Springs, teacher-voice is a priority. "Do they always take our opinions? No, but they ask and they consider our opinions. That's what I have always valued here is you feel like your opinion matters, and that it's valued."

Post Mr. Reid's Leadership. After Mr. Reid left Short Springs at the end of the 2016-2017 school year, Mrs. Parker was appointed principal. Prior to her tenure at Short Springs, Mrs. Parker served as a Literacy Coach within the Ashley Public Schools district and was Assistant Principal at a nearby elementary school from 2013-2017. While her previous school was similar in demographics, it had a slightly lower enrollment. The teachers interviewed for this study perceived the school struggled during Mrs. Parker's first year as principal. Stacey shared that Mrs. Parker and her administrative team referred to themselves as the three blind mice because they "didn't know the school culture or anything about the school so our building was pretty chaotic." According to Angela the new administration was not prepared for the challenges they would face. She

said, “They admit it. They thought they were going to get one thing, but they found a whole other ball game.”

Although Mrs. Parker and her new administrative team did not make major changes to the procedures in the school and kept processes such as faculty meetings the same as years prior, the teachers interviewed for this study highlighted some perceived differences in Short Springs during Mrs. Parker’s tenure. According to the teachers, discipline procedures have changed. Stacey stated that she felt the new principals were afraid to make “bad news phone calls” to parents their first year because they had not yet developed relationships with the parents. John echoed Stacey’s sentiments stating that there did not appear to be a discipline policy in place Mrs. Parker’s first year, and behaviors at Short Springs were a significant problem. Linda agreed that the culture of the school had changed in the last two years, and attributed the change to the new administration. One of the major differences in culture that teachers in this study shared was the presence of the administrator, specifically with the students. While teachers in this study spoke fondly of Mr. Reid and his interactions with students, the teachers in this study did not share the same comments about Mrs. Parker. To the teachers in this study, Mrs. Parker is not visible in the building as often as Mr. Reid. Stacey even shared that she thought the students did not know who Mrs. Parker and her administrative staff were the first year because the students only saw the principals at the school’s monthly awards assembly. In fact, teachers at Short Springs compare Mr. Reid to Mrs. Parker so often that John admitted that the teachers play a game during meetings making tally marks for the number of times Mr. Reid’s name was mentioned.

> Right now, it's always a fun game to play at a faculty meeting "OK, what's the over under? How many times will [Mr. Reid's] name come up? Four. All right, well that's not being done like [Mr. Reid] used to do it." (John, 2018).

The teachers in this study also attribute the higher than normal teacher turnover at Short Springs in 2018-2019 to the change in administration. According to John, several teachers from Short Springs left for buildings within the district and outside of the district, including the former teacher of the year. He stated, "One reason that they left was because they felt that [Mrs. Parker] is never going to assume the same role that [Mr. Reid] had." Even Stacey admitted that she had considered leaving Short Springs. She shared, "I'm going to give it one more school year, and if it isn't better, I'm probably going to look for something else."

Sub-Theme: Teacher-Led, Job-Embedded Professional Development. Professional development at Short Springs looks different than the traditional one-time workshop or sit-and-get sessions most associated with teacher learning. At Short Springs, teachers have the opportunity to participate in various types of professional development that are job-embedded and aligned with teacher needs. Stacey refers to this type of professional development as "what I need now." Stacey juxtaposed this type of professional development with what she was used to receiving by stating, "My first couple of years, professional development seemed to check a box," she said. "Since then, I feel like every professional development has actually been quality, something that I could use and has made me a better teacher."

A good example of professional development in action at Short Springs is the opportunities around the Whole Brain Teaching initiative. The staff began the

professional development with a book study to learn more about the program. Instead of paying for a consultant to train in one or two sessions, onsite professional development is presented at faculty meetings by Short Springs teachers who have used the program successfully. To extend the learning, teachers at Short Springs are also given opportunities to observe each other's classrooms to determine the best methods for implementation. Melissa is appreciative of the training the staff has on Whole Brain Teaching because she is able to visualize the program. "Seeing it demonstrated helps and knowing that you are not just hearing about it, but you are watching how a lesson would look," she said.

This real-time professional development is not only implemented at Short Springs. Ashley Public Schools supports this type of professional learning to the extent that substitute teachers are provided to allow teachers at all levels the opportunity to observe other teachers in their current building, across the district, or the state. This practice is widely used in Short Springs and has been beneficial in implementing Whole Brain Teaching as well as supporting other curriculum initiatives. In fact, during the interview with Elaine, she indicated that a colleague was scheduled to observe her reading instruction the next day to obtain a better understanding of the curriculum.

Sub-Theme: Teacher Voice in Interviewing and Hiring Practices. According to all the teachers interviewed for this study, the hiring practices at Short Springs are unique. When a position is open at Short Springs, the principal convenes an interview committee, and teachers from the grade level with the open position are invited to participate in the interview process. Sometimes, this means that the entire team is in the room when an applicant is interviewed. According to John and Elaine, the interview

committee is as much allowing the candidate to decide if they want the job as the interview committee is evaluating the candidate. Teachers who have served on the interview team expressed that it is important to be honest with potential candidates about the challenges that may be faced within the school. The interview committee at Short Springs plainly states the characteristics of the school to potential teachers and ensures there are no surprises after a new teacher accepts a position.

Because of this honest and open interview process, teachers at Short Springs view themselves and their colleagues as carefully chosen, that they were sought out because they fit within the teaching team and the school. Elaine even referred to teachers at Short Springs as "different." To her, "[the teachers at Short Springs] are not here for the paycheck, or they're not here to just come to school and leave because they know at this type of school, you can't just leave your work at school".

According to Angela:

> The interview team is straight forward about the demographics of our children, and they ask if the teacher is willing to work with that type of students. 'Are you aware that some kids may come to school and have not had any breakfast, we provide breakfast but maybe that kid has not seen a parent and they're worried about it, or the parent maybe incarcerated or the kids might throw a chair across the room, can you handle something like that?' So when they hired the staff and the staff came in understanding what the challenges would be at the school. That made a big difference. They were straight up, not just were trying to fill the classroom. They would try to get people in the positions who are willing to put

up with all of the challenges that come with the lower social economic challenges. That helped a lot. (Angela, 2018)

Participants described the interview process as collaborative and provided examples of how teacher voice and input are as important as administrators. The hiring committee use a standard set of questions to ask each candidate. However, the teachers on the committee are encouraged to ask their own questions of the candidate. This allows teachers and candidates to determine the potential for fit between the teaching team and new teacher. When the interviews are complete, the hiring committee ranks candidates to identify the committee's overall preferred candidate.

Once teachers are hired at Short Springs, the human resources process allows teachers to continue to assess their fit within the building. At Ashley Public Schools, procedures for annual teacher placement include providing each teacher with a letter of intent. On this form, each teacher is provided the opportunity to indicate if they wish to remain in their current building and grade level or if they would like to request a new placement. "We indicate each year if you want to change grade levels, teaching positions, or buildings and they try to honor that," Elaine said. "Having some say in your placement helps you find where you fit in a building."

Sub-Theme: Responsive New Teacher Mentoring. In much the same way that interventions are tailored to the needs of students, new teacher mentoring is structured for the specific needs of the individual. Participants recognize the importance of training for beginning teachers. Without supports in place, new teachers can become discouraged. As Stacey stated it, "New teachers are overwhelmed. I get it. I was there, too. You can't ask much else of new teachers except survive."

At the district level, Ashley Public Schools provides a New Teacher Onboarding program for all teachers new to the district. Stacey serves on the New Teacher committee for Short Springs. She described the process as being prescriptive based on preset topics from the district level. However, Short Springs deviates from the district schedule and focuses on teacher needs in the moment. The district schedule for formal New Teacher Onboarding includes topics such as how to use a pacing guide, standards-based planning, learning goals, and teaching to a high level of rigor. All of these topics are scheduled for first semester sessions.

While new teachers at Short Springs do participate in the district provided New Teacher Onboarding, veteran teachers at Short Springs have developed their own New Teacher Mentoring Program to provide what they believe to the essentials for a successful teacher. According to Stacey,

> My passion for New Teacher is to do the things they [new teachers] need right now. To me, the thing they need is how to work the copier, how to check out a book or resource out from the resource room, where is the resource room, and how to deal with difficult students, what behavior gets sent to the office and what you need to do inside your classroom. Those to me are "this is what I need to know now". The standards to me, yes, they're very important but we can wait just a little bit to address them. (Stacey, 2018)

A major component of the New Teacher Mentoring program at Short Springs is the extra collaboration time. Short Springs is a larger school that has five or six sections of each grade level. Therefore, grade-level teachers usually plan lessons as a group. By practice, though, planning duties are not given to the new teacher. Instead, a different teacher within the grade level plans a subject. Then, the veteran teachers scaffold the lesson planning of the new teacher. Sometimes, at the beginning of the year, lesson plans

are simply given to new teachers. According to Stacey, "New teachers are overwhelmed and being relieved of planning duties gives them the chance to focus on the procedures of teaching without worrying about what to teach." As new teachers build confidence and skill, they are eased into the group planning process with the rest of the team.

The district requires that a mentor teacher be a career teacher with more than three years of experience. New teachers are assigned a mentor teacher by the building principal. Ideally, mentor teachers should also be in the same grade level as the new teacher. This is usually not a challenge in Short Springs due to the lower than average teacher turnover. However, in 2018-2019, for the first time in many years, Short Springs was limited on the number of teachers who met the qualifications as there was a larger group of new teachers than usual.

Once assigned, mentor teachers are provided instructions from the Ashley School District as to the activities that should take place each month and the expectations for mentors. Mentors are asked to meet with the mentee regularly to discuss areas of need for the new teachers. This includes reviewing teacher observation and evaluation procedures, monthly district and building activities, the lesson planning process and curriculum as well as classroom management.

Sub-Theme: Teacher Voice in Faculty Meetings. A common complaint about faculty meetings in most schools is that the information conveyed in the meeting could have been shared in an email. However, Short Springs uses a completely different approach to faculty meetings by incorporating teacher voice and teacher-led discussions. To foster collaboration and solicit feedback, faculty meetings were established to be a free flow of information and ideas between teachers and administrators with teachers

suggesting topics of discussion for the meetings. As participants noted in their interviews, the faculty meeting was a time of teacher-led professional development and group discussion to solve issues within the building. Faculty meetings began with a "Good Things" session where teachers could celebrate successes staff-wide. The meetings also included teacher-led professional development and opportunity for discussion groups which were focused on topics decided upon by the teachers in the building. The Head Principal, an Assistant Principal, and a teacher facilitated the groups keeping the discussion on topic and answering questions as needed. As the meeting came to a close, suggestions and solutions for the topics of concern were presented to the faculty with follow up information added to an electronic document that would be shared throughout the building. Any further questions or suggestions could be noted on the shared document. Teacher input and voice was evidenced during the observations of faculty meetings. This supported data gathered through the interviews and additional observations that teacher opinions are valued in the daily operation of the school.

Participants regarded faculty meetings as valuable time that provided an opportunity for teacher voice. While a teacher had the opportunity to read the notes from the meeting to understand what had taken place, participants described the time as interactive. It was important to the participants to attend the meetings to be included in the discussion.

Melissa described the climate of Short Springs as collaborative and supportive. She stated that the staff supports each other, and the administrators often seek teacher input regarding daily operations of the school. While there are times that the district

central office provides the topic to be discussed at these faculty meetings, most of the time the faculty helps in crafting the topic and agenda.

Theme: Esprit de Corps and Solidarity Amongst Teachers

Esprit de Corps is defined as "the common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Translated literally from French, the phrase means spirit of the body. Esprit de corps can be compared to morale which is defined as the capacity of a group's members to maintain belief in an institution or goal, particularly in the face of opposition or hardship. The climate and culture of a particular school building is determined by the spirit of its inhabitants. The traditions that are celebrated and the day-to-day interactions amongst the staff are the driving force behind the character of a school. Some would consider the term morale to be appropriate when describing the Esprit de Corps of a building which is defined as the amount of confidence felt by a person or group of people, especially when in a dangerous or difficult situation (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Linda cited the school's Esprit de Corps has her artifact as to what makes this school different. It is the spirit of the body of the school, or the faculty and staff that inhabit it that makes Short Springs unlike any other building. Fit within the organization and group is evidenced through the esprit de corps found throughout the school.

The district mission states "to prepare all students to be self-navigating critical thinkers for life". The overall goals of the district are to focus on student achievement by creating high-performing collaborative teaching teams within safe learning and working environments. The teachers at this school live that mission. This group of teachers stays

in the profession because of the desire to make a difference in the lives of students and to be part of this bigger mission. Although in almost every school there are teachers and the expectation to collaborate, Short Springs teachers embody the district mission by remaining focused on ensuring every student receives the highest quality education. It is the school's mission that no matter what classroom a student is in, they will receive the best education possible. The theme Esprit de Corps emerged through the data in the teachers' accountability to one another.

Sub-Theme: Accountability to Teaching Teams. Accountability appeared in Short Springs in two major ways. First, accountability referred to teachers holding each other responsible for sound teaching practices. Angela indicated that teacher accountability is a defining characteristic of the building. She stated the actions of other teachers imply "do your job well or I will report you to the principal." In the beginning, she wondered if ethnicity was the cause since she is African-American but she stated she saw the same accountability measures being used with other teachers. "At first it used to bother me but then I realized that every teacher wanted to protect the quality of education that the students were receiving. I came to admire those teachers' dedication." She stated that the accountability teachers feel to one another ensures that teaching practices at Short Springs are of the highest quality and if they are not, teachers "will come together to help a teacher improve".

Another way accountability appeared at Short Springs was in the construction of grade level teams. In their interviews, both Stacey and John stressed the importance of 'fit' within a team. Both John and Stacey shared that they knew teachers at Short Springs who moved between grade levels at least once to find a better fit personally and

professionally. This practice appeared to be supported by both teachers and administration at Short Springs. This practice appeared to allow both teachers and administrators the opportunity to consider an individual's fit within the grade-level group and, therefore, encourage higher teacher retention across the school. Angela stated that teachers in the school are held accountable to one another which in turn improve the overall instructional practice within the school. Accountability is viewed in a positive light and spurs teachers to focus on student learning. "If a teacher is struggling, we go see how we can help," she said. "We are held accountable to each other and are very supportive."

The focus of accountability is not one of ensuring that teachers do their job but rather that they perform to the highest of their ability. It is not the goal that individual teachers stand out as the best but rather that of the collective body improve their overall practice. John pointed to the students as the primary focus within the school. "I'm not the best. I'll never say I'm the best but I believe I care. I certainly care about the kids. I want what is best for them." The best possible education is the focus of Short Springs teachers. Angela explained that the accountability amongst teachers placed students at the forefront serving as a guiding principle. She told of teachers who did not have "the best" procedures for working with students so a colleague would pull them aside and help them. "We retain good teachers. They stay here and they work really hard. We hold each other accountable. If someone is yelling at a kid, you don't yell at a kid. You pull them aside and let a kid keep their dignity." She stated that the person may talk to the teacher directly or go to the team and say "it sounds like someone on you team is having a difficult time. Go see what you can do to help" thereby saving the dignity of the

teacher and the student. Teaching teams within Short Springs have created an environment of vulnerability that encourages teacher growth and improvement not for the sake of the teachers but for the students that will benefit.

Sub-Theme: Social-Emotional Support for Colleagues. Teacher teams at Short Springs could be described by the Swedish proverb "divide your troubles and double your joy". Participants named instances when their team was a driving force in their continued career in the school. It was the encouragement of a supportive team that helped alleviate difficulties and to find solutions to problems as well magnified the celebrations of the members of the team. "We are held very accountable to each other and are very supportive," Angela stated. "Being a team player makes a massive difference." Support within the teams and school were also evidenced in the "Good Things" that were celebrated at the beginning of PLC and faculty meetings. The comradery of the school was demonstrated through the enthusiasm for personal and professional celebrations. Each was given equal attention and interest.

"The biggest draw for me to stay is my team" was a common sentiment among participants. Stacey stated she is afraid to leave Short Springs solely because she may not find the same support in another building. Elaine emphasized the difficulties that can be encountered because of the trauma some students experience. She indicated that it has been her team that has encouraged her through tough times and the friendships formed that have sustained her when the job became too difficult. Melissa referred to the family atmosphere of the building and despite its size, teachers are able to get to know one another and to form relationships. She spoke of personal difficulties that colleagues have experienced and the support they had received from others in the building. Linda

indicated the key to teacher retention is for people to get along. "I am not saying that you have to like everybody. There have been teachers that I have thought were not good but you have to be nice to them while they are here and you have to be supportive."

Angela and Linda cited several instances when teachers struggled with classroom management or with presenting content, and team members would step in and coach the teachers through the difficulties to success. Linda specifically described a situation where a teacher was struggling with classroom management and rather than let him flounder, teachers on his grade level team as well as other teams helped him learn strategies to improve his instructional practice. Because of the mentorship from other teachers, Linda said the teacher has grown and became an effective teacher. Accountability at Short Springs is viewed in a positive light and spurs teachers to focus on student learning. Angela echoed the sentiment that teachers in the school are held accountable to one another to improve the overall instructional practice within the school. "If a teacher is struggling, we go see how we can help," she said. "We are held accountable to each other and are very supportive."

To Melissa, teacher teams are one reason the school has experienced low teacher turnover. "You don't feel like you are in it alone," she said. "You have support so when you have that support and you build that relationship, you are less likely to leave those people that you are working with." Stacey also shared, "I know the relationships that I have formed with my teammates are a primary reason I stay." While some members of her team over the years have moved to other grade levels or other buildings, it is the continuous collaborative nature of her teaching team that keeps her in Short Springs.

Angela and Linda emphasized the importance of "going the extra mile" to help the larger school. In the prior academic year, no one made a comprehensive calendar for activities. As a result, activities were overlapping and "getting crossways". To fix the problem, one teacher created a new school-wide calendar without anyone asking her to do it. According to Linda, "We've had a lot of people like that in the building that is willing to do things outside their technical job description," she said. "I think we have fostered the willingness to go the extra mile because principals listen to teacher ideas." Angela agreed with Linda that teachers have to contribute more than just what is in their job description. In her interview, Angela indicated that teachers have to be "willing to do a little extra". It takes more than just time in a classroom to have a school run effectively. "You have to be willing to do extra duty," she said. "Whether it is breakfast duty, plan special events, or cover classes. You have to be willing to help out." Elaine referred to the camaraderie at Short Springs as a "sense of community."

> I think whenever you do come here there is a sense of family and a sense of community. We all help each other and wherever we have a weakness we pitch in and help with whatever is going on. In this type of environment, we can't really work by ourselves and for ourselves and then just go home. Once you get here you pick up on that pretty quickly that you are going to have to work together and have that family and sense of community. (Elaine, 2018)

John was the one dissenting voice regarding teaching within a team. He stressed the importance and the value in teaching teams and believes their grade level, fifth grade, sets the example for others in the building. However, he stated that their grade level does not operate in the same way as other grade levels. "My teaching partners are awesome.

Although he indicated that his team members "all get along and have the same philosophies," he described himself as "kind of the outsider of the group. They were their own little clique. Team is one (pointing to the other room), team of one (pointing to himself) is what I would say." According to John, Short Springs Elementary focuses on teaching as teams and that provides support necessary to retaining quality teachers. While he views himself as "a bit of a loner", he knows that he is a better teacher because of his team.

Stacey emphasized the importance of strong teaching teams and credited her team to her tenure at Short Springs.

> The biggest draw for me to stay here is my team. I have worked very closely with my teammates the whole time that we've been here. Some people have left, the new members have come on, but we're still very tightknit, very collaborative. Honestly, I think I am scared to leave. It's comforting to me to have friends that I work with and to collaborate with and if I moved somewhere else, I'm not sure I would find that. (Stacey, 2018)

Sub-Theme: Individual Growth through Team Collaboration. Stacey and Melissa described their teams as very collaborative in. She looks forward to the time with her teaching team because the team looks for innovative methods of instruction. According to Melissa, friendships formed with her colleagues are born out of their shared interest in these innovative instructional practices. "When things are engaging, it's easier to stay on task and it's a little more fun to come to school," she said. "Overall, there's a positive energy because everyone enjoys what they are doing." She believes it is the collaborative nature of her team that brings a positive energy to teaching. "Knowing that

you can try new things and your colleagues will bring in new ideas and you can see how it works," she said. "It's the collaboration and bringing new things that keeps the content fresh and the practice of teaching enjoyable."

To foster a collaborative approach to teaching and provide continuous support for growth, Short Springs has dedicated time in the schedule for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). PLCs at Short Springs began their sessions by discussing "Good Things" that were taking place in the teachers' lives and classroom. Good Things topics could be professional or personal in nature and included such topics as a student who had been struggling in a particular area but was making progress, a student who came into school that day without crying, and the art teacher who had cataracts removed which made colors appear brighter. Teachers in the PLCs cheered or applauded after each Good Things comment. This practice further revealed the positive relationships amongst teachers at Short Springs.

Through the use of common formative assessments developed in PLCs, teachers are able to monitor student progress and learn and grow from observing each other's practices. Elaine and Melissa described their PLC time as a time to talk about students' progress on academic standards and to examine teaching practices. Both teachers regard this time as valuable time for professional learning and collaboration. Elaine stated that it was uncomfortable to compare student test scores in the beginning because it brought the teacher's instructional practices to light. While it is placing the teacher in a vulnerable position, it is also a time to discuss best practices and a time of adult learning. "It really helps you grow as a teacher. You don't feel like you're alone when you struggle, and you don't know who to ask or what to do. I think that goes a long way in retaining

teachers," she said. Melissa stated that if a teacher does not feel they are in it alone, they are more likely to stay in a building. "When you have that support, you build relationships and are less likely to leave those people."

PLC time gives teachers the opportunity to discuss what is working in their classrooms and to find new strategies for student success. This process builds camaraderie amongst faculty members and develops a support system for teachers. While the Head Principal, one Assistant Principal, and the Instructional Coach were observed attending teacher PLCs, the administrators did not interject during discussion, but only provided resources when requested by teachers. During one PLC, the Assistant Principal projected student data on the Smart Board for all teachers to see. He did not comment on data, but rather pulled the information teachers requested. Stacey noted in her interview that the principals were mostly quiet during PLC, and the Team Lead Teacher ran the meeting.

Theme: Ample Physical and Social-Emotional Resources

Participants frequently spoke of the resources available at Short Springs. From instructional materials and technology to common procedures and wrap around services for students, all of these were factors in teacher longevity. Short Springs has implemented a number of initiatives to support students over the years that participants regard as positive steps toward retaining quality teachers. While some of these initiatives do not directly affect teachers, participants listed them as motivations for teachers to remain at Short Springs. Many of these initiatives were funded through grants and community donations. The prior administrator at Short Springs, Mr. Reid, was a prolific grant writer, and Short Springs received a number of awards for providing dinners for

students, outfitting every student with uniforms, adopting technology and installing STEM labs. Two of the largest grant funded initiatives are the Action Based Learning Labs and the 1:1 iPad initiative and makers space. Beyond instructional initiatives, Short Springs has also adopted processes and programs that support the development of the whole child. Short Springs integrates PBIS, Whole Brain Teaching, and a wealth of wrap-around services to ensure students and their families have the resources necessary to be successful.

Action Based Learning Lab in Fostering Student Engagement. According to the Kidsfit website, Action Based Learning Lab uses a series of stations and progressions that are designed to prepare the brain to receive and process information. Child size exercise equipment and obstacle courses are used to practice balance and to increase overall health and wellness promoting a healthier body and brain. Kidsfit's, creator of Action Based Learning Labs, mission is "To reach the child least likely to succeed, last in line, and lost in the system" through movement. The concept promotes kinesthetic activities that incorporate classroom content and creates a deeper pathway of learning for students. Academic content is recited while moving through a progression of exercises and equipment. Content may include such topics as skip counting, spelling words, or math facts. According to the website, Action Based Learning "is based on brain research that strongly supports the link between movement and learning". Labs are intended strengthen a student's vestibular system and special awareness. "When a student walks or crawls in specific patterns, the brain's ability to encode symbols is increased," (Action Based Learning, n.d.)

Short Springs Elementary School received grant funds to install two ABL Labs. One ABL lab is outfitted with equipment for kindergarten through second grade, and the other ABL lab is equipped for students third through fifth grade. Elliptical trainers, stairs, balance beams, and wiggle seats are just a few examples of the equipment available in the ABL lab. To ensure the ABL labs are used to the fullest extent, Short Springs employs a dedicated teacher for the labs who instructs the students as they move through a series of activities. The teacher was required to attend training that promotes the principles of Action Based Learning to understand the science behind the program and proper implementation. The teacher rotates the equipment periodically to keep the activities fresh and engaging for students, and can tailor the class's ABL Lab time to meet the needs of the students based on current learning or need for review. Each class attends the ABL lab for at least 20 minutes twice a week.

1:1 iPads Helps Increase Innovation and Engagement. In 2016, Short Springs Elementary received a $65,000 grant from an educational trust in the state. The purpose of the technology trust is to provide resources to develop technological skills for students in common schools and career technology centers and to prepare students for a global marketplace. Collaboration is an essential element of the grant implementation and must be a key component in a school's application. The grant provided $40,000 in technology for student use and $25,000 in teacher professional development. In order to receive this grant, Short Springs was required to establish that, if the grant was received, the initiative could be sustained into the future. Short Springs demonstrated this capacity by securing community partnerships, support from parent organizations, and district funds. Short Springs' implementation plans addressed integrating technology for authentic learning,

effective strategies for increasing academic performance, and participation in a professional learning community.

Short Springs Elementary has demonstrated authentic learning through the 1:1 iPad initiative. Students at Short Springs use technology for research assignments, creating movies, coding, and robotics. To supplement the iPads, the school has incorporated a Makers Space to integrate engineering and critical thinking skills. When you walk the halls of Short Springs, students can be seen around campus creating stop motion movies using Legos and student created backdrops, completing assignments through Google Classroom, and participating in classroom activities such as internet platform assessments.

Common Procedures through Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports. The school has implemented the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program to varying degrees in the past decade in order to create and sustain a positive social culture. When implemented fully, PBIS is intended to operationalize the process of school and reduce discipline issues, thereby assisting teachers with classroom management. PBIS is characterized by common procedures that enable teachers and students to anticipate expectations and teach desired behaviors through positive reinforcement. Although Short Springs does not fully implement PBIS in all aspects of the school, elements of PBIS throughout the school are still evident in the physical space. Procedure posters still hang in the hallways outlining the proper steps for waiting in line at the restroom or the water fountain. Posters can also be seen on the doors of the library, the walls of the cafeteria, and by the doors leading to the playground letting students know what is expected of them in those spaces as well as informing of the acceptable

voice levels. Lines painted on the floor throughout the building indicate where students should walk as they move through the halls.

Teacher-Led Implementation of Whole Brain Teaching. Although Short Springs still uses some of the strategies of PBIS, Whole Brain Teaching was also implemented schoolwide at Short Springs during the 2018-19 school year. Like PBIS, Whole Brain Teaching provides expectations for behavior and a common language for processes and procedure. Whole Brain Teaching also has five rules that must always be followed. These rules are:

Rule 1: Follow directions quickly.

Rule 2: Raise your hand for permission to speak.

Rule 3: Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat

Rule 4: Make smart choices

Rule 5: Keep our dear learning community happy!

Teachers using Whole Brain Teaching combine hand signals with each of these rules to assist the student in remembering the rule and its application in the shared space. Additionally, Whole Brain Teaching uses 'turn and teach' strategies by which the teacher models learning to students and students mirror the action while discussing content with a shoulder partner.

The Whole Brain Initiative is an example of a strategy that was identified by the teachers and adopted by the Short Springs administration.

The signs of Whole Brain Teaching are obvious. All of the classrooms at Short Springs have the same rules and procedures and use the same hand gestures for each.

Linda shared that she appreciated Whole Brain Teaching because it provides consistency throughout the building. Any teacher or student in the building can hold up an agreed-upon hand signal and everyone in the building understands the need or expectation. According to Linda, Whole Brain Teaching has been hugely beneficial in her special education classroom as her classes serve students from every grade and homeroom.

Of Whole Brain Teaching, John said,

> [A colleague] dabbled with [Whole Brain Teaching] in another building and continued to use it here. It kind of seeped out of his classroom and people saw how his class acted, and bit-by-bit, other teachers were asking him about the program. I would give him the credit for single-handedly changing the culture of our building because [Whole Brain Teaching] is building wide now. I have been using it with him now for two years and it has changed the way that I manage my classroom.

Wrap Around Services in Student Social-Emotional Learning. Short Springs operates much like a community school. At Short Springs, all students are provided with free uniforms, three free meals a day, and weekend food bags provided by the Regional Food Bank. Short Springs employs a Behavior Intervention Counselor to provide immediate counseling for students. A student who is experiencing challenges in the classroom can visit the behavior counselor and be coached through coping methods to turn their focus back to learning. In addition, the behavior intervention room is also used for in-school intervention enabling a student to have behavior modification counseling which may avoid a second offense for the same behavior. In addition to the Behavior Intervention Counselor, Licensed Professional Counselors are on-site each day to meet

the behavior or social-emotional needs of each student. These counselors provide real-time intervention for students that are having a behavior issues in the classroom or dealing with stressors outside of school. She said these counseling services allow students to solve problems as they encounter them and enables the students to return to a state of learning in a more expedient manner. This real-time counseling also provides students better opportunity to process behaviors as they occur and learn and provide appropriate coping skills.

Theme: Teacher Fit at Short Springs

Without a working knowledge of Person-Environment Fit Theory, the teachers in this study overwhelmingly referred to "fit" when discussing what factors influenced them to remain in the profession--fit with the profession, fit with colleagues, and fit within the organization. The concept of "fit" within the organization and teaching teams was strong throughout the study. Participants each discussed the importance of creating teaching teams that "fit" which started with the hiring process. Linda stated that teachers who "fit stay and those who fit stay and those who don't fit, leave."

Participants reported that strong relationships with colleagues increased their sense of efficacy in their job, created a sense of belonging within a group, and created an environment where teachers can be vulnerable to one another while growing and learning to improve their practice. Fit within Stacey's teaching team is her reasoning for staying at Short Springs. She described her team as "working very closely" together and being "tightknit". "Some people have left, the new members have come on, but we're still very tightknit, very collaborative." She regards her team members as the "biggest draw" to

remaining at Short Springs. Melissa credited the family atmosphere for the school's teacher longevity while Linda touted the "mission mindedness" of the staff.

> I think most of the people that stay here honestly feel like they're called to this type of work with kids like this, I think that's a big factor and the personality of service that some people have because if people don't feel that way, they'll probably leave the first year. (Linda, 2018)

To the teachers in this study, finding the right candidate was imperative in maintaining the organization. Elaine's team had three new members during the study. However, the new teachers have "fit right in and work really well together". John and Linda pointed to the hiring practices stating the interview committee "looks at fit of the candidate" as much as teaching ability. John, Angela, and Linda all spoke of being honest when discussing expectation with a potential candidate. Angela emphasized the importance of analyzing candidate "fit" throughout the interview process. "The committee has to decide with this candidate be a good fit for our building or the grade level. Otherwise, they won't stay."

Each teacher interviewed expressed the importance of a quality teaching team. "It's comforting to me to have friends that I work with and to collaborate with them," said Stacey. "I think building a team that you feel that you fit with and having leadership value your opinion as to your placement is highly important". She believes the school does an excellent job of considering the fit within a team and a teacher's desire to continue in the same grade level or to seek another position within the school. "Each year we list our top three grade levels that we want to teach and the principals will place us as best they can." Stacey commented about the importance of fit within the team. She

spoke of one situation where a teacher was not happy in another grade level but switched to her team this year and is finding greater success. "The biggest draw for me is my team," she said. "I have worked very closely with my teammates the whole time we've been here. Some people have left, the new members have come on, but we're still very tight knit, very collaborative." Stacey stated that she has considered moving to another building but was fearful that she would not find the same relationships and collaborative nature. "It's comforting to me to have friends that I work with and to collaborate with and if I moved somewhere else, I'm not sure I would find that," she said.

Research Question 3: How does Person-Environment Theory explain teachers remaining in the profession as well as in their current building?

"*Those who don't fit, leave, and those who do fit, stay. It's that simple".* (Linda, 2018).

According to Person-Environment Fit Theory, a person's satisfaction with a job is influenced by their fit with their colleagues, the organization, their supervisor, and their position. When fit is a complete match, the person finds the job fulfilling and will stay with the organization. This, in turn, benefits the overall organization. Person-Environment Fit Theory also allows for differing levels of fit in the four areas and the level of fit may change over time.

In this study, the high retention of teachers in this school building may be explained by the overall fit of the teachers within the building. Data from this study show that the teachers interviewed have strong Person-Environment Fit and the four areas of P-E Fit. All teachers reported feeling competent in their job, feeling efficacious in

their job, and appreciated the amount of professionalism provided by the building related to their job. These data show that despite being located in an urban school district with many of the challenges indicative of an urban school, Short Springs School has intentionally focused on overall fit—from hiring practices to placement to building teacher leaders. This focus on fit may explain why, despite the turnover in the larger district, teachers remain in this school site for a number of years. This finding aligns with the themes of Administrative Leadership and Person-Organization Fit within the theoretical framework.

Person-Group Fit. Participants discussed a variety of ways that Person-Environment Fit Theory is evident in their teaching teams. Stacey told of a teacher on their first grade team that taught second grade the prior year. She did not feel the overall fit that she was seeking so she moved grade levels. John stated a member of their team taught fourth grade the prior year and requested to move to fifth grade. This practice allows teachers and administrators the opportunity to consider an individual's fit within the group that could encourage higher teacher retention. Stacey discussed the fit that she has found within the group and is "afraid to leave" because she may not find the same fit in another team or another building. She said, "It's comforting to me to have friends that I work with and to collaborate with and if I moved somewhere else, I'm not sure I would fine that." Elaine stated that the new teachers on her team "have fit right in" and work well together. She stated that her team shares teaching practices and compares student achievement. While it was uncomfortable in the beginning, she stated that it has brought their team together as a collaborative group. This finding aligns with the themes of

Individual Teacher Growth through Team Collaboration and Person-Group Fit within the theoretical framework.

Each participant spoke of the importance of "fit" during the interview process. John stated that the concept of fit began in hiring the "right person for the team." Stacey and Elaine spoke from personal experience of serving on the hiring committee. When the hiring committee is interviewing potential candidates, committee members seek people who fit within the school and teaching team. Elaine also expressed the importance of "fit" within a building or district. When a new teacher is needed, teachers from the grade level are invited to participate in the interview process. The interview committee is comprised of members of the potential grade level as well as administration. "If we are interviewing someone for fifth grade, we could have our whole fifth grade team on an interview team," she said. "We get to know the person a little bit and determine if they will be a fit in our team." This finding aligns with the themes of Teacher Voice in Hiring and Interview Practices.

Person-Organization Fit. Participants also reported high Person-Organization Fit expressing that the values of the school are shared among all teachers and achievement and helping others are at the center of the school vision and mission. This school's climate and culture have created a sense of belonging that supports new teachers, allows current teachers to be innovative and try new things, encourages continued growth, and provides them with the resources necessary to successfully teach in their environment. When Stacey, Elaine, or Melissa's team has a new teacher, they do not give them planning duties that allow the new teacher to focus on teaching. This level of support is important to them because it allows the new teacher to focus solely on

practice and learn the planning process when they are ready. The support provided through Responsive New Teacher Mentoring and team collaboration was evidenced in the Person-Organization Fit Scale in the category of Helping Others.

John described Mr. Reid as "an excellent recruiter" who would hire individuals that completed their student teaching in the building. Pre-service teaching programs allow teacher teams to bond with the student teacher and help train them in the culture and climate of the building. "Mr. Reid would get the student teacher to buy into the school and help them find a fit within the building." According to Linda, the most important characteristic in a school to help foster teacher longevity is to simply "get along with each other. Teachers do not have to be friends, necessarily," she said, "but they do have to be kind to one another and support each other." She stated that creating teacher teams where individuals can work collaboratively and operate with same approach helps to find comfort and fit with a grade level. She stated that the teachers within the building do not ignore a problem and let it get worse. "They address them honestly and try to figure out what is wrong and rectify it. I feel very supported and appreciated."

Person-Supervisor Fit. Participants attribute low teacher turnover to a number of factors. However, each pointed to the support provided by the previous administrator Mr. Reid. Four of the six participants worked for administrators prior to Mr. Reid but it was his policies and procedures that stood out as a primary factor for low teacher retention. Stacey stated that he was "our biggest champion," and that he was respectful of teachers' time while John described him as a "dynamic leader" and that "he had vision for the school." Despite Mr. Reid's "very authoritarian" manner, John said, "he worked

tirelessly" to support the teachers and students. By Elaine's account, "Mr. Reid was very open in our faculty meetings. If there was an issue, he would create a committee to solve the problem or address it in faculty meetings." Stacey appreciated the manner in which Mr. Reid included teachers in solving school-wide issues, and he understood the stress and pressure teachers were under. "Like checking on me and asking if there was anything I needed. He was truly interested in knowing what teachers needed to help them feel successful and supported."

Angela stated that during her time in the school, she has always felt supported by the principal. She said when there are difficulties with a student's behavior the principals will arrange a meeting with the parents to find the root of the problem. "Not that we are trying to blame anyone," she said, "but they will try to fix the root of the problem." She stated that the principals that she has worked with try to understand situations and do what they can to find a solution. "They ask what they can do to help and what I need. I appreciate that. They try to understand the underlying issue so they can support me."

Linda and John attribute the change in the culture of the building the past two years to the new administration. "We had quite a few teachers that I liked that left last year. That has changed the climate of the building. Any time you have a lot of new teachers it is difficult to get your footing as a staff," she said. In general, the staff is supportive of one another and that the building will eventually return to its previous state. She indicated that the new administration has not changed procedures significantly and has kept processes such as faculty meetings the same. John mentioned specific teachers that were no longer at Short Springs Elementary, which included the school's teacher of

the year. This finding aligns with the themes of Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative Leadership and Person-Supervisor Fit within the theoretical framework.

Person-Vocation Fit. While the job is not always an easy one, each teacher cited examples of intrinsic or extrinsic motivations for becoming a teacher and why that they regard the profession as a calling. Each told stories of students that had impacted them and the hope that the students' experience in school had guided them in a positive direction. Participants feel called to serve in the school much as one is called to mission work. Linda stated that teachers at Short Springs "are mission-minded or service oriented and feel drawn to this type of work".

John chose to be in a high-poverty school when he began his career. He stated that he stated he could have been successful in any school but he "wanted to go to the school with the greatest need. I've never worked harder in my life but I've never felt that I've been doing something more worthwhile than being here." Elaine stated that it can be difficult to remain in a high-needs school. "You kind of take on some of the trauma and those things that they [students] go through but you also know that that's basically why they come to school. You are their constant."

Linda said she loves literature and stated reading can change people's lives. "If they learn to read and can read well, they can do anything. They can go on in school. They can get better jobs. They can raise themselves out of poverty if they have the desire." Each participant spoke of the challenges teachers face on a daily basis. Angela described the role of a teacher as one that is all encompassing.

> You have to be it all. I heard a teacher one day say "I've been a doctor, a counselor, a lawyer," they said. "Yep, I did it all today." In a school, like this it

> takes everybody to do their part. You need to understand that you are going to be a little bit more than a teacher. (Angela, 2018)

However, she stated she is making a difference for children and it is worth the additional effort.

Participants indicated that they have a strong fit for the vocation of teaching. While Stacey and Elaine had considered other career paths early on and despite John stating that he rejected the concept of teaching when the subject was first presented, each participant stated that they have a natural affinity for teaching. Melissa, Angela, and Linda never considered another path and along with Elaine, pretended to be teachers as children. Participants cited examples of why they became teachers believing they have been called to the profession. Stacey sought a career that was "life-giving" and did not feel like work to her. While she described the profession as "hard and stressful and overwhelming", she also stated that it is "life-giving," "rewarding" and "time well spent". John stated that teachers stay at Short Springs or in the profession because of "something personal and something intrinsic I think that would drive 'why anyone would want to stay in this profession'". This finding aligns with the themes of to make a difference and to be part of something bigger and Person-Job Fit within the theoretical framework.

Summary

In order ascertain what factors contribute to the high teacher retention rates that have existed in Short Springs school, I conducted a case study to examine from the perspective of the teachers what has influenced them to remain in the profession and in their current building. Chapter V answered the research questions through the themes that emerged from the data to form major findings of this study including description of

artifacts provided by the participants, and the major themes that emerged from the data analysis, and support from survey results. When data were triangulated, the findings for Research Question 1 were supported by the survey results indicating that teachers feel a strong fit for the job as well as Research Question 2 indicating why the teachers remain in the building. The highest rating fell within the area of match between the individual's professional skills, knowledge, and abilities and those required by the job. Teachers also scored high in the area of match between the characteristics of the individual's interests for their current job regarding autonomy, importance, skill variety and the desire for a job. This supports the theme that teachers experience autonomy and agency within their current job. The reasons teachers stayed in this building included Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative Leadership was broken down into the sub-themes of Teacher-Led and Job-Embedded Professional Development, Responsive New Teacher Mentoring, and Teacher Voice in Interview and Hiring Practices. Chapter VI discusses the findings will be discussed, conclusions will be drawn, and suggestions for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016), an estimated 8% of teachers leave the profession every year, and an additional undocumented percentage of "movers" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017) transition between districts or schools. Data show teacher turnover, even mobility within the profession, negatively impacts student outcomes and disproportionally effects high-needs schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018). Trends indicate the turnover rate and the subsequent teacher shortage is likely to worsen in coming years (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

There is an existing body of research focused on why these teachers leave but little research stating why they stay. Factors such as increasing workload, low pay, lack of administrative leadership, and working conditions have all been found to be key variables that determine whether a teacher remains in the profession (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Hong, 2012; Day & Gu, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Kersaint, Lewis, Potter, & Meisels, 2007; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007). However, despite the national trends, a number of teachers do persist, become veteran teachers, and "do the best they can for the students they teach under changed and challenging circumstances" (Day & Gu, 2009, p. 1303).

This case study was conducted in a school in a Midwestern state to gain a better understanding of what school factors lead to higher teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district while other schools in the same district experience high teacher turnover. The focus was to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, what factors have influenced them to stay in their current building.

Research Questions

This study examines the experiences of teachers in an urban school focusing on the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in this building about the factors that influenced them to remain in the teaching profession?
2. What factors have influenced teachers to remain in their current building?
3. How does Person-Environment Theory explain teachers remaining in the profession as well as in their current building?

Discussion

Teachers regard the education profession as a calling that requires a commitment and a high level of enthusiasm (Farkas et al., 2000). An individual may hold education in high regard believing that it is their opportunity to be a part of something larger than themselves allowing them to contribute to the good of society (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Brunetti, 2006; Kyriacou & Kunc, 2007).

Person-Environment Fit Theory is a personal satisfaction theory that takes into consideration a person's interests, abilities, and needs and matches those elements to that of the employer, organization, or another individual. If there is fit or congruence between

the employee and the work environment, the employee and the organization are more likely to be satisfied (Caplan, 1987; Rehfuss, Gambrell, & Meyer, 2011). Person-Environment Fit Theory can be broken in to a variety of levels to examine how individuals and the organization interact. These levels include Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit (Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). The results of the Perceived Person-Environment Fit survey and the major themes that emerged through data analysis are organized by level of fit: Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation Fit.

Person-Group Fit

The teachers in this study reported a high level of match with their colleagues and credit their team with their longevity in the building. Each teacher interviewed cited instances when their team was a driving force in their continued career in the school and the profession. For example, Stacey stated the "biggest draw for her to stay" is her team. She has considered moving to another school but she is "scared to leave" because she may not find the same level of connection in another building. Participants also discussed the difficulties that are inherent in teaching, but stated that a supportive team helps to alleviate those difficulties and to assist in finding solutions to the problems. Angela and Linda spoke of instances when teachers were struggling with content and colleagues came together to identify the difficulty and find a solution to the problem. Stacey and Linda provided examples of teachers who did not fit within their teaching team and the difficulties that can arise.

Person-Group Fit was demonstrated through the theme **Esprit de Corps and Solidarity**. This theme also supports the concept of Person-Organization Fit since it is

the overall mission of the school that binds the faculty as a whole. The sub-theme **Accountability to Teacher Teams** and **Individual Growth through Team Collaboration** demonstrate the group's focus on the mission of Short Springs of providing outstanding education to every student. Accountability and collaboration to the team and mission are facilitated through the PLC, the mentoring programs and the professional development that are tailored to teacher needs. Accountability as pointed out by Linda and Angela is a positive term. Though survey respondents provided some answers that were lower on the ratings scale, interviews and observations indicated collaboration, accountability, and support were all highly valued by teachers in Short Springs. Teachers saw their teams and the results of their collaborative work as integral to their own individual growth as teachers. The school's mission of providing high-quality education to every student was paramount to individual teacher growth. Teachers did not focus on being the best teacher in the building but rather focused on the collective growth of the teacher teams and the faculty as a whole which was the key to fulfill the school's mission.

The culture of Short Springs Elementary is steeped in collaboration with each participant discussing its value and the role it plays in their instruction and daily operation of the building. Creating safe spaces to be vulnerable within teacher teams was evident through the PLC process. Teachers turned to their team members to improve teaching practices. Linda described the staff as "supportive of each other" stating that the building is "not a place where if you are having a problem you have to hide in your room and feel ashamed. You can come out and say 'what I'm doing isn't working. What do you guys think I could do?'" She stated that the building had a history of solving any

problem that may arise. The most obvious evidence of teacher collaboration is PLCs. Teachers at Short Springs meet together as a grade-level team at least once a week. My observation of PLCs showed that teachers used this time to focus on student data, develop common assessments, discuss best practices, and talk through teaching strategies. Elaine compared the process of examining student data to comparing the quality of someone's teaching skills. "You aren't just looking at how well kids did on an assessment," she said. "You're looking at how well I taught it. That can be very uncomfortable."

Fit within the group was at the forefront of all hiring practices in the building, and teachers were intentionally hired to fit within the school and the teams. This hiring structure allowed teachers to have agency in determining their teams to perpetuate the culture necessary for teachers to feel supported and remain in the profession. This supports the sub-theme **Teacher Voice in Interviewing and Hiring Practices**.

Person-Organization Fit

Linda stated that when there are teachers who do not fit within an organization, it is "almost assured that the person will leave". If a person does not have the same philosophies of teaching or does not want to operate within the parameters of the job, they will not stay. "Those who don't fit, leave and those who do fit, stay," she said. "It's that simple." John referred to the organization fit required as "coming in with your boots laced up tight" and stated that during his tenure in the school, there have been teachers who quit shortly after the school year began. Melissa stated that some new teachers are surprised "at how rough some of the students' home lives can be and how much trauma kids' experience." Each of the participants discussed the importance of hiring individuals

who are prepared for the challenges that can be found in the school and stated that teacher resilience may be the element missing from those who do not remain in the building.

Melissa described being a teacher as intense and daunting but the community spirit within the school made the job enjoyable. Linda referred to the common spirit of positive regard that exists among the group when stating her artifact was the organization's *esprit de corps*. It is the devotion and regard that teachers have for the overall school environment that keeps teachers coming back.

Participants reported high Person-Organization Fit expressing that the values of the school are shared among all teachers and achievement and helping others are at the center of the school vision and mission. This supports the theme **Esprit de Corps and Solidarity**. The emphasis Short Springs placed on support for teachers and students, providing an opportunity for teacher voice, and the hiring practices in place at the school were all important themes identified through Person-Organization Fit.

While mission and vision were not expressly discussed, each participant described the prevalent reason for teacher longevity is the mission-mindedness of the staff and their personal desires to make a difference. This supports the **theme To Make a Difference** and **To Be Part of Something Bigger**. Supports in place at Short Springs are beneficial to teachers and students alike. The school provides wrap around services for students which include free uniforms, free meals for extended school day, and accessible counseling services. This is evidenced in the theme **Ample Physical and Social-Emotional Resources**. Additionally, support for teachers is evidenced through PLCs, site-level teacher mentoring, and school-wide initiatives designed to formalize processes and procedures. The school's climate and culture have created a sense of

belonging that supports new teachers, allows current teachers to be innovative and try new things, encourages continued growth, and provides them with the resources necessary to successfully teach in their environment. In addition to the numerous supports for teachers and students, the importance of teacher voice was prevalent throughout interviews and observations. Teacher-led initiatives were established within the culture of the building. These data support the sub-themes **Responsive New Teacher Mentoring** and **Teacher-Led, Job-Embedded Professional Development under Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative Support** as well as sub-themes **Social-Emotional Support for Colleagues under Esprit de Corps**.

Participants indicated that they believe teacher input is a factor for remaining within the organization. Each of them pointed to opportunities the school's administration provides which encourages teacher input such as solving building-level issues in faculty meetings, for teacher placement, and for professional development. This approach gives teachers the opportunity to take ownership in the school and conveys to the staff that their opinions matter.

Person-Organization Fit at Short Springs was demonstrated through overall teacher support from administration and colleagues, alignment of values and beliefs between the school and the staff, availability of resources provided to teachers to ease the burden of teaching and enable instruction to be more engaging, and the use of teacher voice in a multitude of areas within the school. These elements within Short Springs increased participants overall fit within the organization.

Person-Supervisor Fit at Short Springs

Person-Supervisor Fit examines the relationship between the employee and the supervisor (Rehfuss et al., 2012; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015). Participants demonstrated the importance of supervisor fit citing several examples of when the fit was good and when it was not. One administrator stood out to them as an individual who "worked tirelessly for the school". Each told of resources acquired through grant funds and community partnerships cultivated to improve school programs. He was described as a dynamic leader and as someone who protected the teachers from unnecessary mandates. Stacey praised the vision he had for the school and stated that he was the school's "biggest champion". When he began his tenure, he set high expectations for teacher behavior as well as students. "He came in very authoritarian and told us his non-negotiables right off the bat," said John. "I thought 'wow, this is going to be rough!' But he worked tirelessly for our school. He was a phenomenal leader!"

A new principal, Mrs. Parker, was named in the 2017-18 school year. She had not completely gained the teachers' trust during the time of this study. Participants named highly effective teachers who left the building because, as John stated, they "did not believe Mrs. Parker would assume the same role as the previous principal." While Mrs. Parker has tried to establish the same open communication style of the previous administration, participants indicated that it has not been as effective. Stacey stated that the new administration did not have a clear behavior plan in place their first year and the "building was chaotic". The lack of trust is further evidenced in the Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale completed by certified teachers. Ratings on the scale were the lowest in the area of Person-Supervisor Fit. These scores indicate that teachers do not

have a high fit with the current administration. Linda indicated that the new administration has adopted the school's faculty-led style of faculty meetings but that they are "not as effective" as they had been in the past.

The results of this study in regards to administrator leadership are interesting because Person-Supervisor Fit was described in two ways—fit with the previous administration and fit with the current administration. It was evident from data collection that the teachers in this study felt respected and supported by the previous principal. His name and actions were shared more often than the names and actions of the current administration. According to teachers, the autonomy and agency instilled in Short Springs by the previous principal was integral to their decision to remain in the building. In fact, when the previous principal left Short Springs for a job in a neighboring district, the teacher turnover rate was the highest it had been in years. The survey results for this study, however, reflected the fit with the current administration. According to the survey respondents, these teachers are not as highly matched with this new principal. This mismatch was also evident in interviews and observation. In fact, one teacher interviewed for this study admitted that she was going to leave Short Springs "if things didn't get better."

Through discussion of the two different leaders at Short Springs, the theme **Teacher Autonomy and Agency within Administrative** Leadership emerged. This is evidenced in the **Teacher-Led, Job-Embedded Professional Development, Teacher Voice in Interviewing and Hiring, Responsive New Teacher Mentoring**, and **Teacher Voice in Faculty Meetings**.

Person-Vocation Fit at Short Springs

Person-Vocation or Job Fit considers how the individual feels about the job for which they have been hired. The tasks required must match an individual's abilities and they must feel they are being properly compensated for the effort. If the skills required and compensation do not meet with the individual's expectations, there will be discord and the individual may become dissatisfied and seek employment elsewhere (Caplan, 1987; Su, Murdoch, & Rounds, 2015).

Linda described the staff as "mission minded" and stated that overall, they are "looking to make an impact in the life of a child." The teachers in this study shared personal stories of their path to teaching that involved a strong desire to help others and make a difference. This is evidenced through the themes **To Make a Difference and To Be Part of Something Bigger**.

In this study, all participants described strong Person-Vocation Fit, which aligned with the survey respondents' answers. Each interview participant cited personal and often emotional reasons for entering and remaining in the profession and for remaining in their current building. The vocation of teaching appears to align with the needs of these participants as well as the abilities and skills they bring to the job. All participants indicated an aptitude and interest in the field of education, and all expressed they have found satisfaction in their work. As John stated it, "It is something personal and something intrinsic I think that would drive why anyone would want to stay in this profession". Stacey described the vocation of teaching as "hard and stressful and overwhelming" but she does the job that is required because the feeling of

accomplishment offsets the negative elements of the job. She also used words such as "life giving," "rewarding" and "time well spent" to describe the vocation of teaching.

Overall, participants emphasized the importance of Person-Vocation Fit in order for a teacher to stay in the profession and in the building. John described it as coming "in with your boots laced up tight" while Linda spoke of teachers who quit after two weeks on the job. There was an overwhelming feeling amongst the participants that people who stay in the vocation of teaching do so because they feel they are called to teach and because they want to be a part of something that is bigger.

Participants in this study find value in the job they do despite the effort that is required. Stacey said the work does not "feel purposeless" to her and is willing to put forth the extra effort that is required. Elaine described the exhaustion she experiences at the end of the day but she stated that she has never questioned her "passion for teaching." While each participant spoke of the challenges of teaching at Short Springs, they also described the personal satisfaction they received for their time in the school.

As indicated in research question one, all the teachers in this study reported having a strong "fit" with the teaching profession and the answers to the Person-Job Fit Scale were at the highest level of the survey. Additionally, all teachers had a strong emotional relationship with teaching as evidenced in their artifacts and in their personal stories. However, these teachers were also teaching within a district that had, on average, high teacher turnover and were teaching in a school that faced the same challenges as most urban elementary schools. This study illuminated several factors that influenced these teachers' decision to not only stay in teaching, but remain in this building for a number of years.

Conclusions

Through interviews, observations, artifacts, and the results of a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale, teachers have identified from their perspective what school factors lead to higher teacher retention rates in their building. The school is located in a large, urban district and has historically had high teacher retention despite challenges that may be present. Through teacher interviews and observations, some insight has been gained as to what the participants regard as factors that have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building.

Conclusion 1

In this study, making a difference and being connected to something bigger was important to participants. This is evidenced in the participants' words used to describe the work as a teacher, "life giving," "rewarding" and "time well spent". While the job is not always an easy one, motivations such as impacting the life of a child, doing their part for society, and feeling their time is well spent were some of the reasons teachers in this study gave for choosing education as a career path and remaining in the profession for a number of years. For instance, John purposefully chose to work in a high-poverty school when he began his teaching career. In his interview, he stated he could have been successful in any school but he "wanted to go to the school with the greatest need." Of his teaching career, John said, "I've never worked harder in my life but I've never felt that I've been doing something more worthwhile than being here." Linda referred to the teachers at Short Springs as "mission-minded or service oriented and feel drawn to this type of work". In the interviews, teachers with longevity were described as individuals

who were not in the school merely for a paycheck and were truly there to make an impact on students' lives.

Conclusion 2

In this study, connectedness to a common cause and accountability through strong teaching teams are integral to teacher retention on this campus. This is evidenced in through the Esprit de Corps and Solidarity that is evident in this school. Accountability is demonstrated through the continued teacher growth born out of collaboration and responsive mentor. Professional development is tailored to the individual needs of teachers with the intent of strengthen the group as a whole. This is evidenced in the Teacher-Led Professional Development of Whole Brain Teaching. Such statements such as "my team is the biggest draw for me" and "I am scared to leave because I might not find this at other schools" support the connectedness within teaching teams and the camaraderie that is exists within the school. While all teachers in this study felt a strong connection to the profession, they also expressed the challenges of teaching. Teacher teams, then, are a way for the teachers in this study to face these challenges and to provide Social-Emotional Support for teachers. As Melissa stated, she looks forward to plan time with her teammates because they share innovative ideas for teaching. Melissa appreciates these times "because you don't feel like you are in it alone." Additionally, these teams provide much needed personal support for a demanding profession. Elaine stated that her team members encourage her during difficult times. Stacey describes her team as "collaborative" and "tight-knit". This conclusion supports the literature indicating that when teachers are provided dedicated

time for collaboration, teachers are more likely to remain in the same building (Boyd et al., 2011; Day & Gu, 2009; Haar, 2007).

Conclusion 3

In this study, leadership was important to these teachers. Administrative leadership manifested in this study as providing Autonomy and Agency for teachers, championing education and educators, and adopting good hiring practices. Teacher voice was vital to participants. Participants in this study sought open communication with administration and valued having a voice in building-level decisions. Each described various methods current and prior administrators used to elicit teacher voice and involve teachers in decision making such as faculty-driven initiatives, open door policies for discussing policies and procedures, and the opportunity to move to another grade level to seek a better fit within an individual's team or subject area.

Participants in this study indicated that they stayed at Short Springs Elementary School because they found fit with the current position in the current context. However, all participants expressed wariness of the new administration and one teacher admitted to considering leaving Short Springs. In fact, after the leadership change in 2017-2018, Short Springs saw a higher than normal teacher turnover rate. These data indicate that leadership is important to a teacher's decision to remain in the building as the leader has the perceived authority to change structures in place that encourage or inhibit 'fit.' If a teacher perceives that their 'fit' is impacted by a change of leader, they will seek another context regardless of the perceived benefits of teaching within that building.

Implications

This case study reveals perceptions of teachers in one school regarding what strategies should be put in place to retain high quality teachers. Participants were forthcoming regarding their reasons for remaining in their current building and their profession. Despite the challenges the teachers in the building face such as large class sizes and negative student behaviors, this building historically retains high quality teachers. In addition to implications for practice, recommendations for further research exploring perceptions of teachers should be conducted. Person-Environment Fit Theory should be further examined on a broader scale allowing the results to be more generalizable to the education profession.

Implications for Practice

Findings from this study indicate that, in order to increase teacher retention, these administrators ensured that teachers were provided ample time for Teacher Collaboration and to foster positive relationships within their team. PLC provided the time to compare instructional practices and to monitor student achievement. Common plan times provided opportunities for teachers to collaborate on instructional practices and lesson planning as well as spending essential time with mentor teachers. While findings from this study are not generalizable, findings from this study emphasized the importance of hiring practices and interview procedures that include teacher representatives. This practice allowed teacher teams the opportunity to interact with candidates and determine the potential for fit within the grade level and building. Administrators in this school provided autonomy and agency to teachers through PLC, faculty meetings, and teacher-led professional development. The hiring protocol included teacher input as an integral

part of the hiring process. Teachers were active committee members seeking candidates with the right "fit" for the organization and grade level. Participants emphasized the importance of open communication as well as having input in decisions within the school. Theses teachers were given the opportunity to teach a grade level or subject matter where they felt comfortable or to move to a position they believe would provide a better fit. While not generalizable, these findings may be transferrable to districts and schools with similar contexts and demographics.

Implications for Research

Research should be conducted regarding the Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale to further the conversation regarding fit within an organization and group as it relates to the field of education. Research could be conducted on a larger scale to allow the results to be more generalizable. Though this qualitative case study revealed areas of concern and interest for teachers, the study itself is limited to the opinions and beliefs of the participants within the study. It is the responsibility of the reader to interpret the findings of this case to their own contexts. As John stated in regards to the school culture and why teachers remain in the building, "you would have to ask that question of each individual person to really understand why they stay." This study could have been enhanced through greater participation of the Perceive Person-Environment Fit Scale. If more individuals had participated, the scale could have provided a more comprehensive look at the school as a whole and could have provided clearer data. Since only 8 surveys were completed, the results cannot provide any clear conclusion as to the overall perceptions of the faculty's fit within the school.

Implications for Theory

In this study, Person-Environment Fit Theory was applied to each area of findings to determine teacher perceptions of fit within each element. Applying Person-Environment Fit Theory to the educational setting provided some insight regarding teacher desire to remain in the profession and in their current school building. This finding is important because many schools in Oklahoma are experiencing extreme teacher shortages. Applying Person-Environment Fit Theory provides a perspective to examine current teacher retention rates. For future studies, questions such as a teacher's perception of fit within the district overall, the school, and grade-level teams could provide valuable information to the profession. This would also further research regarding Person-Group Fit, Person-Organization Fit, Person-Supervisor Fit, and Person-Vocation and how individual's perceptions factor into the teacher's intent to remain in the building and profession. This study revealed a number of areas that are important to teachers and their intent to remain in a building. If such topics as opportunities for teacher/team collaboration, supportive or visionary administrative leadership, job-embedded professional development, and responsive mentor teacher programs were studied extensively, more specific information could be provided to increase retention of high-quality teachers.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of veteran teachers as to what school factors have influenced them to remain in the education profession and the same building for a length of time. Data collected was analyzed through the lens of Person-Environment Fit Theory. The research design was driven by the research

questions. A case study was employed since it enables the researcher to examine a bounded system and to provide an in-depth look at a particular school that historically has had high teacher retention rates. This method afforded me the opportunity to observe the participants directly which supported the information gathered through the interview process. Information regarding the purpose of the study was presented in Chapter I. Research questions were presented in Chapter I as well the significance of the study, the limitations of the study and the definitions of terms.

Chapter II presented a discussion of the literature indicating the low retention rates for a majority of schools nationally. A vast majority of teachers leave the professional within the first five years of service. Chapter II also discussed the theoretical framework and the history of Person-Environment Fit Theory. The theory originated with the work of Kurt Lewin in 1936 in *Principles of Topological Psychology*. He stated that a person's satisfaction in any given situation could not be determined without also considering the environment (Lewin, 1936).

Chapter III discussed the methodology for the study and the research design. This chapter describes the case study process and the data that will be gathered. Interviews with six participants were conducted in an urban school in a Midwestern state. Observations were conducted during Professional Learning Community and faculty meeting times as well as general interactions within the school. Artifacts were provided by participants representing the element of the school that they believe influences high teacher retention. A Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale was completed by eight certified teachers indicating their perceived fit within the school.

Chapter IV consisted of a presentation of data as well a description of the district and school contexts. Participant profiles were presented providing a brief background on each individual. A presentation of survey data was provided as a means of triangulating data.

In Chapter V, themes were presented as well as the participants' path to teaching which provided more in-depth description of each of the participants. This was relevant to the study because it provided a more complete picture of the data collected. Artifacts provided by each of the participants were presented as well as a discussion of the data analysis process that was used. Participants indicated that from their perspective the factors which influence teachers to remain in the profession and their current building are making a difference, being part of something bigger, teacher autonomy and agency through administrative leadership, esprit de corps and solidarity, having ample physical and social-emotion resources, and fit.

Chapter VI presented answers to the research questions, the discussion, conclusions, and recommendations for future research. Key factors which influence teachers to remain in the profession and to remain in the same building were discussed. Making a difference and connectedness to something larger is vital to these teachers. Through collaboration, mentoring and onboarding programs, teachers are provided support that eases the burden of teaching. Collaboration with colleagues and strong teaching teams is integral to teacher retention. Leadership matters. Administrative leadership manifested in this study as providing autonomy and agency, championing education and educators, and adopting good hiring practices. Hiring practices were seen

as an important factor in school culture and teacher retention. Finally, the chapter presented implications for practice and future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale (PPEFS)

Please indicate the number of years that you have worked in this building:

1-2 3-5 6-8 9-11 more than 11

Please indicate the total number of years as a classroom teacher

1-2 3-5 6-8 9-1 more than 11

Please indicate the demographic with which you most closely identify

☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ Black ☐ Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native

Gender
☐ Male
☐ Female

Table 13. Demographics of Survey Respondents

Demographics	Number Respondents	Percentage
Black	2	18.18%
Hispanic	3	27.27%
White	6	54.55%
Male	2	18.18%
Female	9	81.82%
Years in Building	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1-2 Years	2	18.18%
3-5 Years	2	18.18%
6-8 Years	4	36.36%
9-11 Years	1	9.09%
More Than 11 Years	2	18.18%
Years in Profession	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1-2 Years	1	9.09%
3-5 Years	3	27.27%
6-8 Years	4	36.36%
9-11 Years	1	9.09%
More Than 11 Years	2	18.18%

Person–Group Fit Scale (PGFS)

Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception of the match between your emphasis and the emphasis of others with whom you work on the following values

1. Honesty

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

2. Achievement

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

3. Fairness

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

4. Helping Others

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 14. Person-Group Fit Scale

		1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
5.	**Honesty**	0	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%
6.	**Achievement**	0	0	0	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%
7.	**Fairness**	0	0	0	2 25.00%	0	4 50.00%	2 25.00%
8.	**Helping Others**	0	0	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	0	1 12.50%%	5 62.50%

PGFS-Goals

Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception of the match between your goals and the goals of others with whom you work on the following dimensions

5. Reward

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

6. The Amount of Effort Expected

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

7. Competition with Other Groups

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 15. Person-Group Fit Scale Goals

		1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
4.	**Reward**	0	0	0	3 37.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%
5.	**The Amount of Effort Expected**	0	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%
6.	**Competition with other Organizations**	0	0	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	2 25.00%

PGFS-Attributes

Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception of the match between you and others with whom you work on the following characteristics

8. Personality

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

9. Work Style

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

10. Lifestyle

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 16. Person-Group Fit Scale Attributes

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
4. Personality	0	0	0	2 25.00%	4 50.00%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%
5. Work Style	0	0	0	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	2 25.000%	2 25.00%
6. Lifestyle	0	0	0	5 62.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%

Person–Organization Fit Scale (POFS)

Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception of the match between your emphasis and your school's emphasis on the following values

1. Honesty

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

2. Achievement

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

3. Fairness

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

4. Helping Others

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 17. Person-Organization Fit Scale

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
5. Honesty	0	0	0	0	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	4 50.00%
6. Achievement	0	0	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	3 37.50%
7. Fairness	0	0	0	0	2 22.22%	4 44.44%	3 33.33%
8. Helping Others	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

POFS-Goals

Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception of the match between your goals and your school's goals on the following dimensions

5. Reward

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

6. The Amount of Effort Expected

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

7. Competition with other Organization's

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 18. Person-Organization Fit Scale Goals

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
4. Reward	0	0	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%
5. The Amount of Effort Expected	0	0	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	3 37.50%
6. Competition with other Organizations	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

Person–Supervisor Fit Scale (PSFS)
Please choose the number below that most closely indicates your perception regarding the teaching position you currently hold.

1. The match between the things you value in life and the things your supervisor values
Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

2. The match between your personality and your supervisor's personality
Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

3. The match between your work style and your supervisor's work style
Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

4. The match between your lifestyle and your supervisor's lifestyle
Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

5. The match between your supervisor's leadership style and the leadership style you desire
Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 19. Person-Supervisor Fit Scale

	1-Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7-Complete Match
6. The match between the things you value in life and the things your supervisor values.	0	0	0	2 25.00%	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%
7. The match between your personality and your supervisor's personality.	0	0	2 25.00%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	2 25.00%	1 12.50%
8. The match between your work style and your supervisor's work style.	0	0	2 25.00%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%

9. The match your lifestyle and your supervisor's lifestyle.	0	0	2 25.00%	3 37.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	1 12.50%
10. **The match between your supervisor's leadership style and the leadership style you desire.**	1 12.50%	1 12.50%	0	1 12.50%	0	4 50.00%	1 12.50%

Person–Job Fit Scale (PJFS)

For the following questions, please select the response that most closely indicates your perception regarding the teaching position that you currently hold.

1. The match between your professional skills, knowledge, and abilities and those required by the job

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

2. The match between your personality traits (e.g. extrovert vs. introvert, agreeable vs. disagreeable, and dependable vs. undependable) and those required by the job

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

3. The match between your interests (e.g. social vs. unsocial, artistic vs. inartistic, and conventional vs. unconventional) and those you desire for a job

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

4. The match between the characteristics of your current job (e.g. autonomy, importance, and skill variety) and those you desire for a job

Does Not Match 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Complete Match

Table 20. Person-Job Fit Scale

	1- Does Not Match	2	3	4	5	6	7- Complete Match
5. The match between your professional skills, knowledge, and abilities and those required by the job.	0	0	0	0	1 9.09%	4 44.44%	4 44.44%
6. The match between your personality traits e.g. extrovert vs. introvert, agreeable vs. disagreeable, dependable vs. undependable) and those required by the job.	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%
7. The match between your interests (e.g. social vs. unsocial, artistic vs. inartistic, conventional vs. unconventional) and those you desire for a job.	0	0	0	0	2 22.22%	4 44.44%	3 33.33%
8. The match between the characteristics of your current job (e.g. autonomy, importance, skill variety and those you desire for a job.	0	0	0	0	3 33.33%	3 33.33%	3 33.33%

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROJECT TITLE: PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT THEORY APPROACH TO TEACHER RETENTION

INVESTIGATORS:
Vicki Nighswonger
School of Educational Studies
College of Education
Oklahoma State University
vicki.nighswonger@okstate.edu

PURPOSE:
The purpose of this case study is to gain a better understanding of school factors that lead to high teacher retention rates within a building in a large, urban district while other schools in the same district experience comparatively higher teacher turnover. The focus will be to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, what factors have influenced their choice to remain in the profession and, specifically, factors that have influenced them to stay in their current building.

PROCEDURES
Teachers will be asked to, first, complete a Perceived Person-Environment Fit Scale. This scale will be sent via email, and participants will have the opportunity to complete the survey via Qualtrics, if they agree to participate. Six teachers will be invited to participate in individual, separate interviews. Selected teachers will be asked to participate in one, hour-long interview. Times and locations of these interviews will be based upon teacher convenience. Interviews will be audio recorded so that researchers can remember participant responses to questions. Teacher observations will be conducted on an ongoing basis during Professional Learning Community sessions, faculty meetings, teaming meetings, or general interactions with other faculty members.

If you choose to participate in both the survey and the interview, time commitment will be no more than two hours.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time, and you may choose not to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION:
There are no known risks associated with this project that are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:
There are no direct benefits to you for choosing to participate in this study. However, your participation will add to current understandings about teacher retention and teacher perceived fit within a particular school. Your participation could help us understand teacher retention and what factors may influence a teacher's decision to remain in their current building.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Only the researcher will have access to data from this study. Survey data will be collected anonymously. No names will be collected on survey data, and surveys cannot be linked back to your individual computer. If you choose to participate in an interview, your identity will be protected by keeping answers anonymous on recorded transcripts. Transcripts of interviews will be recorded using numbers or pseudonyms rather than names. Lists of pseudonyms will be kept separate from interview transcripts and will only be accessible by the researcher. Interviews will be transcribed, and audio recordings will be deleted. Transcripts of interviews with no identifiable names will be kept until completion of the study in Fall 2018 and then will be destroyed.

Approved: 05/08/2018
Expires: 05/07/2019
Protocol #: GC-18-1

All data collected will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the PI's locked office. Transcriptions will be done on the researcher's password protected computer and stored in the PI's locked office. Reported survey results will include only aggregated data.

Confidentiality will be maintained except under specified conditions required by law. For example, current Oklahoma law requires that any ongoing child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect) of a minor must be reported to state officials. In addition, if an individual reports that he/she intends to harm him/herself or others, legal and professional standards require that the individual must be kept from harm, even if confidentiality must be broken. Finally, confidentiality could be broken if materials from this study were subpoenaed by a court of law.

COMPENSATION:
There will be no compensation offered in the study to any participant.

CONTACTS:
You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study:

Vicki Nighswonger
School of Educational Studies
College of Education
Oklahoma State University
vicki.nighswonger@okstate.edu
(580) 554-8006

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the IRB Office at 223 Scott Hall, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:
I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:
I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

- I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.
- I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me.

I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

_____ _____
Signature of Researcher Date

Approved: 05/08/2018
Expires: 05/07/2019
Protocol #: GC-18-1

APPENDIX C

Person-Environment Fit Approach to Teacher Retention

Interview Questions

The following questions will be asked during a face-to-face interview with six teachers.

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. How long have you taught in this building?
3. Why did you become a teacher?
4. What has kept you in the profession?
5. Why have you stayed in this building for ___ years?
6. Have you taught anywhere else? Why did you leave?
7. What has made this building different from teaching in other buildings?
8. What are some strategies buildings could use to retain high quality teachers?
9. In order to ensure information provided is accurate, I will provide a written transcript of the interview. What is the best method for contacting you?
10. Do I have your permission to contact you for follow up questions using the previously stated contact information?

VITA

Vicki Dawn Nighswonger

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT THEORY APPROACH TO TEACHER RETENTION

Major Field: School Administration

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education in School Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2019.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma in 2005.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications at Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma in 1989.

Experience:

Duncan Public Schools – Principal – 2015 to Present, Duncan Oklahoma.
Enid Public Schools – Assistant Principal – 2012 to 2015, Enid Oklahoma.
Enid Public Schools – Counselor – 2004 to 2012, Enid, Oklahoma.

Professional Memberships:

National Association of Elementary Principals.
Oklahoma Association of Elementary Principals.
Leadership Duncan – Class of 2017, Duncan, Oklahoma.