What Factors Impact Why Novice Middle School Teachers in a Large Midwestern Urban School District Leave After Their Initial Year of Teaching

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA) as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.

Joyce L. Albright
Middle School Principal
L. Arthur Safer
Concordia University Chicago
Paul A. Sims
Concordia University Chicago
Angela Tagaris
Concordia University Chicago
Denise Glasgow
Concordia University Chicago
Kim M. Sekulich
Concordia University Chicago
Mary C. Zaharis
Concordia University Chicago

This research investigated the experiences of new teachers employed in urban school districts and how these novice teachers' perceived school district and school administrators' support required to retain them as well as teacher's perceptions of their pre-service experiences and/or induction programs necessary to prepare them for an urban environment. The three middle schools selected were characterized by high poverty, low academic achievement, and not meeting Average Yearly Progress. The research outcomes revealed that teachers did not feel they were adequately prepared for the urban setting and that they were not provided adequate support. Administrators also acknowledged that novice teachers were not prepared to succeed in an urban school setting since they lacked classroom management skills and strategies; they did not spend enough time in urban schools in their pre-service training; and many had limited or no experience with urban, at-risk students.

Over the past three decades, teacher turnover has increased substantially in the United States public schools (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). This is historically more pronounced in underserved communities (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycokoff, 2013). Nationally, the average turnover for all teachers is seventeen percent and in the urban school districts specifically, the number jumps to twenty percent according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2012). There are numbers and percentages of teachers who leave the profession but there is little research into determining why they leave the profession or just choose to leave the urban schools. Newcomers to school teaching often encounter many challenges, especially those who work in the urban environment.

Only sixteen percent of teacher attrition at the school level can be attributed to retirement. The remaining eighty-four percent of teacher turnover, results from teachers transferring between schools and teachers leaving the profession. (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). They are leaving because of the lack of support from upper level administration, school climate, and lack of resources, poor facilities, government policies, and community attitudes. Many leave and go to school districts with fewer minorities and poverty, while others just leave the profession (McKinney, Beery, Dickerson, & Campbell, 2014). Most efforts to solve staffing problems have focused on recruiting promising teachers into high-poverty schools, often with little attention to systemically supporting and retaining them once they are there (Ingersoll & May, 2011).

This study was created to investigate the experiences of new teachers employed in urban school districts. The data from the study will provide school leaders with a better understanding of what is missing from pre-service programs and what type of support is needed for new teachers within the first five years of their employment.   The teacher and administrator participants from three selected middle schools fulfilled the following school district criteria; high poverty, low academic achievement, and not meeting Average Yearly Progress (AYP). Four out of every five students come from families challenged by poverty. These students move frequently from home to home and many are homeless. Nearly one in every five students spend less than a full academic year with the district, and for one in every seven students, English is their second language.

The district in central Ohio is the largest in the state and has over six thousand employees (6,000); three thousand seven hundred and seventy (3,770) are teachers. The district hires between three hundred and four hundred teachers every year. Demographically the student population of 57, 327 is represented as: 14.6% Limited English Proficiency Students; 16.9% Special Education Students; 70% Economically Disadvantaged Students and a18.9% Student Mobility rate. As for student demographics by ethnicity the district data indicates that: 56% are African-American; 26% Non-Hispanic White; 9.3% are Hispanic; 5.7% are Multiracial; 3.1% are Asian; and <1.0% are American Indian.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the qualitative research was threefold: (1) to ascertain how teacher preparation has prepared novice teachers for the urban environment; (2) to substantiate why a large number of teachers leave the urban environment in their first years of employment; (3) to identify ways by which building administrators can more effectively support novice teachers so they will continue within the school district.
The four research questions considered were:
    1. Do new teachers feel prepared to work in the urban setting?

2. Do new teachers feel they are given the support needed to achieve academic excellence in the urban setting?
3. Do administrators feel that new teachers are adequately prepared for work in the urban setting?
4. Do administrators feel they give enough support to new teachers entering the urban setting?

Review of the Literature

Over the past two decades researchers such as Ingersoll and Merrill (2012), Haberman (2005), Allensworth (2009), and Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013), DiCarlo, (2014), Johnson and Birkeland (2003), and Simon and Johnson (2013) have demonstrated that retention is closely related to the quality of the first teaching experience. The Analyses of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) administered by the National Center for Education Statistics established the correlation between the level of support and training provided to beginning teachers and their likelihood of moving or leaving after their first year (Haynes, Maddock, and Goldrick, 2014).

The majority of the studies on teacher turnover in high-poverty schools have focused on the characteristics of the students and their teachers rather than on the school climate or culture where they were employed. Therefore, these findings suggest that policymakers and practitioners who wish to retain talented, effective teachers in high-poverty, hard-to-staff schools must pursue retention strategies that are designed to improve the teaching environment (Simon & Moore Johnson, 2013). Research by Johnson (2012) surmised that the problem rests with the schools not with the students and that "teachers who leave high-poverty, high- minority schools reject the dysfunctional contexts in which they work, rather than the students they teach" (Johnson, 2012).

Factors related to the leadership attributes of the building principal have shown important reasons why teachers remain in urban schools. "Stability rates were higher in schools where teachers reported having high levels of influence over school decisions, trust in their principals who were strong instructional leaders and coherent instructional programming" (Allensworth, et al., 2009, p. 26). Research suggested that "schools where the principal and teachers work together to coordinate instruction and programs in a coherent and sustained way" (Simon and Moore Johnson, 2013, p. 16) are more able to retain teachers. This was further substantiated by Jennifer Waddell (2010) in her research at the University of Missouri, *Fostering Relationships to Increase Teacher Retention in Urban Schools* where she determined that one of the key external components of teacher retention was their relationship with their principals.

Teachers who are confident in the setting in which they are working are more successful and tend to stay longer. This is supported by Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory. Increasing the confidence of these new teachers, along with providing them the information to have a positive perception of the urban schools, better prepares them for success in the urban environment and helps the retention rate for new teachers in urban schools. The study found that the research on the success of traditional field experiences is in-decisive; however programs like the UI may positively impact the recruitment and retention of teachers in urban schools (Schaffer et al., 2014).

Research suggests that non-minority pre-service teachers may often resist pedagogies that address these inequalities if they, themselves, are directly implicated in the systems causing

oppression for others (de Freitas & McAuley, 2008; Hampton, Peng, & Ann, 2008). As a result, pre-service teachers need to be given the tools and support to deal with this cognitive dissonance

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Existing research has generally sought to explain teacher turnover as a function of the characteristics of individual teachers. Moreover, most research has focused on narrow subsets of the total turnover and inter-organizational mobility of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll purports to extend existing theory and research by examining teacher turnover from an organizational perspective. The theoretical perspective of his analysis, drawn from the sociology of organizations, occupations, and work, holds that teacher turnover and school staffing problems cannot be fully understood without closely examining the characteristics of the organizations. In particular, inadequate support from the school administration, student discipline problems, limited faculty input into school decision-making, and to a lesser extent, low salaries, are all associated with higher rates of turnover, after controlling for the characteristics of both teachers and schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

The practice of placing new teachers into the profession in the most difficult-to-staff schools also impacts teacher attrition and transfer levels. According to Haberman (2006), students attending high poverty schools are taught by more novice, uncertified, and less experienced teachers. Furthermore, many of these novice teachers were enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program with little or no emphasis on urban school teaching (Haberman, 2006).Juliesophievan46

Dissatisfaction is often the reason teacher's make the decision to transfer. Furthermore, teachers leaving high-poverty schools tended to cite lack of administrative support as their reason for leaving, while those teachers leaving more affluent school districts mentioned salary as their reason for leaving (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002). Kotetz et al. (2006) reported that issues related to diversity (e.g., socioeconomic status and race of students) were included among teacher's reasons for leaving. Moreover, Johnson and Birkeland's (2003) descriptive analysis collected from teacher interviews found that teachers who left the profession after a brief tenure (three years or less), experienced high levels of frustration, with many viewing themselves as failures.

Methodology

A phenomenology research paradigm which explored urban middle school teachers' perceptions of their first year experience and their struggles as well as how they could have been better prepared or provided with more on-site support served as the methodological framework.

Using inductive analysis (Patton, 2002) to address the study's research questions, this methodological approach included gathering and examining data comprised of individual and focus group interviews which were recorded, transcribed, and confirmed for accuracy through member checks. These methods supported the triangulation of the data which improved internal validity (Merriam, 2009).

Fourteen district wide educators within selected urban, middle schools (nine novice teachers and five building principals) were invited to participate in the study. The teacher participants were between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-seven. Five building principals were interviewed each of whom had a minimum of five years' experience in their respective

middle school. The focus group consisted of teacher participants who were novices to the teaching field and who volunteered to participate in this group setting.

Participants in the face-to-face interviews were interviewed with eight open-ended broad questions in order to gain the most insight while the focus group was an open-ended set of questions based on the information from the face-to-face interviews. Interviews were conducted between October 12 and October 28, 2016. These interviews were recorded which insured accuracy and validity and followed a semi-structured format. Each interview was then transcribed and printed and then returned for member checks/respondent validation to ensure validity. Once the member checks were completed they were coded by themes, patterns, and sub-patterns.

The focus group consisted of four to six teachers selected from those who volunteered for the face-to-face interviews and was conducted on October 31, 2016. The 45-minute focus group permitted teachers to answer questions and exchange information with respect to their preparedness and support once they began their teaching responsibilities. The moderator asked participants to provide a written response to the final question which asked, how much support they believed the administrators provided them as a new teacher?

Raw data was reviewed multiple times with the researcher making notes in the margins and creating codes or categories based on themes (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002).

Sample Demographics

A graphical representation of the teacher and principal participants summarizing their age, gender, certification, grade level, subject taught, degree level, and the university they attended is represented in the following tables:

Table 1
Demographics of the Selected Teacher Participants

Name	Age	Male/Female	Certification	Grade Level	Subject Taught	Degree Level	University Attended
Teacher A	24	Female	4-6 ELA/SS	7	ELA	BS/MA	XXX
Teacher B	25	Female	4-6 Math/ Science	6	Math	BS	XXX
Teacher C	25	Male	4-6 Math/ Science	8	Science	BS	XXX
Teacher D	24	Female	4-6 ELA/SS	7	ELA	BS	XXX
Teacher E	26	Female	7-12 English	8	ELA	BS	XXX
Teacher F	24	Female	4-6 ELA/SS	6	ELA/SS	BS/MA	XXX
Teacher G	24	Female	Mild/Moderate	6/7/8	Math/ Science	BS/MA	XXX
Teacher H	25	Male	7-12 Math	8	Math	BS	XXX
Teacher I	26	Female	4-6 Science/ Math	7	Math	BS	XXX

| Teacher J | 25 | Male | 4-6 ELA/Math | 6 | Math | BS | XXX |

Table 2
Demographics of the Selected Building Principal Participants

Name	Age	Male/Female	Certification	Degree Level	Years of Experience	Middle School Experience
Admin 1	39	Male	Admin	Master	7	7
Admin 2	41	Female	Admin	Master	3	3
Admin 3	52	Male	Admin	Master	16	14
Admin 4	29	Female	Admin	Master	2	2
Admin 5	67	Female	Admin	Master	41	41

Results

Eight questions for teachers and eight questions for administrators consistent with the four research questions were generated by the researcher and used during one-on-one interviews. Questions aligned with Research Questions 1 and 2 were answered by teachers. Questions aligned with Research Questions 3 and 4 were answered by administrators. Both teachers and administrators were queried within their individual focus groups. There was also one additional question for participants in an open forum; participants' responses to that question were written on sticky notes to encourage candor in anonymity. Below, Table 3 provides a graphical representation of the research questions with the corresponding individual and focus group interview questions.

Table 3
A Compilation of the Research Questions with their Corresponding Individual and Focus Group Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
Research Question #1 Do new teachers feel prepared to work in the urban setting?	Interview Question #1: What do you consider was your greatest challenge working in the urban schools? Interview Question #2: Did you feel confident and prepared when you started the year, and did this feeling change as the year progressed? If so how and why? Interview Question #3: Did you have any urban experience during your pre-service and if so to what extent? Interview Question #4: What could your university have done to better prepare you for the urban setting?
Research Question #2 Do new teachers feel they are given the support needed to achieve academic	Interview Question #5: What do you feel your needs were this year and were they addressed?

excellence in the urban setting?	Interview Question #6: To what extent do you believe you were supported by the administration? Interview Question #7: What can your administrator do to support you? Interview Question #8: Were you offered any professional development by the school or district for new teachers? Focus Group Question #1: Do you feel supported by your administrator? Explain.
Research Question #3 Do administrators feel that new teachers are adequately prepared for work in the urban setting?	Interview Question #9: Do you feel universities are adequately preparing new teachers to work in the urban setting? Explain your response. Interview Question #10: In your experience what area(s) do new teachers in the urban setting struggle? Interview Question #11: What factors do you believe play the most significant role in the success or lack of success of new teachers in urban schools? Interview Question #12: How would you describe the performance of new teachers in urban schools?
Research Question #4 Do administrators feel they give enough support to new teachers entering the urban setting?	Interview Question #13: As an administrator what types of support do you provide for new teachers? Interview Question #14: What is your biggest barrier to providing adequate support of new teachers? Interview Question #15: On the average how much time do you spend working with new teachers during the school year? Focus Group Question #2: How do you give support to new teachers?

Research Question 1

The first research question states, "Do new teachers feel prepared to work in the urban setting?" In general, teachers felt unprepared and frustrated and these feelings did not improve as the year progressed. Teachers in the study expressed that they did not feel prepared for the challenges of working with urban, at-risk students. They wished that the university had done more to prepare them for this experience by providing additional pre-service hours in an urban classroom setting.

There were two themes and seven sub themes that manifested during this investigation. Findings of the study revealed during the individual interviews supported that the majority of teachers did not feel they had spent enough time in the urban schools and had not been prepared for what they faced when they started working. Four of the nine teachers interviewed did their student teaching in an urban school setting. Although their student teaching was completed in an urban environment, these teachers did not believe that they were afforded enough quality classroom time or exposure to working with urban, at-risk students. This was especially true for student teachers who took over a classroom in January that was already established by the current teacher. They shared that they would have liked to have more spent time in the urban classroom so they could immerse themselves in this experience and get to know the students.

Just as all new teachers, they were nervous as they began this initial teaching assignment; 89% of them were very candid in their assessment that as the year progressed they began to lose confidence in themselves. Six of the nine shared that there were multiple times during the school year that they wanted to quit and three shared they cried on multiple days on their way home from work. They were frustrated and felt as if they had no concept of what they were doing other than to think about how they would survive the school year. Three shared that they thought of quitting before the school year ended and one stated, "I called in sick some days, because I just couldn't handle another day of it." Their frustration came as a result of the challenges their students exhibited such as acting out, their home life, the transient population, and their poor attendance.

The teachers commented that they had not been prepared to handle urban, at-risk children and that teaching these middle school students was very different than teaching in other non-urban school systems. Teacher C stated:

> I had a teacher that really took me under his wing and took care of me. He made me understand there is a better way and gave me a chance to see the value in education. He took me into his home. I want to give back what I was given. I completely understand these kids but some days are still tough. When I was in college, I used to sit in classes and think, you have no idea what school is like for urban kids. They just describe to you the perfect classroom where the majority of students want to learn and have a supportive family. They spend too much time teaching content.

They acknowledged that they required more time learning about the culture and value system of an urban school environment as well as spending time immersed in the classroom rather than so much time on curricular content. While all of the teachers had a semester in student teaching, not all of it was completed in an urban school building. Those teachers who did student teach in an urban community believed that they still needed additional time to learn and practice the necessary skills specific to their survival within this new classroom setting.

Teacher A felt her confidence decreased as the year progressed; she felt she did not have the necessary materials and support and felt like quitting many times. Teacher B expressed that she was prepared to handle the instruction in her classroom because she had worked with at-risk children previously. Teacher C shared that she was nervous to start and "after the three-day orientation I was more nervous since during the three-day orientation it was too much information at once." Teachers D, E, and I commented that they felt confident but nervous, but at some point during the first day they felt completely frustrated. They all also shared that as the year progressed that they lost confidence instead of gaining it and they all expressed that at some point in time they wanted to resign. Teacher D added she cried frequently as well as in the presence of her principal.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 states, "Do the teachers feel they are given the support needed to achieve academic excellence in the urban setting?"

From the individual interview questions, themes revealed that the teacher participants' perceived support from administrators paralleled the responses from the focus group question: "Do you feel supported by your administrator?" as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Factors of Perceived Support or Non Support by Their Building Principal

Supported	Not Supported
• Felt supported with discipline	• Administrator does not have time
• Given a mentor in the building has time to help	• Needed someone in the building
• Provided Professional Development and encouraged conference attendance	• Too many special education students in the class
• Open door policy	• Has unreal expectations
• Provided resources	• Did not support discipline

The individual interviews and the focus group results indicated that administrators were not providing the support that the first year teachers required. The majority of teachers believed that their administrators were already over worked and overwhelmed and this was the reason that enough support wasn't forthcoming. All nine of the teachers interviewed believed support was available but it was not sufficient to adequately address their critical areas of need. Novice teachers were often left to succeed or fail on their own and were assigned to the most challenging students with little to no resource or academic tools for successfully fulfilling their role in the classroom for improving student achievement.

Teachers A, C, D, E, and H, were cognizant of administrator support efforts which ranged in a variety of actions. Teacher B stated:

Yes and no. The administrator really wanted to support her and did with discipline. However, it seemed a lot of times I got pushed off on someone else because the administrator just did not have time for and all of my questions. I depended a lot on other teachers in the building but they were so busy and overwhelmed, it was difficult for them and they would help but I could see their frustration.

New teachers in the district have a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program that supports and evaluates them, however, the PAR consulting teacher is only in the building one day a week to observe and they only met with the new teacher once every two weeks. Since the district provided new teachers with the PAR program then administrators relied upon that for teacher encouragement, however they did not believe this program really mentored them. The PAR consulting teacher was also not someone from the building so they did not necessarily know the culture and climate of the building and were unable to provide needed tools for improving new teachers classroom teaching skills. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the teachers or six out of nine did not feel PAR provided enough support or the kind of support they needed. One teacher stated, "PAR is just a program to get rid of the teachers they do not want and not a program to grow new teachers. New teachers need an immersion program that offers coaching and modeling, and provides feedback but is not evaluative. It needs to provide more support than

PAR." Teachers A, B, and C explained that the district had a PAR program and it was helpful but they all said they needed additional support than PAR could provide. Teacher A admitted that, "we needed someone in the building on a more consistent basis who knows the culture and climate of the building and someone I could interact with daily."

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 states, "Do administrators feel that new teachers are adequately prepared for work in the urban setting?"

There were three themes and six sub themes that manifested during this investigation. Findings of the study revealed during the individual interviews that administrators did not feel new teachers were prepared for the urban school setting. They believed that novice teachers were deficient in: (1) Management: They were not strong in setting expectations, procedures, routines and following through with them, therefore the classroom management was weak and they did not possess the strategies to complete this work; (2) Relationship building: They did not understand the culture and social norms or all of the non-academic barriers and the degree of the non-academic barriers; (3) Lesson Planning and Delivery: They struggled, not necessarily in curricular content, but rather in planning and delivering strategies to urban, at-risk students.

One administrator acknowledged that novice teachers had not been provided with enough time and experience in an urban classroom. Some of them, not all, quickly figured out that they lacked the survival skills and strategies, they weaken as the year progressed, they began to frequently call in sick because they were frustrated and then it only got worse and they were in my office crying and wanting to resign. Principal 5 observed that "No university can prepare pre-service teachers for what they will see and experience with their students without immersing them into the urban schools."

This observation was reiterated by the other participant principals who noted that new teachers seemed to struggle the most with classroom management.

They do not have the everyday survival skills to modify at the minute on their feet.

When a student acts up in the classroom and they cannot immediately redirect, they get frustrated and they cannot recover. They also think the best way to handle it is to just send them out to the office or a buddy teacher. Many times, new teachers. have not seen some of the extreme behaviors or have not had in a classroom of multiple behaviors so they don't know what to do when several students are acting out or acting off of each other. They don't know what it is like to come from an urban and poverty stricken environment so they don't understand the cultural norms or value system because it is so different.

Other observations by the interviewed principals acknowledged that:

New teachers often lack tools for strategies. They need to get their toolbox filled with tools to work with kids. They come with big ideas or textbook ideas from college classes, but they have to build their own toolbox of things that they can make work. Strategies come with experience and I am not sure it is something you can teach. Each teacher needs to figure out what works for them and their students.

All five principals shared that new teachers did have skills in understanding their content area and having a bank of ideas to present the material as well as effective lesson plans with engaging activities. Three of the five shared that although they had all of these materials they did not know how to adapt to make it work in the urban school or adapt it when a school did not

have the technology they had in college, "when they cannot make a lesson work the way they planned, they do not know how to adapt so they go to direct instruction and urban kids do not do well with direct instruction."

Research Question 4

The fourth research question states, "Do administrators feel they give enough support to new teachers entering the urban setting?"

There was one theme and three sub themes drawn out in this research. Findings of the study as delineated in Table 5 below revealed that building administrators did not feel they provided enough support to new teachers, but it was not because they didn't want to provide the support.

Table 5
Perceived Factors Which Precluded Building Principals from Providing Support

Enough Support Yes/No	Reasons
• Principal 1 – No • Principal 2 – No • Principal 3 – No • Principal 4 – No • Principal 5 – No	• Time Constraints • Too much discipline • Too much paperwork • Day to day operations • PAR • Union • New teachers don't ask • Not receptive

The major challenge for administrators was providing the adequate support with limited time options. The administrators responded that they themselves were overwhelmed with their responsibilities and that novice teachers had the Peer Assistance and Review Program (PAR). However, the administrators did feel they provided enough professional development because the district allowed for three non-attendance days and professional development was provided. They also commented that they provided funds for teachers to go to professional conferences upon their request.

One administrator shared that he had good intentions but the day got away from him. He admitted to pushing new teachers off when they asked for help. He often told them to call their PAR, ask another teacher, or gave them someone in the district they could call. He stated,

I should help them make that call or find the answer for them. Another principal acknowledged that she never gets in the new teacher's room because they have a PAR consulting teacher. I am quick to let the PAR consultant know when the new teachers are struggling, but not so quick to provide support for them and I should since they are in my building daily.

Three of the five interviewed principals shared that their overriding barrier was finding time in the day which was generally consumed by dealing with student discipline issues and therefore resulted in not working directly to encourage their new teachers. One principal asserted that the union and PAR got in the way of principals supporting teachers. This was echoed by another building principal,

You know they have PAR so you convince yourself they have help but really they do need a lot more than just PAR. She shared that she communicates constantly through email, text, and daily updates so they get information but they may be unsure of what all the communication means and it may also be overwhelming to them. She has an open door policy but, "many times the line is long and I know they get frustrated. I wish I had more time for them".

Conclusions

The research outcomes revealed that teachers often did not feel that they were adequately prepared for the urban setting. They felt universities did a commendable job of preparing them to teach and provided the content knowledge they required but not necessarily the skills and strategies to function in an urban classroom. They also added that it would have been beneficial to have had a rotation in an urban school. The participant teachers did not plan on working in the urban setting but that is where the job market was. They discovered that the challenges with urban, at-risk children were not similar to those a teacher encountered in a suburban or rural school system. They often felt frustrated when they could not redirect students and get them to follow directions thus actually escalating the behavior.

Teachers also did not believe they were afforded ample support once they entered the profession since the pre-service training they experienced resulted from entering a classroom mid- year and taking over a classroom where the rules, expectations, and procedures had already been established.

Furthermore, administrators did not feel teachers were prepared for the urban schools for a number of the same reasons: they lacked classroom management skills and strategies; they did not spend enough time in urban schools; and many had limited or no experience with urban, at-risk students. Building principals commented that novice teachers did not have the skill base to develop relationships with urban at-risk students or the skills to de-escalate behavioral classroom management events. One administrator observed that "New teachers see their students for the first time and you can see the fear in their eyes and it all starts going in the wrong direction from there. Urban kids can see and smell fear miles away. They take kindness for weakness and run all over teachers." Another administrator acknowledged that, "they just are not sure how to adapt traditional lessons so that urban at-risk students will be engaged and when they are not engaged they are ready to hand out discipline and not find a way to connect and adapt."

Seven out of the nine teachers interviewed admitted that their administrator wanted to work directly with them but it did not happen and the district central office did not provide enough resources or the right kind of skill-building tools. Building leaders did not have the time to assist these teachers or were frustrated with them since they needed so much help. Three of the teachers mentioned the realities of the PAR program. They stated, "Principals just rely on the PAR program to give us the support we need and they don't have time either. Principals use PAR to tell on us".

All of the selected school building administrators agreed that they had good intentions of providing support, and they would like to have had more time to provide substantive opportunities for growth, but they were remiss in providing this necessary professional development. Many of the reasons were a result of being overwhelmed with their own work and time constraints. They also shared that even though there was a mentoring/evaluation program encouraged by the school district that they (principals) did not have to add to this endeavor or

that the PAR and the union created barriers. There was a consensus that as building leaders they should have provided more support except for one principal participant who surmised that "If you provide too much support you enable them (teachers) and then they expect you to do everything for them."

Implications of the Research

The focus of this qualitative, phenomenology research was to identify why novice teachers left the profession especially during their initial year in the school district. Why was teacher attrition higher in the urban setting? How could school systems better prepare teachers for the urban setting and once they were there how leadership could have been more supportive?

The problem was how school districts and school administrators provided the support that teachers required so that they were able to retain them in an urban school environment as well as what pre-service experiences and/or induction programs were needed to better prepare novice teachers.

First, there is a need for pre-service teacher preparation programs to better prepare teachers for work in the urban setting. Nationwide, there is a push to redesign teacher education programs in order to allow pre-service teachers the opportunity to participate in more comprehensive, first-hand, urban school field experiences. "Perceptions of pre-service teachers, like all other people, are influenced by media images and other socializing agents" (Gleich & Copich, 2014, p.23).

Although, the study captured feedback provided by teachers and building administrators, it excluded the perspective of teachers who actually left. The teacher participants provided valuable insight but it would have been more beneficial to interview the teachers who actually quit and determine what they are currently doing. Did they stay in education and go to a different type of school district, or did they leave education altogether.

A second implication for this study is the need for a strong support system for teachers once they enter their first year of teaching. The transition from pre-service to the first year of teaching is difficult. First year teachers need support in the form of coaching and modeling and require different types of professional development than veteran teachers. If they are not provided the support and professional development, they often do not remain in the profession and especially in the urban setting. Teachers who receive a comprehensive induction package achieve higher in three areas: (1) job satisfaction, commitment, and retention, (2) classroom teaching practices and pedagogical methods, and (3) student achievement. Comprehensive induction programs that comprise multiple types of support, such as high-quality mentoring, common planning time, and ongoing support from school leaders, reduced the turnover rate by one-half when compared to those receiving none. However, few beginning teachers currently receive the ongoing training and support that constitutes comprehensive induction (Haynes, Maddock, & Goldrick, 2014).

Finally, in order to reduce the teacher attrition rate and especially in the urban setting, universities must provide pre-service teachers additional exposure and experience in the urban setting and provide them with better preparation in working with diverse populations, underprivileged students, and their families. Approaches taken by teacher preparation programs to prepare future teachers for success in urban schools need to include initiatives to: (1) increase their sociocultural competence, (2) foster high expectations for student achievement, (3) build collaborative skills, and (4) equip them with instructional strategies that promote learning within diverse populations (Voltz, Collins, Patterson, & Sims, 2008).

Recommendations for Future Research

This study was a qualitative study that explored how new, urban school teachers perceived their pre-service experiences and the support and resources they received from school districts and administrators. It is often difficult for teachers to have a successful transition into the classroom from pre-service. This study also used a phenomenological approach since teachers would be explaining a lived experience.   While the study provided useful information that can be used by universities and school districts, at times, the researcher felt participants were holding back information for fear of retaliation since the researcher was an administrator in the district. Therefore, the study should be replicated in other schools urban school districts where the researcher is not employed by the school district.   It would also benefit the study to interview teachers who have left the district or left teaching completely and this was not allowed by the district in this study.

Future research on teachers who enter the profession from an alternative pathway vs. teachers who enter in the traditional pathway would also provide valuable information. Future research should also be conducted, comparing new teachers who have induction programs in their first years and new teachers who do not have induction programs during their first year. This additional research could help provide more evidence for universities and school districts to implement induction programs to help both at the university level for preparation and at the school level once teachers start teaching.

References

Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research – University of Chicago.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2008). *What keeps good teachers in the classroom? understanding and reducing teacher turnover*, 1-9. Retrieved from http:// www.all4ed.org/files/TeachTurn.pdf.

Alliance for Excellent Education. (2014). *Teacher attrition costs United States Up to $2.2 Billion annually.* Retrieved from http:// www.all4ed.org/files/TeachTurn.pdf.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191-215.

Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E. & Leaf, P. J. (2012). Effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on child behavior problems. *Pediatrics*, 130(5), 1136-1145.

Creswell, J. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (3rd ed).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: .Pearson.

de Freitas, E., & McAuley, A. (2008). Teaching for diversity by troubling whiteness: Strategies for classrooms in isolated white communities. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 11*(4), 429-442. doi:10.1080/13613320802479018.

DiCarlo, M. (2014). Teacher turnover in DCPS. January 2015 Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from http://www.shakerinstitute.org/print/2605.

Fuglei, M. (2013). *Retaining good teachers: Why they leave.* Concordia On-line Education, Portland, Oregon.

Hancock, S. (2011). White women's work: On the front lines in urban education. In J. G. Landsman & C. W. Lewis, (Eds.), White teachers/diverse classrooms: Creating inclusive schools, building on students' diversity, and providing true educational equity (pp 91-109). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Haberman, M. (2005). *Star teachers: The ideology and best practice of effective teachers of diverse children and youth in poverty*. Houston, TX; The Haberman Education Foundation.

Hampton, B., Peng, L., & Ann, J. (2008). Pre-service teachers' perceptions of urban schools. *Urban Review, 40*(3), 268-295. doi:10.1007/s11256-008- 0081-2.

Haynes, M., Maddock, A. Goldrick, L. (2014). On the path to equity: Improving the effectiveness of beginning teachers. Alliance for Excellence in Education. Washington D.C. Retrieved from http://www.all4ed.org .

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499–534.

Ingersoll, R.M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tells us. Kappanmagazine.org.

Ingersoll, R. M., & May, H. (2011). Recruitment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Ingersoll, R. M., & Merrill, L. (2012). Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force. The Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Johnson, S. M., & Birkeland, S. E. (2003). Pursuing a "sense of success": New teachers explain their career decisions. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 581–17.

McKinney, S.E., Berry, R.Q., Dickerson, D. & Campbell-Whately, G. (2014). *Addressing urban high-poverty school teacher attrition by addressing urban high-poverty school teacher retention: Why effective teachers persevere*. HabermanFoundation.org (Reprinted from *Education Research and Reviews*, 3(1), 1-9.

Merriam, S.B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (3rd ed.).San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Marinell, W. H., & Coca, V. M. (2013). *Who stays and who leaves? Findings from a three part study of teacher turnover in NYC middle schools*. New York: The Research Alliance for NYC Schools.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). Enrollment and percentage distribution of enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity and region: Selected years, fall 1995 through fall 2021. [Data The Nebraska Educator 26 File]. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_00u.asp. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2012, January). No dream denied: A pledge to America's children. Retrieved from http://www.nctaf.org/article/?c=4&sc=16.

O'Brennan, L. & Bradshaw, C. (2013). Importance of school climate research brief. Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence National Education Association.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4–36. doi:10.3102/0002831212463813.

Schaffer, C., Gleich-Bope, D., & Copich, C. (2014). Urban immersion: Changing per-service teachers' perceptions of urban schools. The Nebraska Educator: A student led journal. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebeducator/19.

Schaffhauser, D. (2014). The problem isn't teacher recruiting; its retention. *The Journal*, 6 (29), 52-56.

Simon, N, & Moore Johnson, S. (2013). Teacher turnover in high-poverty schools: What we know and can do. Harvard Graduate School of Education. United States Census Bureau. (n.d). State & county quick facts: (city), (state). Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/31/3137000.html.

Valentíin, S. (2006). Addressing diversity in teacher education programs. *Education*, 127(2), 196-202.

Voltz, D. L., Collins, L., Patterson, J., & Sims, M.J. (2008). Preparing urban educators for the twenty-first century: What the research suggests. In C.J. Craig & L. F. Deretchin (Eds.), Imagining a renaissance in teacher education, (pp. 25-40). Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield Education.

Waddell, J. (2010). Fostering relationships to increase teacher retention in urban schools. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 4(1), 70-85. Retrieved from http://www.joci.ecu.edu.