

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER TURNOVER IN INNER-CITY
SCHOOLS**

by

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Abstract

The public K-12 education system poses many challenges that cause teachers to relocate schools or leave the profession altogether. Inner-city schools face an increasing and alarming rate of teacher turnover. Factors influencing teacher turnover also influence student learning and teacher wellbeing. This phenomenological study examines four teachers' perspectives of the factors that made them leave or stay in inner-city schools. Through data analysis, the findings of the study suggest that teachers leave inner-city schools due to a lack of resources, negative school community, and lack of support, and that they choose to stay in inner-city schools for reasons related to positive relationships and positive school community. Recommendations related to improving teacher retention within inner-city schools include providing more staffing and resources to those hired into inner-city schools, particularly new teachers. More research should be done to explore professional development and training for teachers working in schools with students with diverse needs, especially those with mental health concerns and trauma.

Keywords: inner-city, teacher turnover, retention, support, teacher perspectives, teacher wellbeing, trauma, mental health

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my soon-to-be baby. Being pregnant and finishing this journey has been a true blessing. I hope to inspire your thoughts and considerations for the world you will enter, and may you do anything you set your mind to. May you be passionate for what this world needs. Thank you to my husband Cam, for your support throughout this journey.

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Glossary

- i. *Administration*: Throughout the following literature and within this research paper, the term administration or administrator refers to a leader of a school building that oversees all the staff in the building. The term administrator is inter-changeable with terms including principal, vice-principal, and school leader, as different scholars refer to different terms. A principal's role is to promote high levels of classroom teaching to ensure academic success for all students and encourage new ways of learning and teaching amongst novice and veteran teachers (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Principals are the focal point of the school to which all people involved first look for direction (Roberson & Roberson, 2009).
- ii. *Early Career Teacher*: The term early career teacher references teachers that have taught for under five years. The term early career teacher is interchangeable with novice teacher, new teacher, or beginning teacher.
- iii. *Inclusion*: Inclusion is described as a principle where all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). In the past, children with exceptionalities were not a part of the mainstream education system. They attended school in separate classrooms with children who were not necessarily in their peer group. Since 1995, school districts in British Columbia (BC) have followed the Special Education Services (SES) policy as a framework and guideline to support special education services within the province (BC Ministry of Education, 2016) and to maintain an inclusive model of education (Inclusion BC, 2022).

Acronyms

- i. *BC*: British Columbia
- ii. *EA*: Education Assistant
- iii. *ELL*: English Language Learner
- iv. *PE*: Physical Education
- v. *SEL*: Social Emotional Learning
- vi. *SWD*: Students with Disabilities
- vii. *UDL*: Universal Design for Learning

Introduction

Being a teacher can be regarded as a highly rewarding but challenging career. However, teacher attrition is a persistent problem across the globe which poses numerous problems for schools, their districts, and their students (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Teachers continue to leave their current schools to either go work in different schools, different districts, or because they choose to leave the teaching profession altogether. Teacher retention and the alarming rate of turnover are a significant issue in inner-city schools (Burkhauser, 2017; DeMatthews et al., 2022; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Shuls & Flores, 2020; Smith & Smith, 2006). Inner-city communities are often low-income and composed of historically marginalized populations in urban neighbourhoods (Glickman & Scally, 2008). Research suggests that teachers may leave inner-city schools for multiple reasons. Some teachers report leaving lower-performing or ‘hard-to-staff’ schools due to working conditions that make it difficult to teach their students, not because of the students themselves (Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015, as cited in DeMatthews et al., 2022).

I began my teaching career by accepting a fulltime classroom assignment in an inner-city elementary school, a few months after completing my Bachelor of Education degree. As I prepared for my first classroom position, I had limited knowledge of the school community; however, I was excited to be receiving my own classroom as a first-year teacher. I soon realized I was not the only new staff member as most staff members were new to the school that year. As I continued to teach at this school for the next four years, I noticed teachers continuously leaving to go to new schools, changing to different districts, changing from classroom positions to non-enrolling positions, going on stress-leave, or quitting the profession altogether. With continuous

teacher turnover, it seemed like our school community had to re-shift and re-start their school routines every year. I watched extra energy being spent on creating new systems and could not help but sense the exhaustion in our school community. Through experience teaching in an inner-city elementary school and from my observations, I became inspired to be an advocate for inner-city schools through exploring teachers' perspectives on teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

There is a need to focus attention on turnover in inner-city schools as many schools are failing to meet the needs of these students (Smith & Smith, 2006). Students who are socio-economically disadvantaged are more likely to drop out of school (Smith & Smith, 2006). Research indicates that inner-city schools can be impacted by high teacher turnover, which reinforces existing poverty and may impact student achievement (Beesley et al., 2010; Carver-Thomas et al., 2016; DeMatthews & Knight, 2022; Monk, 2007, as cited in Frahm & Cianca, 2021). As teachers continue to leave inner-city schools, it places a financial burden on the school and negatively impacts the staff and students that remain (Shuls & Flores, 2020). If teachers were to stay at inner-city schools longer, it could benefit students' learning.

Having witnessed teacher turnover in my school I became curious about the possible conditions that may cause teachers to leave or stay in inner-city schools. My inquiry question is: "What are the conditions that have influenced whether teachers in an inner-city school choose to stay or leave their school?". The focus of this research study was to analyze the phenomenon of teacher turnover in inner-city schools. The purpose of my inquiry was to explore the possible factors influencing teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

It is important to research the conditions that have influenced whether teachers in inner-city schools choose to stay or leave as I believe it can help support school administrators and

school districts retain teachers in these schools. In addition, interviewing participants provided the opportunity for teachers to have their voices heard regarding teaching in inner-city schools. This study intends to benefit the research community by adding to existing literature and future research on teacher turnover in inner-city schools. From this research, I hope to advocate for inner-city schools and help students get the necessary support they need to be successful.

Literature Review

Teacher turnover is a major concern in many schools with specifically higher rates in inner-city schools (Burkhauser, 2017; DeMatthews et al., 2022; Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Smith & Smith, 2006). Teacher turnover can be influenced by many factors which determine whether teachers choose to leave or stay in inner-city schools. Current literature discusses important factors that can influence teacher turnover including: (a) supportive administration, (b) school culture, (d) teacher training, (e) resources, (f) student behaviors, and (g) teacher wellbeing. These factors are reported as having considerable influence on teacher turnover.

Factors Influencing Teacher Turnover

Supportive Administration

Literature suggests that a key indicator as to whether teachers stay or leave is having supportive administrators in their schools (Ellison, 2022; Roberson & Roberson, 2009; Shuls & Flores, 2020). Shuls and Flores (2020) conducted semi-structured interviews with district representatives which included two directors of human resources and an assistant superintendent. A consistent theme of needing supportive leaders and administrative teams emerged throughout all schools (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Teachers who experienced supportive and encouraging leadership were more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes towards teaching and remain in the

field longer (Shuls & Flores, 2020). School districts with high teacher retention had a culture of honoring teacher voice through having school administration working directly with teachers to explore and solve problems (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Administrators can better support teachers by listening to teachers' perspectives, creating a culture of shared ideas and collaboration. The study by Shuls and Flores (2020) provides important insights regarding the benefits of support from administration in teacher retention; however, this study was limited to the perceptions of district leaders. Research from the perspective of teachers would further enhance our understanding of the kinds of supportive and encouraging leadership needed.

Research on teacher attrition indicated that 30 to 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Brunetti, 2001; Gritz & Theobald, 1996; Stanford, 2001, as cited in Smith & Smith, 2006). Shuls and Flores (2020) suggest that school administrators need to develop and implement strategies that support teachers. This is particularly important for early career teachers. In addition, they stress that administrators need to be aware of what is going on inside classrooms so they can be present and supportive of teachers' needs. Principals can support beginning teachers by creating a collaborative environment where new teachers can work with, observe, and learn from experienced teachers (Shuls & Flores, 2020). School leaders should create an environment for teachers to collaborate, and problem solve as a team. Creating a collaborative environment would help new teachers feel less isolated and part of the school community.

Smith and Smith (2006) found that teacher turnover in inner-city schools became cyclical, with teaching positions often filled by unqualified or early career teachers. Thus, with the challenges associated with teaching in urban schools they often left the district. High levels of yearly turnover are harmful for schools and students and is especially difficult for schools

with higher proportions of minority, low-income, and low-achieving students (Burkhauser, 2017). Administrators in inner-city schools have the power and authority to set in motion the connections and activities that novice teachers need to be successful (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). To help with teacher turnover in inner-city schools, administrators need to be attentive to how early career teachers are feeling to provide the appropriate support. Through the diligent and meaningful efforts of a school principal, novice teachers can grow to be the teachers they envisioned they would be (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Smith and Smith (2006) noted that early career teachers are leaving districts in higher rates than experienced teachers in urban schools; however, their study fails to focus on how to further retain early career teachers in these schools. Further research on how school districts and school principals can better prepare and retain early career teachers for the complexities of working in inner-city environments is needed.

Ellison (2022) conducted a qualitative data analysis using a longitudinal mixed-methods case study of 12 physical education (PE) teachers' perceptions on resilience in high-poverty schools. The results indicated that teachers remain teaching in high-poverty schools if they receive support from family, administration, and colleagues. One of the participants commented on feeling comfortable going directly to his administrator when an issue needed to be addressed. Additionally, the teacher commented on feeling comfortable that everyone was working towards a common goal. Ellison (2022) concluded the research by stating that school principals should exhibit *servant leadership* qualities. Servant leadership is where leaders put their followers first by empowering them and helping them to develop their full personal capacities (Northouse, 2019). Ellison indicated the importance of administrators having qualities of servant leadership by communicating with staff to work towards a common goal and vision so that each person in the school community feels a sense of purpose and belonging. Along with being a supportive

administrator, fostering a positive school culture is an important factor to reducing teacher turnover in inner-city schools. Ellison (2022) analyzed non-enrolling teachers' perspectives through interviewing PE teachers. What is missing is the perspectives of classroom and non-enrolling teachers such as resource or English Language Learner (ELL) teachers.

School Culture

Teacher turnover may be influenced by school culture. Principals have power and control over school culture which includes allowing for teacher voice and sharing leadership positions to support all staff members (Shuls & Flores, 2022). School principals should prioritize promoting a positive school culture to retain teachers in their schools. DeMatthews et al. (2022) conducted a longitudinal dataset study comparing teacher turnover with school principal changes.

Interestingly, DeMatthews et al. (2022) found that teacher turnover is particularly evident and impactful in high-poverty schools serving higher concentrations of lower-performing students and students of color. There is often less administrative support in high-poverty and lower-performing schools (DeMatthews et al., 2022; as cited in Boyd et al., 2011). Through data analysis, the authors found that effective and stable leadership fostering a positive school culture contributes to the success and support of teacher retention (DeMatthews et al., 2022). This study found that effective and supportive leadership is needed to maintain a positive school culture in inner-city schools.

Glickman and Scally (2008) interviewed teachers and organizers of Texas community institutions and community-based schools in New York City. Glickman and Scally (2008) suggested ways schools and communities can work together to improve education within inner-city schools. Similarly, their research emphasized the importance of principals developing school cultures that mentor and nurture teachers (Glickman & Scally, 2008). Maintaining and

supporting a positive school culture is essential in inner-city schools. It is imperative for principals to keep the big picture in mind and ensure that progress is made (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Previous research on school climate found that a high level of teacher satisfaction was associated with schools that involved collaborative working opportunities, strong principal leadership, and a school culture involving trust and respect (Johnson et al., 2011, as cited in O'Brennan et al., 2017). The climate and culture of a school community is a critical component of a school's success or failure, and it is imperative that school leaders nurture positive and growth-oriented relationships amongst staff (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). The studies by DeMatthews et al. (2022) and Glickman and Scally (2008) also suggest that the influence of a school principal helps to determine the culture of a school, which influences teacher retention; however, both studies fail to ask teachers how principals can improve the work conditions to benefit the school community and its culture.

Teacher Training

Schools successful in teacher retention have policies that promote teacher voice and support teacher induction and development (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Schonert-Reichl (2017) explained how mindfulness and stress management programs for teachers are effective in developing teachers' social and emotional learning competence and wellbeing. Mindfulness is attentive and receptive awareness of present-moment experiences regarding feelings, images, thoughts, sensations, and perceptions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). When teachers are trained in behavioural and emotional factors that improve teaching and learning in the classroom, teachers feel better equipped in their classroom management that can deter students' aggressive behaviours and promote a positive learning climate (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Not only do teachers need to know how to teach social and emotional skills but they also need knowledge,

dispositions, and skills for creating caring, supportive, and responsive school, and classroom communities (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Mindfulness and stress management programs exist to improve teachers' social-emotional competence to increase teachers' job satisfaction, compassion and empathy for students while reducing stress and burnout (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Schonert-Reichl (2017) highlighted the importance of providing training for teachers' own social and emotional learning competence in order to effectively teach students these skills. This study touches on the importance of teacher training; however, the research is missing an exploration of teachers' perspectives as to how social emotional learning can also benefit their own wellbeing.

Teachers need to be better equipped and trained when entering inner-city schools to help reduce teacher turnover. Low-achieving and high-poverty schools need to be staffed by highly trained teachers with specialized training in educating students from economically stressed families (Hansen, 2022). School districts should add financial and honorific incentives for teachers to become certified and work in poverty-affected schools as pay and job satisfaction could increase competition for jobs in low-income areas. This could make the job of hiring highly qualified teachers for inner-city schools easier (Hansen, 2022). Giving teachers these incentives have the potential to reduce teacher turnover in inner-city schools. Teacher training is one critical factor to reducing inner-city teacher turnover, however, internal and external resources are also of significant importance.

Resources

Teachers are more likely to leave low-income schools due to inferior working conditions including demanding workloads, extra duties, and few curriculum materials (Haberman & Rickards, 1990; Mont & Rees, 1996, as cited in Smith & Smith, 2006). Inner-city schools are often labeled as 'bad schools' which can be characterized by low test scores, outdated buildings,

high staff turnover, and economically stressed families (Hansen, 2022). When a school is labelled 'bad' it puts an additional burden on the staff who are already coping with a poverty-stressed population and teaching with fewer resources that perpetuates the inequities in our school system (Hansen, 2022). When discussing teacher turnover, 28% of teachers in urban schools reported that textbooks and classroom supplies were inadequate compared to 19% of teachers in suburban schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Poverty-affected schools need equitable funding to have diverse curriculum, support staff to boost instructional and teacher planning time, a clean and inviting facility, modern technology, and sensible class sizes (Hansen, 2022). Staff with adequate resources may be able to level the playing field and narrow achievement gaps of inner-city schools (Hansen, 2022).

Gilmour et al. (2022) collected data on teacher turnover by researching associations between teachers teaching students with disabilities (SWD) and teachers changing schools, changing districts, or leaving the profession. After controlling for variables of the classroom and school characteristics, they found no direct correlation to teachers leaving schools due to SWD but instead, discovered that teachers were leaving due to needing more internal and external resources to be able to support students (Gilmour et al., 2022). There are diverse students amongst inner-city schools and providing more accessible resources and supplies to new teachers could influence teacher retention in these schools. Gilmour et al. (2022) continued their research by looking at internal resources for teachers, including certification, preparation type, experience, classroom management, and external resources, including instructional leadership and culture for teaching and learning and how these are associated between teaching SWD and teachers changing schools, districts, and leaving the profession. Through examination of internal and external resources, they found that an increase of turnover occurred as teachers taught a

higher percentage of SWD (Gilmour et al., 2022). There is a concern with how teachers are responding to the challenges of teaching groups of students with unique needs and moreover, higher rates of inclusion should come with resources for supporting teachers in meeting SWD's needs (Gilmour et al., 2022). As school districts continue to follow policies around inclusion to better support all learners (BC Ministry of Education, 2016), researchers question if inclusion influences teacher turnover due to a lack of training and resources. Further research should focus on teachers working within an inclusive model of education in British Columbia (BC).

Investigating local teachers' perspectives regarding how a lack of resources and the complexities of the inclusion model can influence teacher turnover could be beneficial to improving teacher retention.

Student Behaviour

Inner-city schools can be perceived as violent and chaotic places where anything can happen (Smith & Smith, 2006). Ingersoll and May (2011) researched teacher turnover trends of minority teachers teaching in high-poverty schools compared to the lower turnover rates of white teachers. Minority teachers are teachers self-identifying as Black or African American, Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and multiple races (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The researchers found that a school's poverty level or demographic had no direct relation to teachers deciding to stay or leave. They found that teachers in high-poverty, high-minority, and urban schools were more likely to report less positive school organizational conditions and more serious discipline problems than teachers in low-poverty, suburban schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Organizational conditions that were strongly related to minority teacher turnover included staff input into school-wide decision making and individual classroom autonomy (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Ineffective school organization and increased student

behaviour could influence teachers' decisions to leave inner-city schools. Ingersoll and May (2011) provided important insight into how effective organizational conditions in schools are critical to reducing teacher turnover. Without resources, tools, or training, teachers will leave due to a lack in school organization. Examining teacher and administrator perspectives could provide further findings as to ways of fostering a healthy organizational environment. As well, exploring how school leaders establish positive organizational conditions would also benefit research on improving teacher retention.

Smith and Smith (2006) conducted qualitative interviews of teachers' perceptions regarding the factors that caused them to leave their urban schools. All participants except one reported that an urban school position had been their first teaching placement (Smith & Smith, 2006). Ten out of twelve participants shared stories about teaching in urban schools where they commented on student violence and how it led to teacher attrition (Smith & Smith, 2006). Smith and Smith (2006) found that staff awareness and training on how to deal with violence is needed, which has the potential to reverse trends in teacher attrition in urban schools. Many teachers are not equipped to manage violent or extreme disruptive student behaviours in the classroom. The highest turnover occurs in low-performing, high-poverty schools with a high percentage of minority students (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). A contributing factor to high teacher turnover in schools is due to issues with student discipline, classroom management, and student mental health (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). As such, this requires additional support for teachers to manage student behaviour. Children from highly stressed homes have diverse needs that can only be addressed through additional staff personnel (Hansen, 2022). Children are presenting with more social-emotional, behavioural and academic challenges for schools that require additional support for the classroom teacher. Hansen (2022) discusses his teaching experience in a low-

poverty school and the needed support for counselors or social workers to address student issues. Importantly, Smith and Smith (2006) analyze teacher attrition in inner-city schools, specifically that of early career teachers. They found that early career teachers require additional professional development for managing student misbehaviour. This study did not specify the particular training methods that were needed for these teachers. While there is agreement from various studies why early career teachers need support for behavioural management, many studies do not explain how it matters to these teachers. Teachers in high-poverty schools should be relieved from dealing with urgent problems on their own so they can develop more engaging units of study to help their students thrive in their learning (Hansen, 2022). This would also lend itself to reducing teacher stress and burnout as well as to support teacher wellbeing.

Teacher Wellbeing

The research literature identified a myriad of factors that contributed to the teacher turnover phenomenon. Teacher wellbeing was one of the critical factors influencing teacher turnover. Smith and Smith (2006) found stress seemed to be the general reason why teachers decided to leave urban school settings. O'Brennan et al. (2017) examined school factors that caused burnout among high school staff. The authors found that the staff who felt a sense of belonging in their school communities and felt connected to their students and principals felt less burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017). Having a supportive administrator and a positive school culture may help foster teacher wellbeing and minimize teacher burnout in inner-city schools. Schonert-Reichl (2017) examined United States teacher education programs and how they prepare teacher candidates for their own and their students' social-emotional competence. They found that stress and poor emotion management were the primary reasons that teachers became dissatisfied and left their positions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Teacher training programs need to

focus on helping teachers manage their own stress and social-emotional learning. Student behaviours causing violence in urban schools was a factor that greatly contributed to the stress level for many teachers (Smith & Smith, 2006). O'Brennan et al. (2017) found that teachers felt less burnout when they believed they had the skills needed to deal with behaviourally challenging students. Teachers' own social and emotional competence and wellbeing influence school and classroom contexts (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). If teachers are stressed, it will be ultimately difficult to navigate the challenges of a classroom causing teachers to become overwhelmed and possibly influencing teachers' decision to change schools or leave the teaching profession.

The research reviewed presented possible factors influencing teacher turnover in inner-city schools including supportive administration, school culture, teacher training, resources, student behaviours, and teacher wellness. Although many of the factors identified by previous research literature are also highlighted through this study, there is limited research on the perspectives of teachers as to why these factors matter. This study will explore the perceptions of teachers at an inner-city school regarding what factors can contribute to whether a teacher will stay or leave a particular school. It will also examine the importance of why organizational conditions such as having a strong school culture, and readily available teaching and human resources are essential to improving teacher retention.

Methodology

I have looked at my research through a constructivist paradigm (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). A constructivist interprets research as a relativist that is attempting to understand a situation through realities that are socially constructed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017, Yilmaz, 2013). I have hoped to seek an understanding of the world I work in by listening to teachers'

perceptions of their experiences teaching in inner-city schools (Creswell, 2002). I have also relied on the varied and multiple realities of their situations (Creswell, 2002).

Ontology is the nature of reality (Creswell, 2002). My ontological belief understands that participants' meanings are negotiated socially and historically and are dependent on an individual's situation and experience (Creswell, 2002; Yilmaz, 2013). My ontological belief impacts my research as I have experienced similar realities and feelings of participants when teaching in inner-city schools.

Epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2002). I used an epistemological view by purposefully seeking participants from my own school with whom I already knew and had previous conversations with. From these conversations, I was curious about their perceptions on teaching in inner-city schools. My epistemological belief is there are benefits to having a previous relationship with participants; it enables them to be more comfortable sharing and being vulnerable with their perceptions on teacher turnover. From being aware of participants' previous opinions regarding teaching in inner-city schools, I assumed participants understood the phenomenon of teacher turnover at my school.

Axiology is the study of the role of values and biases (Creswell, 2002). Axiology aligns with a constructivist paradigm, as it is a given that there will be biases within research. My axiology recognizes that I have biases; therefore, I had preconceived biases going into my research. These biases result from being a part of my school community for the past four years and witnessing a high teacher turnover rate. I have listened to teachers within my school community informally share their opinions and concerns that have caused them or others to leave our school community. Conversations helped to influence my own biases and led me to investigate the phenomenon of teacher turnover.

My research question examined teacher turnover by asking: What are the conditions that have influenced whether teachers in an inner-city school choose to stay or leave their school? Qualitative research uses assumptions and interpretations to inform a study of the research problem by collecting data in a natural setting while being sensitive to the people and places under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through my qualitative study, I listened to the voices of teachers who have taught in inner-city schools and their reasons for why they have stayed or left. Qualitative research focuses on the voices of participants, the reflectivity of the research, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to a call for change (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In contrast, quantitative research focuses on empirical research on social phenomenon or human problems through theories consisting of variables, mathematical methods, and statistics (Yilmaz, 2013). I chose qualitative research over quantitative research as qualitative research serves as an interpretive and naturalistic approach to study people and social situations (Yilmaz, 2013). This qualitative study helped me to construct the reality of participants' perspectives through understanding that their meanings of teacher turnover are attached to their experience of teaching in inner-city schools. I chose *phenomenology* to capture the authentic voices of participants through personal interviews.

Method

Phenomenology's purpose is to uncover implicit meaning in a particular situation from multiple perspectives and to analyze how people feel to gain insight into an underlying phenomenon (Lusthaus et al., 1995). Phenomenology was the best method to investigate my research question. I focused on listening to participants' perspectives by asking broad, open-ended questions that allowed participants to reflect on their own experiences. To listen to teachers' perspectives and to maintain validity throughout my phenomenological study, I used

bracketing to acknowledge my biases and then put them aside to focus on participants' perspectives of their experiences (Groenewald, 2004). The purpose of my study was to understand how individuals feel about the phenomenon of teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

Bracketing

Bracketing is setting aside your experiences to take a new perspective toward a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To ensure the integrity of this study, I wanted to share some of my experiences and beliefs related to my research question regarding the conditions that have potentially influenced whether teachers in an inner-city school choose to stay or leave their school. Within my four years of teaching in an inner-city school, I have observed many teachers transfer to different schools. I have engaged in conversations where teachers have shared their thoughts on leaving the school. From engaging in conversations with teachers and their decisions to leave schools, I have seen the importance of communication, adequate student support, and shared decision-making within a school community. I continue to acknowledge that my teaching experience and previous conversations have influenced my biases (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, I tried to put biases aside before conducting my research. I used descriptive and reflective notes to support bracketing my biases throughout my data collection and analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through bracketing my biases, I continued to remain neutral during my interviews.

Data Sources

Before recruiting participants for this study, the University of the Fraser Valley's Human Research Ethics Board granted consent to conduct research (Appendix A). To recruit participants for this study, I sent out an email script (Appendix B) and letter of consent to a purposeful sample of teachers. Purposeful sampling is the intentional selection of participants that best

address the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Purposeful sampling was important for this study as I wanted to select teachers that had at least two years teaching at one specific inner-city school as well as experience teaching in other inner-city schools. Once participants agreed to participate in my study and I received their signed letters of consent, I emailed them a proposed timeline with dates and times for an interview that would work best for them. Once participants chose an interview time, I responded with the interview script (Appendix C). I wanted participants to review the interview script so they would have access to the questions prior to their interview. As a phenomenological study, I intended for participants to have thought over their perspectives on teacher turnover in inner-city schools, so they were prepared and comfortable going into the interview.

Participants. The purposeful sample included four teachers that have worked for three to five years in inner-city elementary schools within the same school district in an urban region of western British Columbia (BC). Additionally, the same participants had additional teaching experience ranging from one to twenty-five years in other inner-city schools within the same school district and in other school districts in western BC. Since participants had previously worked with me, this increased trust as participants felt comfortable sharing their perceptions during *semi-structured interviews*.

Tools. I conducted individual *semi-structured interviews* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) with the participants of this study. Semi-structured interviews are flexibly worded, allowing the researcher to respond to the respondents' ideas (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were the best tool for me to conduct my research as my interview script and questions helped me stay focused on my research topic to help me find themes surrounding teacher turnover. I was able to follow through with participants answers by asking additional probing

and clarifying open-ended questions. Before beginning my interviews, I reviewed the participants' consent letters and reminded them that the study was anonymous and confidential. I informed participants of their right to withdraw from the interview prior to their approval of their transcripts. My interview questions were open-ended to guide participants toward their perceptions on why they have stayed or left schools. Semi-structured interviews consisted of six guiding questions and extension questions. The four interviews ranged from 23 to 52 minutes in duration.

My guiding questions included: "What conditions and factors have caused you to stay at a school?", "What conditions and factors have caused you to transfer to a different school?", "In your own terms, can you define an inner-city school?", "What has been your experience teaching in inner-city schools?", "What have been some successes and joys of working in inner-city schools?"; and "What have been some challenges?". Examples of the extension questions included: "What has made you teach and stay at your current school", "Do you think these challenges could cause you to relocate schools?"; and "Tell me about a typical day teaching in an inner-city school?" The order in asking my questions was important to me as I wanted participants to share their reasoning for staying or leaving their school first. I wanted participants to define what an inner-city school meant to them and, following that, share their successes and challenges. As open-ended questions, I asked extension questions to explore in more detail what it looks like for participants' day-to-day teaching in inner-city schools. I intended to connect participants' feelings and opinions regarding their experience teaching in inner-city schools to understand participants' lived realities. Throughout the interviews, I continued to be mindful about withholding from sharing my perspectives and thoughts so I could listen to participants share their experiences. I found myself nodding and responding 'okay' and 'uh huh' to keep my

interjections to a minimum and to show that I was listening and valuing participants' perceptions.

Interviews were conducted over Zoom, where I was in a closed-door office in my house. Participants chose a location wherever they felt comfortable answering questions. I recorded and transcribed all the interviews. The recording was then deleted from Zoom and saved to my personal computer. After I transcribed the recording, I edited the transcript by cleaning the data, which included taking out unnecessary language, including 'like' and 'uhm'. I ensured the transcript best represented each participant by sending it back to the participant to review, alter, and approve. I sent transcripts back within one week of doing our interview. Participants chose a pseudonym to anonymize their transcript and had one week to send it back to me with their approval. All four participants approved their transcripts with no revisions. Three of the four participants asked me to choose a pseudonym for them. The purpose of having participants review their transcripts was to confirm accuracy of what participants said during their interview and for participants to approve that they were best represented through their authentic perspectives on teacher turnover.

Data Gathering. I maintained being present throughout the interviews by using the observational protocol of descriptive and reflective notes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Descriptive notes focus on collecting data and what is being said from participants. Reflective notes record hunches, impressions, and feelings the researcher has towards the data collected (Creswell & Poth 2018; Groenewald, 2004). Taking descriptive and reflective notes enabled me to maintain bracketing throughout the qualitative analysis. Descriptive notes enabled me to record the detailed experiences of participants. To be present during the interviews, I took reflective notes immediately after each interview. I recorded how I felt the participant was feeling, any hunches I

had, personal thoughts or connections I had, and any emerging themes I found surfacing. Having descriptive and reflective notes allowed me to separate my perspectives from the participants' perspectives and, overall, enabled me to analyze my data clearly.

Data Analysis

Data analysis aims to reveal fresh insights into what is observed and discovered about a human condition (Saldana, 2011). My data analysis was to compare participants' overall experience of teaching in inner-city schools and analyze the possible conditions for why teachers have stayed at schools or left. I used the *data analysis spiral* to analyze my data into results and findings. The data analysis spiral helps the researcher analyze qualitative data by moving in analytic circles instead of a fixed linear approach which involves managing and organizing data, reading and recording emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

I began my data analysis by managing and organizing my data, which is important as organizational decisions can impact future analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I created a file on my computer desktop for each participant including their recording, Zoom transcription, and consent forms. I then listened to the recordings again and edited the Zoom transcriptions into a transcript for each participant in Microsoft Word. I interviewed and transcribed all four participants' transcripts before I analyzed the data. I waited to analyze the data to be present and unbiased during all my interviews. I acknowledged that I was taking reflective notes of hunches, feelings, and emerging themes after interviewing participants so I could wait to further analyze the data until all transcripts were finished. I did not want to alter questions based on another participant's answer or voice. When I was ready to analyze the data, I used Microsoft Excel by creating a spreadsheet where I took and recorded quotes from the transcripts.

To continue my analysis, I read and recorded emergent themes by reading the transcripts several times and rereading the descriptive and reflective notes I had taken after each interview. Since I used descriptive and reflective notes during data collection, it allowed me to remember how the participant was feeling during the interview, any hunches I had, and what was being said at that time. After I read through each interview and highlighted the possible codes, I wrote *analytic memos* to each transcript regarding the codes I had found. Analytic memos are a narrative that sets into words your interpretations of the data by further articulating *deductive*, *inductive*, and *abductive* ways of thinking (Saldana, 2011). Deduction is drawing and concluding facts and evidence; induction is exploring and inferring evidence; and abduction is explaining hunches based on clues. Recording analytic memos allowed me to compare codes and emerging themes to my descriptive and reflective notes on participants, hunches, and previous biases. I was able to transfer my notes into my analysis. Rereading the transcripts allowed me to build a sense of the data I was working with instead of getting caught up in coding details (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I looked at the ideas I had throughout each interview and analyzed them to one another.

I then coded the data and organized the data into categories and themes (Saldana, 2011). I continued to use Microsoft Word to highlight quotes that presented possible codes. I then used Microsoft Excel to record the codes from the data by entering quotes I had highlighted through the transcripts and labelling a code. Coding is a method of discovery that leads toward the meanings of individual sections of data (Saldana, 2011). In qualitative research, coding involves making sense of the transcripts collected from the interview, aggregating them into categories, and assigning a label (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My coding process included first-level codes which meant re-reading participants' transcripts and highlighting quotes to make meaning of

what was being said and giving those quotes a code (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My coding process included second-level codes where I organized participants' quotes into categories and themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For my first-level codes, I used *in vivo codes* and *process codes* (Saldana, 2011). In vivo codes use the participants' actual words and language (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Saldana, 2011). In vivo codes best represented my phenomenological study as I was interested in using the actual language of participants to see how their perspectives could translate into common themes. Also, I wanted to see if participants would use similar or different language from each other to describe their experiences and perspectives. To continue, I used process coding where gerunds (“ing” words) are used to capture action in data (Saldana, 2011). I used process codes to cluster quotes to find connections with categories and themes. Process codes worked well alongside in vivo coding since I found some of the codes to be similar or the same. I wanted to compare the two types of codes to find similarities and differences in themes.

After assigning first-level codes to my data, I began doing second-level coding. I compared and analyzed my first-level codes for second-level coding and began clustering them on Microsoft Excel into themes. I began comparing all four transcripts to each other and narrowing down the content of my first-level codes. I started looking for patterns and connections amongst my first-level codes to organize them into categories and to find emerging themes. I made a note of how many codes were within a category and began assigning themes to those categories.

Developing and assessing the data involves abstracting beyond codes and themes and moving toward the larger meaning of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I took the codes and categories that had emerged within my data and organized them into themes. The main themes

were based on my descriptive and reflective notes, and data going into my interviews and are an interpretation of my hunches, insights, and intuition (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From my main themes, I began to visualize my data.

I represented and visualized the patterns and connections of data into categories and themes that represent my results and discussion (see Table 1 and Table 2 for themes, categories, and codes). Charts and illustrations portray an inductive analysis that begins with the raw data consisting of multiple sources of information and broadens into specific themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Table 1 and Table 2 provide a visual for my data collection which demonstrates how I generated the common themes by labeling some codes used during the data analysis.

Managing Bias. Throughout my interviews, I continued to bracket my assumptions and thoughts away from my research. Once I added pseudonyms to the transcripts and coded them, I did a member check with my supervisor to check the validity of my study and to make sure my preconceived biases were not influencing my codes. To develop and assess interpretations of the data, I had to acknowledge participants' protection from harm and disclosure of comprehensive findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although I anonymized the data, participants could be identifiable based on their quotes. I recognized that this research has limitations due to the participants' representativeness. This research is limited to teachers who have taught for at least two years within a specific inner-city school in western BC. To maintain my data's validity, I member checked (Creswell & Poth, 2018) my data and my analytic memos (Saldana, 2011) with my supervisor to ensure my biases were limited. My supervisor provided feedback to ensure salient points, negative points, and surprises made sense and related back to my codes, quotes, and transcripts. I shared data with my supervisor with the intention of making sure my data and the codes given best interpreted and represented participants' views. My supervisor approved

my data analysis which confirmed that my researcher bias did not skew the data. My interpretation of the data and common themes strengthen my study as it is captured through participants' perceptions of teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

Strength of Study. To determine the strength of this study, I referred to the *triple crisis of representation, legitimization, and praxis*. The triple crisis of representation, legitimization, and praxis looks at qualitative research and how the three crises are coded within the social theory of a researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, MacMath, 2009). Within the crisis, there are two assumptions of qualitative research. The first assumption is that researchers cannot capture lived experiences without social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The second assumption requires research to be 're-thinked' in terms of validity, generalizability, and reliability within the researcher's paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I used representation to treat participants with respect and care by cleaning their data, editing their transcripts, and bracketing my biases to listen to participants' perspectives. I used legitimization by using participants' quotes throughout my discussion to display how I assigned codes based on what participants said. The use of quotes allows readers to convey their meaning of the codes used and relate it to the transcript. I also continued to be transparent of my biases by acknowledging them before my research and taking reflective notes to record hunches I had after each interview. Through data analysis, I continued to bracket my biases and opinions so the themes I found best represented my results. I used praxis by having a passion for teaching in inner-city schools and transferring my teaching passion to interviewing teachers in inner-city schools on the phenomenon of teacher turnover.

Through interviews, my research presented common themes from teachers' perceptions regarding the potential conditions that determine whether teachers stay or leave inner-city

schools. The results of this study examined potential factors that influence teacher turnover with the understanding that they can also contribute to better teacher retention in inner-city schools.

Results

The purpose of this study was for participants to share their perceptions on the phenomenon of teacher turnover in inner-city schools to better understand how to improve teacher retention in these schools. Four participants responded to guiding questions around the inquiry question of this study that asked, “What are the conditions that cause teachers to stay or leave inner-city schools?” Three themes emerged from participant interviews as to why they had left their schools. These themes were: (a) lack of resources, (b) unsupportive school community, and (c) limited support. Similarly, two themes were generated from participant responses to the question regarding why they had stayed at a particular school. These themes were (a) positive relationships, and (b) supportive school community.

Table 1

Themes, Categories, and Codes for Factors Causing Teachers to Leave

Themes	Categories	Codes
Lack of Resources	Families	“Getting children designated” “Lack of resources”
	Teachers	“Right resources”
	Teacher Training	“Learning and training with trauma informed practice”
Unsupportive School Community	Poor Communication	“Poor communication” “I’m not being heard”
	Negative School Culture	“Families don’t feel welcomed or included”
	Lack of Structure and Organization	“Having expectations and rules” “Strong structures”

Limited Support	Student Behaviour	“Safety concerns me”
		“Behaviours taking over”
	Diverse Needs	“Mental health issues”
		“trauma”
		“Not meeting grade level”
	More Support Staff	“Lack of manpower”
		“Help needed everywhere”
		“Seeding student support”
	Teacher Wellbeing	“Burnt out”
		“Stressed and overwhelmed”
		“My own trauma”

Factors Causing Teachers to Leave

Participants discussed their ‘lived realities’ and the factors that caused them to leave or consider leaving inner-city schools. A common theme that caused participants to leave was due to a lack of resources.

Lack of Resources

It was important to participants that resources were available to teachers and to students and their families. Several codes were used to formulate categories for the theme involving lack of resources. Categories included: (a) families, (b) teachers, and (c) teacher training.

Families. Participants discussed the inequities due to a lack of resources available to students and their families within inner-city schools. Limited resources made it difficult for teachers to support students’ and their families. When asked to define what an inner-city school was, “Quinn” stated, “it’s a school full of learners with great potential but who unfortunately don’t have the same resources, home environments, or the adults to actually help them with their growth.” When asked about the challenges of teaching in an inner-city school, “Arian”

mentioned, “it’s important to get more resources in there because those families aren’t necessarily able to provide those things for their children.” Students need more access to resources since they do not always have the support at home. Arian added that the school district needed to provide access for more resources for students:

Access to seeing a counselor or getting them access to outside supports in the community, or behaviour programs because a lot of it is rooted in mental health issues and the kids don’t have control over it, but they need support. If they’re not getting it at school, they’re not getting it at home and it’s not really helping the problem. They’re going to go out into society and the community and it’s not going to end up well.

“Maya” stated, “I don’t know how long I can go” with teaching many students with complex needs but not having support for them since “another challenge is there’s a three year wait list for Sunny Hill.” Sunny Hill is a health center in British Columbia that provides specialized developmental assessments and rehabilitation services for children, youth, and their families (BC Children’s Hospital, 2023). She mentioned, “there’s five children I’m worried about...four are on a waitlist for assessment¹.” Arian agreed, “with so many kids in inner-city schools it takes so long to get them designated so it’s hard to meet everybody where they are at all the time.” Maya compared these challenges at her current school to her previous experience teaching at an inner-city school in another school district in British Columbia. At her old school they had, “pediatricians coming through our school and looking and seeing. So, if we could have

¹ From my experience, families must first consult their family doctor or a pediatrician who then provides a signed confirmation that the child is eligible for a further psychological educational assessment at Sunny Hill Hospital. This assessment can potentially determine if a child is eligible for a Ministry of Education funded designation. There is a lengthy waitlist for this assessment process.

something, even just a slight, minute little crumb of what we had [there], I think that would help.”

When asked to define what an inner-city school was, Maya stated, “poverty of children and family [and] inequity of schools.” Maya mentioned concerns with lack of resources involving getting food for students since her current school is, “heavily reliant on different things” such as, “the firefighters actually pay[ing] for the food and the snacks [and] the church is having...volunteers making lunches and a child can’t go pick up a breakfast because it has to be scheduled.” If a student needs a lunch one day at school, it has to be organized with an outside agency. Maya compared her current experience with resources for families to her previous school. She stated:

Inner-city in “Hillside” meant wraparound service. Yes, there was poverty...but there was also enhancement of family and community involvement, they had a family enhancement worker that would help bring families in. We had indigenous teachers and an indigenous worker working together. They had the supports and extra staffing and materials and resources to help support the inner-city. Schools with resources, the connections, and partnerships of a variety of community services, supporting children, youth, and families. Programs to build on social emotional learning [and] early intervention programs.

Maya felt that the lack of resources her current school was facing was a challenge compared to the previous school she worked in. When comparing resources in her current school, Maya stated: “We must be a community, but where is the community?” Inner-city schools and their districts need to secure resources at the school level and within the community to be more accessible for students and families. Resources include food programs within the school,

programs and partnerships, pediatricians being more accessible, and being able to provide appropriate designations in a timely manner. More resources could benefit students and their families, meet the needs of students in the classroom, and as well, increase teacher retention in inner-city schools.

Teachers. When asked about decisions that made teachers leave schools, participants also discussed the lack of resources available for teachers. Many early career teachers accept jobs in inner-city schools as their first teaching assignment and as such, have not acquired many personal resources for themselves or their classroom. In previous schools, Arian felt that many new teachers were entering with limited resources for teaching, stating, “teachers that have been teaching for a long time, have those materials and resources. But in inner-city it’s just that cycle of new people...and I don’t think it’s really doing the kids a favor all the time.” Arian felt that limited resources negatively influenced student learning. She felt that:

The quality definitely suffers, it’s just busy work that the kids are doing, and they’re not being taught anything new. [It is important that] people acknowledge that turnover in inner-city schools is so high for a reason and work to kind of change that [because] those kids deserve people that want to be there and stay there, to make positive changes.

Arian believed that what happens in inner-city schools is, “people come in, they’ll have ideas...but after a couple years they burn out and [are] forced to move on...It’s a vicious cycle.” Arian discussed the reasons she left her previous school and mentioned she felt “sad” and “heartbroken” with how her school was functioning:

The district level needs to make changes and come in and actually spend time in inner-city schools and understand what’s not working and how we can fix it...Inner-city kids are super vulnerable kids and we should be doing all of what we can do to put them on a

path to success and change so they can have a positive impact on our community [but] I don't feel like that's happening right now [and it's] really sad and heartbreaking to see. Maya agreed that teachers are leaving her school since "it just seems like there's a burnout" as she discussed "[needing] different agencies" working with the school so teachers and the school community can help families with food support and community programs.

Additionally, Arian noticed a "lack of resources like art supplies, nice books in the library, and things for teachers to use [which puts] extra pressure on teachers that doesn't need to be there to find those things on their own." When teachers must purchase their own resources, it influences their decision to leave inner-city schools.

As participants discussed the challenges of teaching in inner-city schools, they also mentioned a lack of resources available to teachers that focus on students' mental health. Maya stated feeling "sad" for her students when they are "having fits or crying and screaming for hours [and] where's their dignity? [Since] it's not just about the children, it's mental health. This year, the mental health is beyond what I can do." Maya reinforced the idea that teaching in inner-city schools, especially in recent years, needs to focus on providing mental health resources for teachers to support their students. When asked about challenges that made participants leave their previous schools, Arian commented:

It makes you feel sick when [students] are all sitting there, they want to learn, but you can't actually teach them because you're dealing with a behaviour or trying to just keep a kid in the room or keep him from tearing the room apart. I think that's the biggest challenge and I don't think that will change unless more resources and more supports are given to inner-city schools.

Teacher turnover happens in inner-city schools due to limited resources including early career teachers having limited resources, supplies within the school, teaching resources such as mental health resources, and resources provided from the district.

Teacher Training. Participants discussed the need for effective teacher training in inner-city schools. “Quinn” mentioned that “I kind of felt inadequate, I wasn’t sure if I was actually teaching kids and I started to kind of doubt myself as a teacher because I was worried for [students’] emotional needs.” She continued to explain her classroom dynamic and stated:

Their behaviours and trauma were getting a bit too much at certain times and being in an inner-city school the whole school is always very busy and I understood that not all the people who can come to help could get there all the time.

Although there were adults in the school building that could support students, they could not always make it to her classroom, which left her alone to deal with students’ behaviour and trauma: “Doing the teaching program, it’s about teaching kids certain academic things, but I wasn’t sure I was getting to all that. So, I wasn’t sure if I was cut out for this in such a high needs school.” Quinn commented on the training she received as a teacher candidate and how she ultimately did not feel prepared for teaching in an inner-city school. When asked if anything could have been done differently to make Quinn stay at her previous school, she responded, “possibly more learning or training with trauma informed learning and teaching might have been more helpful.” Quinn stated, “we don’t need adults who trigger students [and] not just anyone but people who understand and know and have a heart to work with students with different needs.” When asked about challenges that have caused participants to consider moving schools, Maya mentioned a “challenge” is there’s “not enough support around and everyone’s just doing their best, and some days the best is not enough...there’s no money for the district but if they

could just be more creative.” For instance, Maya discussed teacher training she had received when district staff came to support her school. She felt, “that could have been done differently [and] rather than have lectures and workshops, but to be hands on...something needs to happen [as] it just seems like the world is more complex now.” The influence of having an unsupportive school community was also noted by participants.

Unsupportive School Community

All participants felt that the strength of a school is its community. Through discussion, the themes of (a) poor communication, (b) negative school culture, and (c) lack of structure and organization emerged as critical factors that influenced participants’ decisions to leave an inner-city school.

Poor Communication. “Dina” felt that administrators needed to prepare teachers ahead of time for upcoming events and general school communication during the school day. She mentioned the reason for leaving her previous school was the “unpredictability” and the “challenge with administration communicating [when] sometimes things are just sprung on [teachers].” Dina explained:

There’s a student in my class who is consistently getting into fights outside and I haven’t been told anything...there’s not really a consistent message that we’re being told to share with students and as a school culture... [There is] a lack of communication to families and to the teacher...What is the strategy? What is the plan that we’re going to do? How are we going to handle this situation?.

Importantly, Dina concluded, the “extra stress of not being told anything is the reason why I am leaving.” Arian also brought up challenges with communication and stated:

I ended up leaving my last school because there was poor communication. I think communication is the biggest and most important thing at a school, especially at an inner-city school. There's so many different pieces and things going on each day, so much trauma and things going on at home for the kids, that if there's not a good communication between resource [teachers] and the [classroom] teachers, or administration and the teachers, then it just all falls apart.

Arian also provided an example where she felt "frustrated" by not having "admin follow up on an incident that happened with a student" outside of the classroom. The administration had "made contact with the family to let them know then didn't let [her] know what the conversation was, what they talked about, or what the follow up was." Arian and Dina found that more school communication was needed from their school administrators. Interestingly, Maya believed that better communication was needed from the school district level regarding listening to teachers' concerns, "I feel like we're not being heard, or I'm not being heard sometimes and it's not admin's fault. From an inner-city kindergarten perspective, [students] come to you [and] you don't know their history, there's no files." Maya discussed her experience:

They won't give transition meetings because [students] are not designated. But wouldn't that be helpful? If you just spent a few more hours meeting with families with so many 'wonders' we have about the children. Wouldn't you want to know that before school started?

When asked why there was no help with transition meetings, Maya replied, "it was the district [that didn't give support]" since at the school level "our resource teacher was pleading [for transition meetings]." When discussing communication from the district, Maya stated, "with one severe behaviour I have in my classroom, we did get a transition meeting which was so helpful,

but what about the other children?” Maya believed it “would have been better” if “we had gotten to [have transition meetings] with the families.” Effective communication in any organization is vital to creating a vibrant and positive culture, none more so than in a school environment.

Negative School Culture. Participants commented on having positive experiences with the culture of their school and how this impacted their decisions to stay. Quinn stated feeling “welcomed” in her school community and Dina mentioned “feeling supported by staff.” Conversely, Maya described the inner-city community she currently works in, “it’s a different culture [and] we all have lives, we don’t have time. There’s no professional development, but we need to come together as a community because so many people are struggling and it’s really sad.” To help retain teachers, a school culture could involve giving teachers time to work together to help form a sense of community. Maya explained the challenges with the culture of her school and said, “it’s just a revolving door [and] it just seems like everyone’s leaving [so] why am I still here?” She concluded, “I’m here now, I don’t know if I’m staying, and I’ve never felt that before.” Maya discussed the challenges of teaching at her current school and stated, “something has to happen...you don’t have a lot of parent involvement or family involvement. I’m not sure how we can change that. But the fact that [families] don’t really feel welcomed or included.” Maya believed that the school culture was not as welcoming as it could be for families.

Lack of Structure and Organization. When asked what a typical day teaching in an inner-city school looks like, Arian and Quinn mentioned the importance of having structure. Arian replied, “for me teaching at an inner-city school, it was all about structure and routine. Ensuring that the kids knew what to expect and keeping things as consistent as possible for them.” Quinn stated, “having structure and routine so students are not caught off guard and going

through the shape of the day with them is really important and having expectations.” Participants also discussed the issue of a lack of structure in schools from the vantage of the school’s administration. Dina declared, “what made me leave last year and what’s making me go to a different school next year is the structure and organization.” Dina discussed challenges when dealing with student misbehaviour due to “no real structure put into place.” Dina felt, “very frustrated” with administration having “no follow up with me or the students” and needing “structure in place [as] to how kids should be treating each other [because] what happens when they’re not treating each other with respect?” Quinn similarly mentioned a need for having “certain structures in place” including, “rules within the school or expectations that have to be a school wide approach to how things are dealt with.” Quinn believed that if there was more structure in her previous school, “there might have been a little bit more control [if] students are expected not to just wander around the hallways, if that was a school wide expectation and everyone was helping with that, maybe that could have changed.” Much of the participants’ discussion regarding school structures and organization places emphasis on the need for varying levels of support to reduce teacher turnover.

Limited Support

The theme of limited support was the most often mentioned observation by all participants. Themes of limited support were coded into the categories of: (a) student behaviour, (b) diverse needs of students, (c) more support staff, and (d) teacher wellbeing.

Student Behaviour. Student behaviour was a common theme discussed by all participants. Dina, Arian, and Quinn explained the reason they left their previous schools was due to the challenges with students’ behaviours. Dina felt that she was “more stressed when I

was having a lot more behaviours in class and I really wasn't getting the support." Arian also expressed similar concerns:

With inner-city there's a lot of mental health issues and trauma and with that there comes big behaviours and I definitely felt there was not enough support from admin, from resource, and even the district when dealing with that... You're only one person in the classroom and I don't think it's fair to expect teachers to teach 20-some kids and deal with four, five, really complex kids that have major behavioral issues without really any additional support.

Arian mentioned an example of receiving more support for student behaviours, since relocating to a different school.

Rather than tearing the room apart or the class leaving the room, the child comes out [of the classroom] and they talk through and have time to calm down with the youth care worker, admin, or resource [teacher] [then] they fill out a little form together...bring it to the classroom teacher and talk about what happened.

Quinn mentioned, "the biggest challenges were behaviours for me personally [and] I loved every student in a professional way, however their behaviours and trauma were getting a bit too much at certain times." Quinn described her experience at the school she decided to leave:

I've had many room-clears and that was really tough. When students would go into the red zone and red zone looks very different in inner-city. There are objects being thrown around, there's things being cleared off shelves, tables being flipped, swearing, doors slammed, things break. It's sad to say but that's typical, it's a common occurrence.

Maya also mentioned struggles with students' behaviours and stated:

The safety concerns me when friends are getting hit or the adults are getting hit, [the] only thing for me to leave would be the challenges [due to concerns with] the dignity of the children, it's horrible that they [must] show their most inner-feelings and have it on display for people in the hallways or other classes to hear.

Maya expressed concerns when students with severe behaviours, "if [students] finally do get designated, it's the children with the behaviours that take over and then the children that are non-verbal or have no language are not getting any support because of the behaviour of the other children."

Diverse Needs. Within the theme of a lack of support, participants expressed concern with the challenges of meeting the diverse needs of students. Importantly, they commented on requiring additional support to meet students' academic and social-emotional needs, as well as ways to support students' homelives. Dina mentioned, "you're going to get stressed because you have to realize that with no support it's hard to meet all my kids where they are at." Quinn stated that there are:

A lot of different needs academically and there's so many different levels [when] kids are really academically low, you see a lot of rudeness and behaviours come out because they don't want to show you that they're struggling [when] maybe a couple [students] would be at grade level academically [in areas of] literacy, with reading, writing; which is a struggle for a lot of learners [and] I saw that more in the inner-city school.

Additionally, participants felt there needed to be more support for students' social and emotional needs. Maya mentioned, "challenges" of "meeting everyone's needs, social emotional needs, self-regulation, trauma informed practice, language learners, and speech and language." When discussing why she left her previous school, Arian mentioned how her previous school could

have used more “experienced” support as “I think the kids at that last school were definitely more complex and that there’s definitely more kids with mental health issues.” Arian expressed a “challenge” that “bothered” her:

In inner-city schools, [students] can be traumatized by some of the things that they see, that I feel like you wouldn’t normally see at another school and acknowledging that sometimes that can cause them further trauma and it could be kids that already have trauma from home, but they don’t present like they do.

Inner-city schools include students where “life is really challenging, there’s lots of siblings, families are stressed, and they’re just barely getting by” (Maya). These diverse needs are challenges which influence teacher turnover in these schools.

More Support Staff. Another factor that participants discussed, that potentially influenced teacher turnover, was the lack of support staff in their schools. Quinn reflected on her teaching experience at the school she left and mentioned, “I had an amazing EA [education assistant] and we worked together really hard, but even with that we still needed help.” Within the school there were “too many classes who needed help, too many students who needed help, and it felt like a ball of yarn that was all tangled up and there was no way to untangle it.” Quinn found it “difficult” that the school she was previously at “had a focus on literacy” and that her school:

Got a lot of support from the district with [literacy], but I feel the support that we need was more manpower, because when the behaviours weren’t dealt with right away, the academics were hard. How are we going to get escalated kids to work on their letters?

Although there was academic support from her district, with so many student behaviours she could not always teach academics. When asked if anything could have been done differently to

keep teachers at her previous school, Quinn stated, “to control their behaviours I think it might have been different if we had more support, if we had more people who could actually come right away”, but she understood that “it was such a busy school that help was needed everywhere.” At Maya’s school, she also mentioned there’s “not enough support” and “I don’t know if I can do this every year.” Maya mentioned, “it’s not admins fault, they’re running around with their heads chopped off. I have support because we need it, but that’s taking from someone else.” Quinn agreed that more people were needed in her previous school since “that was a constant thing” and “that’s probably where the burnout came.” Teachers are leaving inner-city schools or having thoughts about leaving their schools due to needing more support staff. Participant responses suggest that increasing the number of support staff will help to support students with behaviours and diverse needs so that teachers can focus on teaching academics. This would also go a long way in benefiting not only student well-being, but also that of all teachers.

Teacher Wellbeing. Many of all the participants’ were focused on the urgency of teacher wellbeing as a strong indicator as to whether a teacher would stay or leave a school. Arian reflected on moving to a new school and stated, “now that I’ve actually left that school, I realize that I was actually really burnt out and now I just feel so much better physically and mentally.” Similarly, Quinn reflected on teaching at her previous school and stated, “it was hard” as she realized “if things weren’t going to change then I wasn’t sure I could be rooted there. So that’s why I had to look around because the students’ trauma became traumatizing for me, like secondary trauma.” Maya commented that at her current school, “there are many people that have been on stress leave, I don’t know how you can come back from this. I definitely have some

trauma from teaching [and] after 25 years it is taking a toll on my own trauma.” Arian felt “burnt out” from teaching at her previous school:

By the end of the day, it would hit me how stressed I was or how overwhelmed I was [and] there hasn’t been anybody that’s been there for a long time...that just goes to show the toll that it takes on your mental and physical well-being.

Dina mentioned that she felt “heartbroken” leaving her school since she “loves the kids and the challenge is nice, but it is stressful.” Maya discussed her thoughts on her current school:

I can’t go on like this, I don’t think for long. Already, I’m not sleeping, I have heartburn, I’m not wanting to get up in the morning...It just seems like the world is more complex now, children are more complex, society is more complex and there’s so much pressure on everybody, even us teachers.

When asked if anything could be done to help keep Maya from leaving, she replied, “I don’t know what the solution is but what’s not happening, is not working.” Teachers are leaving inner-city schools due to the limited support for teacher wellbeing, especially in cases where complex trauma factors are involved.

Participants discussed their perceptions of teacher turnover and the challenges that can cause teachers to leave inner-city schools. These challenges were presented within the themes including a lack of resources, unsupported school community, and limited support. Participants also discussed factors that contributed to teachers staying in inner-city schools.

Factors Causing Teachers to Stay

Throughout all interviews participants discussed the positive factors that caused them to stay at specific inner-city schools. Themes that emerged from these discussions were: (a) positive relationships, and (b) supportive school community.

Table 2

Themes, Categories, and Codes for Factors Causing Teachers to Stay

Themes	Categories	Codes
Positive Relationships	Staff	“Support each other” “I like the community and staff”
	Students	“The reason I show up” “Crave that relationship”
Supportive School Community	Positive School Culture	“Sensing a community” “To be part of something”
	Positive Communication	“Supportive administrator” “Regular communication”

Positive Relationships

A significant recurring theme during interviews was that of positive relationships and its correlation with why teachers decided to remain in their specific schools. Relationships were categorized into two themes: a) staff, and (b) students.

Staff. Participants were asked about the joys of teaching in inner-city schools and mentioned that positive relationships with staff were one of the main reasons they stayed. Arian mentioned that at her previous school, “the biggest reason that I stayed was the connection that I had with staff.” She “enjoyed going to work each day [and] connecting with colleagues. It was nice to work in an environment where people understood each other and there were positive relationships in the building.” Dina agreed and stated:

The staff make it so much better because you have people to lean on, even through the tough times...you have them to laugh about it and have that shoulder to cry on...but also to get advice from, especially the veteran teachers who have done more years than me [and] I felt really good [about the] relationships with the staff that I worked with.

Arian, however, felt “frustrated” with the challenging conditions of her previous school because, “if the conditions were better, I would have stayed and wanted to stay because I like the community and the staff, but I just got to a point where I couldn’t do it anymore.” Additionally, Quinn stated, “I was willing to stay in that school because of the staff [since] I connected with the staff, [but] some things were actually a bit tough, that’s why I kind of looked around as well.” Although relationships were the factors keeping Arian, Quinn, and Dina at specific inner-city schools, they weren’t strong enough compared to the factors causing them to leave.

Students. Relationships with students were another factor that caused participants to stay at their school. When asked about the joys of teaching in inner-city schools, Maya responded, “to see children come back and to visit you, that’s been awesome [and] to give them the success and to get the support they need.” Maya emphasized the importance of relationships when she stated, “I’m just trying to build relationships, it is where it’s really worthwhile if I can make a difference in some of these children’s lives.” Dina also valued relationships as, “students are the reason I show up every day because I love them [and] especially being in an inner-city school they really crave that relationship with their teachers.” Quinn compared her previous teaching experience in a “more affluent neighborhood” and mentioned:

The connection is very different in an inner-city school. [Students] pour out their hearts, once they feel safe and they will share their deepest struggles...although sometimes their behaviour may not show it, I know they appreciate their teachers because they know that they are loved.

Quinn mentioned “joys come with a big smile” when noticing that students “enjoy being a part of the school or classroom [and] when they remember [her] as a teacher and will visit again.”

When asked about the factors that caused participants to stay at a school, Arian replied:

The reason that I went to another inner-city school was the impact that you can have there versus a school where the kids don't really need or want to have that relationship with their teacher because they get that at home already.

Although Arian left her previous school due to many factors, she went to another inner-city school because of the relationships teachers can have with students in those schools. Establishing healthy relationships with teachers and students is essential to fostering a positive school community and potentially reducing teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

Supportive School Community

Within the theme of supportive school community, two categories emerged: a) positive school culture, and (b) positive communication.

Positive School Culture. A school's culture is the lifeblood that creates a school community. Dina discussed her experience teaching in an inner-city school and mentioned that "it can get really stressful and chaotic, but it can also be a lot of fun, especially with staff members where you can kind of just laugh about it and have a chaotic day and be okay with it." Dina also mentioned she returned to her previous inner-city school as she "had a really good time there [and] just felt welcomed." Quinn mentioned she liked teaching at schools where she had "a sense of community [and] where you feel like you're safe there too and we support each other." Maya also mentioned a positive example where everyone worked together in the school to support students and families, "it felt like a big community [and] you were lucky to be a part of that community [and] to be a part of something bigger and everyone seemed to be on board, it was pretty awesome."

Positive Communication. One participant discussed the reasons they stayed at their inner-city school and mentioned several points relating to positive communication within the

school. When describing her current school, Arian mentioned, “it’s organized, there’s good communication, there’s regular communication, there’s support, their open to talking to you whenever you need to.” When asked why she stayed so long at her previous inner-city school, Arian mentioned communication by her administrator listening to her needs and following through with them:

Having a supportive administrator, or just one that you feel cares about you...I always felt like if I needed something that I could go to them and talk to them about it, and they would listen and genuinely try to do their best to help me. I think those were the main factors that kept me there for as long as I was there.

Positive communication was a major factor in keeping this participant at this inner-city school.

The results from this study explored three key themes that caused teachers to leave inner-city schools. The complexity of these themes is prevalent within any education system. Additionally, two themes surfaced that helped keep teachers at schools and can be argued as important factors school districts need to build upon to retain teachers. These key themes are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

From personal experience teaching in an inner-city school, I became aware that there were issues with teacher turnover in our school. Each year, I witnessed many teachers leaving our school and even a few resigning from teaching altogether. I couldn’t help but feel frustrated and disheartened for teachers as I assumed it had taken numerous factors to cause them to leave. I became curious of what the factors were that caused teachers to leave schools and the factors that caused teachers to stay.

The purpose of this research was to understand participants' perceptions of teacher turnover so that school and district administrators can gain a better understanding of what is needed to retain teachers in inner-city schools. I hoped to explore and better understand participants' lived experiences of teaching in inner-city schools and the deep-rooted factors that potentially led them to leave inner-city schools. My assumptions regarding the urgent need for increased support in the classroom were echoed by all participants as being crucial for teacher wellbeing. Ongoing professional development was also a consistent theme that confirmed my assumptions that additional resources are another important factor to improving teacher retention. Additionally, participants' observations about the importance of building a positive school community provided a new insight as another critical factor for teacher retention. It struck me as to how important a schools' culture is and the positive relationships within it are what a community seeks to nurture to become a thriving and caring environment. Factors including resources, support, and positive school community have great potential to retain teachers in inner-city schools.

Resources

The results of this study highlighted the importance of teachers' urgent need for more resources in inner-city schools. Teachers felt that more resources were needed for students' and their families as well as for teachers. Resources for teachers included training on student mental health and ongoing professional development.

All participants teach in a school district where the inclusion model for meeting the diverse learning needs of all students is practiced. This proved to be a challenge for participants due to the limited resources for students with trauma, mental health concerns, speech or language challenges, and learning disabilities. Gilmour et al. (2022) believe that future research needs to

investigate the negative association between the percentage of SWD in teachers' classes and the rate of teachers leaving and identify potential resources that can best support general education teachers working with these students. All participants in this study felt additional resources were needed to effectively meet the needs of students experiencing trauma and mental health issues. Hansen (2022) also found that "high-poverty schools need more resources and teaching specialists, not more blame and stigma" (p.66).

Quinn mentioned the behaviour of her students may have changed with "more learning or training on trauma informed learning and teaching [because] when the behaviours weren't dealt with right away, the academics were hard...how are you going to get escalated kids to work on their letters?" Two of this study's participants noted that ongoing professional development in trauma informed practices would help retain teachers in inner-city schools. Hansen (2022) believes that more specialized training in inner-city schools would mitigate the profound effects of poverty and benefit students' learning. Pre-service teaching programs that focus solely on teaching academics do not easily transfer to teaching academics in highly diverse inner-city schools. Teachers who reported higher levels of stress had more students in their classrooms with mental health problems (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Mindfulness training and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) for students is a necessary part of teacher training which can help teachers deal with classroom diversity and behaviours (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Teachers were challenged to meet students' needs due to not having enough resources or support.

Support

Other contributing factors that caused participants to leave inner-city schools included a need for more support staff in the building and a need for more support for teacher wellbeing. Participants stated they felt inadequate in their teaching due to not being able to meet all their

students' diverse needs with limited staffing support. Hansen (2022) stated that "many children from highly stressed homes have special needs that can only be addressed through additional staff" (p. 68). Participants expressed that they needed more 'bodies' in their school which included additional support staff such as educational assistants, resource teachers, school counselors, and youth care workers. As well, additional external supports through direct contact with social workers, counselors, and doctors or pediatricians could help assess children for potential learning or social-emotional disabilities. If external supports are more readily available to students and their families, it could provide additional opportunities for funding and resources for these children.

Hansen (2022) reviewed evidence that additional staff helps to increase student achievement and allows teachers to have more time to do the job they were trained for. As a teacher, I argue that when students' needs are not being met, there is an increase in student misbehaviour in the classroom. Smith and Smith (2006) found that more violence in urban schools contributed to teacher stress [and] stress was the general reason teachers decided to leave urban school settings. When teachers are constantly stressed it impacts their wellbeing and can lead to 'burn out'.

Participants commented on needing more support and how this resulted in them feeling stressed or burnt out, which ultimately led them to leave their school due to their mental and physical wellbeing. Participants all mentioned a love for teaching and a love for working with a more challenging student demographic. Staff who reported more efficacy in handling difficult behaviours and those who felt safe at their schools reported lower levels of burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017). Unfortunately, over time participants felt burnt out from the limited support they were receiving for teaching their diverse students. Schonert-Reichl (2017) found that 25% of

teachers' decisions to leave were related to student discipline problems and that stress and poor emotion management were the primary reasons teachers left their positions. Additionally, "teachers social-emotional competence and wellbeing strongly influence the learning context and the infusion of social emotional learning into classrooms and schools" (Schonert-Reichl, 2017, p. 139). When teachers are struggling with their wellbeing this can also influence students and their learning. When teachers became aware of their deteriorating wellbeing and experienced no additional support, they began to leave their schools. Another factor influencing teacher turnover that participants mentioned was having a positive school community.

Positive School Community

Participants agreed that having a positive school community helped to retain teachers at their schools longer. They mentioned that a positive school community needed to have open communication, consistent schoolwide structures, and positive relationships.

Participants mentioned when there was a lack of communication from administration it influenced the flow and organization within the school. Shuls and Flores (2020) found that a consistent theme across school districts was school buildings needed to be led by supportive leaders or administrative teams. Additionally, participants stated that many new or early career teachers begin their careers in inner-city schools and that it is important that school administrators provide these teachers with guidance and support. Supportive administrators need to take time or make time to help new teachers navigate challenges by working closely with teachers to solve problems (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Teachers feel supported when they receive a clear and consistent schoolwide system of organization established by their administrators.

Participants stated that a positive school community requires consistent school-wide expectations regarding discipline and appropriate student behaviour. This lack of a school-wide

structure was another factor for some of the participants leaving their schools. School principals play a significant role in communicating details of acceptable teaching behaviours and providing guidance (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Participants also mentioned that what kept them at their schools longer was the collegial relationships with their staff and students. Staff members who reported higher personal connectedness to their schools, students, and administration reported lower levels of burnout (O'Brennan et al., 2017).

The results of this study discussed three key aspects that are important for improving teacher retention in inner-city schools. These considerations could also help improve teacher wellbeing, keep teachers in the profession longer, and could benefit inner-city school communities by enhancing student learning through support for student academic and social-emotional needs.

Limitations

As with many studies, the design of this study is subject to limitations. The first limitation is the location of this study. This study took place in multiple inner-city school settings within one school district in Western British Columbia (BC). One participant had also taught within another inner-city school in a different school district in Western BC. Therefore, the results from this study may not be transferable to other urban areas outside of Western BC. This study did not explore teacher turnover in other school demographics, as it only focused on teachers' perspectives on inner-city schools.

A second limitation of this study is the limited sample size of participants. The four participants in this study were not representative of all teachers' perceptions of teaching in inner-city schools. Participants also taught within kindergarten to grade five elementary schools. This limitation may prevent findings from teachers' perceptions from inner city middle or high school

levels. All participants identified as female and go by “she” and “her” pronouns. This study did not investigate the perspectives of teachers with other genders. This study mostly focused on general education or enrolling teachers’ perceptions; however, two participants had also worked as specialist teachers within elementary schools.

A further limitation is participants were recruited through an email invitation, based on knowing participants, from having previously worked with them. Although having this collegial relationship with participants allowed them to share more openly and honestly, it is possible it could skew findings. From the limitations of this study, I believe it is imperative to engage in further research on the factors that influence teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

Implications and Recommendations

This research study confirms the importance of recognizing teacher turnover in inner-city schools and working towards improving teacher retention in these schools. Through this study, it was found that many factors influence teacher turnover. Further research can examine how support for teacher wellbeing and student learning can improve teacher retention in inner-city schools. I believe it would be beneficial to do a longitudinal, mixed-methods study on teacher turnover within a range of inner-city schools across several districts in Western BC, to find out the rate of teachers leaving schools and the correlation regarding support, professional development, and school leadership. The following topics should be considered for further research and how they influence teacher turnover.

Support

There is limited research on teacher turnover within inner-city elementary schools in British Columbia. More research is needed regarding teacher attrition within urban areas of the province and how this is potentially impacting student achievement and success. Through this

study, a crucial factor influencing teachers' decisions to leave focused on needing support for students' diverse academic and social-emotional needs, sufficient resources for teachers and students, as well as general mental health and wellbeing for students and teachers. Teachers are not able to adequately meet the needs of all their students and are consistently battling for more support. As a result, teachers are feeling disheartened and burnt out from the education system. Further research should investigate the depths of these support systems across more school districts in Western BC and how they are also affecting students over longer periods of time.

Inclusion

It is important that further research is conducted within British Columbia school districts regarding the Ministry of Education's inclusive policy for equitable education for all students (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). It is important for research to further examine the inclusion model since many teachers in this study admitted the reasons, they are leaving schools is due to a lack of resources and support when working with the diversity of their classrooms. Every child has a right to an education, and I personally feel like our school system is failing the success and capabilities of many of our students through limited support and funding for students with diverse needs in the classroom. From my experience, as students receive ministry designations, they are not provided adequate support and resources to learn and thrive to their fullest potential. Unfortunately, it takes the advocacy efforts of parents, teachers, the school community, and external agencies to pressure school districts and government bodies for much needed support. An inclusive model of education is a step towards benefiting our future communities, but I personally believe that much more is needed to meet students' diverse needs and to help reduce teacher attrition.

Professional Development

To help retain teachers, more research needs to be conducted regarding providing teachers with relevant professional development for teachers to feel successful in inner-city schools. Further research needs to investigate how school districts and universities can better prepare early career teachers or pre-service teachers with the skills and strategies to work with the complex behaviours and needs of students' families, especially within inner-city schools. Research in the areas of teaching training involving social and emotional learning, trauma informed practice, and universal design for learning (UDL) would also be an important step to promoting teacher wellbeing and effectiveness in all school settings. UDL is a framework that promotes inclusive education to help all students engage in their learning (Tomas et al., 2021).

School Leadership

Throughout this study, many conversations focused on school community and communication, particularly regarding the formal leadership of a school. More research should be conducted on the quality of school leadership programs that need to emphasize the importance of equipping district and school-based leaders with the skills to better organize and communicate in inner-city schools. While there is current research literature regarding the influence of school leadership in elementary schools in BC, more research needs to be done with a focus on inner-city school leadership. Additionally, it would be beneficial to research school leaders' perspectives on the influence teacher turnover has on their school leadership and their school community.

It is essential that further research is considered to help improve teacher retention rates in inner-city schools. Researchers need to look further at how support, professional development,

and school leadership influence teacher turnover. Furthermore, research needs to investigate how teacher turnover in these schools may affect students and their learning.

Conclusion

I began this study inspired to continue to be an advocate for myself and teachers within the education system in British Columbia. From my teaching experience, I viewed the teaching profession as not sustainable, especially within inner-city schools. I was curious as to the factors that influence teacher turnover in inner-city schools since many teachers were leaving my school. The results of this study give me hope that education systems will consider the factors that influence turnover with the aim of improving teacher retention. It is my intention to present these results to my school district so that they can better understand the importance of what is needed to improve teacher retention, not only in inner city schools, but all schools.

I hope that this study has given voice to the many teachers working within inner-city schools. It is crucial that further research investigates the influence teacher turnover has on students in inner-city schools. My intention for this study was to bring awareness to the many challenges that are faced by teachers and to highlight the urgent need required to increase teacher retention to benefit inner-city school communities.

I felt a connection to participants' emotions and responses regarding teacher turnover in inner-city schools. I was encouraged by participants' passion to work in these schools and their dedication and love toward teaching students with diverse academic, emotional, and behavioural needs. However, I could sense how they were overcome by the challenges of limited support and resources. An unexpected outcome of this study was the effect of being immersed in the setting had on my role as colleague and researcher.

This research exploration has sparked my desire to continue to advocate for what inner-city schools need to become positive and caring places for all children. It has also inspired me to further pursue leadership opportunities by continuing to be a mentor within my school and district. I have learned much from participants' perspectives and hope to reach out to them often to collaboratively nurture a school community that welcomes all students, their families and is a place where teachers want to be.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval

Human Research Ethics Board - Certificate of Ethical Approval

HREB Protocol No: 101162

Principal Investigator: Mrs. Katie Dickie

Team Members: Mrs. Katie Dickie (Principal Investigator)

Mr. Luigi DeMarzo (Co-Investigator)

Title: Teachers' perspectives on teacher turnover in inner-city schools.

Department: Faculty of Education, Community & Human Development\Teacher Education

Effective: November 17, 2022

Expiry: November 16, 2023

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) has reviewed and approved the ethics of the above research. The HREB is constituted and operated in accordance with the requirements of the UFV Policy on Human Research Ethics and the current Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2).

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Approval is for one year. A Request for Renewal must be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date.
3. Modifications to the approved research or research team must be submitted as an Amendment to be reviewed and approved by the HREB before the changes can be implemented. If the changes are substantial, a new request for approval must be sought. *An exception can be made where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (TPCS2 Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the HREB within 5 business days.
4. If an adverse incident occurs, an Adverse Incident Event form must be completed and submitted.
5. During the project period, the HREB must be notified of any issues that may have ethical implications.
6. A Final Report Event Form must be submitted to the HREB when the research is complete or terminated.

*Please note a Research Continuity Plan is no longer required.

Thank you, and all the best with your research.

UFV Human Research Ethics Board

****Do not reply to this email****

Appendix B

Email for Participation

Cc

Add a subject

Hello,

You are receiving this email as an invitation to be a part of my research study on teacher turnover. If you are interested, you will participate in a semi-structured interview with me, Katie Dickie, the Principle Investigator. Our interview will take place over Zoom and will be recorded. Please see the attached consent letter for information regarding your participation and confidentiality. Please see the attached interview script, to review the questions. Ethics has been approved by the UFV Human Research Ethics Board. This is voluntary and confidential.

Thank you,
Katie

Katie Dickie
Katherine.Dickie@student.ufv.ca
Student, Masters of Education
University of the Fraser Valley



Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Katie Dickie
Masters of Education

Interview Script:

- Thank you for participating in my study.
- Participation is voluntary and confidential.
- You do not have to answer all the questions. You may skip on any questions you don't feel comfortable answering.
- You will have one week to review your interview transcript before sending it back to me. When you review your transcript, you are able to revise, edit, or alter anything you said during the interview to your approval.
- Remember, you can withdraw from the interview until you send your transcript back to me. If you choose to withdraw, I will delete all raw data.
- All contact to me regarding this study should be done through my UFV email address Katherine.Dickie@student.ufv.ca
- Please be aware of the Fraser Health Crisis Line at 604-951-8855 or 1-877-820-7444 which provides immediate, free, and confidential emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information for people of all ages, 24 hours a day, everyday. counselling services are available to you as a participant.

Interview Questions:

1. What conditions/factors have caused you to stay at a school?
 2. What conditions/factors have caused you to transfer to a different school or leave your school?
 3. In your own terms, can you define an inner-city school?
 4. What has been your experience teaching in inner-city schools? What has made you teach/stay at your current school?
 5. What have been some successes/joys of working in inner-city schools?
 6. What have been some challenges? Do you think these challenges could cause you to relocate schools?
 7. Extra: Tell me about a typical day teaching in an inner-city school?
- Thank you for your time. I have learned so much from you.
 - Remember, you have one week to review your transcript before sending it back to me. In that time please feel free to revise, edit, or alter anything you said during the interview.
 - Please be aware of the Fraser Health Crisis Line at 604-951-8855 or 1-877-820-7444 which provides immediate, free, and confidential emotional support, crisis intervention and community resource information for people of all ages, 24 hours a day, everyday. counselling services are available to you as a participant.