

A case study of one Midwestern elementary professional development school's experiences
in hiring student teachers upon graduation

by

Nicholas Morgan

B.S., Emporia State University, 2009
M.S., Kansas State University, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2019

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Although there is a vast amount of professional literature on the hiring process in the K-12 educational setting, the research on how hiring teams identify effective student teachers to be employed at their schools after graduation is limited. This area is significant to educational leaders across the United States because of alarming recent teacher shortage and retention data. This study addressed a gap in the literature by providing information on the hiring process implemented by one rural Midwestern elementary professional development school (PDS) pertaining to student teachers who completed student teaching at that site.

This qualitative single case study used the Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI) model and teacher characteristics and abilities found on one state department's educator evaluation protocol as the method to examine this PDS' experiences in its hiring process of graduated student teachers. Five participants were interviewed for this case study including the principal, an assistant principal, a non-classroom teacher, and two classroom teachers employed at this school.

This study identified the following themes contributing to an effective hiring process. During the student teaching experience, hiring team members considered the performance and general personality characteristics of the student teacher along with how the potential hire would fit within expectations for the present school culture. School leaders implemented distributed leadership principles by working collaboratively with the hiring team in making employment decisions. Finally, certain components of the BBI model were present in the hiring process.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Effective teacher hiring can have an enormous impact on an elementary school's future culture, instructional practices, and stakeholder perception. "As the most important resource for student learning, the academic success of any school depends on high quality teachers providing high quality instruction" (Cannata & Engel, 2012, pg. 455). Essentially, one of the top priorities of any building principal should be identifying and recruiting high quality teachers to their buildings (Baker & Cooper, 2005; Cannata & Engel, 2012; Engel, 2013). In addition to the effect teachers have on a school's culture and stakeholder perception, previous studies indicate there is no doubt that teachers have a tremendous influence on student learning (Cannata & Engel, 2012; Schumacher, et al., 2015). This concept was recently quantified with the following statistics. In Hattie's (2015) effect size study, the teacher's estimate of achievement had a higher effect size on student learning than any other influence (i.e. professional development, parental involvement, school philosophy, etc.). In addition to this, teaching quality alone can be associated with as much as seven percent of the overall variance in student-value added achievement gains (Rivken, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005).

The United States Department of Education also determined the importance of recruiting and retaining effective teachers in every school as they created their blueprint for reform in 2010. In the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the second priority identified is to have great teachers and leaders in every school. The reauthorization's new program calls on states and districts to develop and implement systems of teacher and principal evaluation. This supports the United States Department of Education's ambition of recruiting, placing, rewarding, retaining, and promoting effective teachers and principals to enhance the profession of teaching (United States Department of Education, 2010).

When President Obama signed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law in 2015, this abandoned the well-known requirement that states staff each core academic class with a “highly qualified” teacher. The previous law required teachers to hold a bachelor’s degree, state certification, and have demonstrated content knowledge. Many education advocates argue that the absence of a minimum teacher-quality standard could end up hurting education, specifically poor and minority students. However, this revision is a major advantage for many states that are facing teacher shortages (Sawchuck, 2016). When considering this information and these initiatives, it is apparent that “the hiring of future teachers is too important to be left to ‘guesses’ and ‘gut feelings’ about candidates” (Clement, 2013, pg. 99). There are many different recruiting structures, roles, settings, and protocols when it comes to hiring teachers at the elementary school level. With research supporting the relationship between high quality teachers and student achievement, it is imperative that professional development school (PDS) leaders examine the ways they select from their local student teacher pool. By doing this, these leaders can begin to refine those structures, roles, settings, and protocols to create more consistency in the hiring process regarding student teachers.

Ultimately, the goal of hiring high quality teachers is to improve student achievement. Behrstock and Cogshall (2009) have found that private sector experts in talent management claim that if organizational leaders have one dollar to spend on professional development or improving hiring processes, the dollar should be spent on the latter. There are several factors that can contribute to this theory. Behrstock and Cogshall (2009) stated:

Employers can prevent high turnover by matching highly skilled employees to their organizational goals. Some critical skills such as judgment and adaptability can take years to develop, so this would save lots of time, energy, and costs if

these skills were already developed among candidates when hired. Research shows that the fit between the right candidate and his/her job is linked to better job satisfaction and less likeliness of the candidate quitting (p. 3).

As mentioned previously, wise selection of future teachers from the available supply of teachers is one of the most crucial dimensions of a principal's job (Engel, 2013; Engel & Curran, 2016). Teacher hiring has an effect on many different aspects within the elementary school setting. Liu and Johnson (2006) identified an important outcome when it comes to teacher hiring. "A good match between teachers and their schools and positions is an important contributor to teacher effectiveness. It can also have implications for teacher job satisfaction and retention" (Liu & Johnson, 2006, p. 325).

Prevention of high turnover can also be a beneficial feature of the hiring process to the building leader. Principals can save substantial amounts of time and stress by not having to create improvement plans to develop ineffective teachers. They also do not have to take time to provide extensive documentation to non-renew ineffective teachers. Searching for, interviewing, checking references, and submitting paperwork on potential teaching candidates also takes time away from building principals that could be spent on moving staff collectively towards achievement of school improvement goals. Baker and Cooper (2005) summarize this by stating that the most important actions a principal can take toward improving school quality are to recruit and retain high-quality teachers.

Flanigan (2016) reported that districts are using data mining to streamline their hiring process and hire candidates earlier. Some of the data school districts are collecting and analyzing include anonymous surveys to current staff members about their future plans and implementing proprietary screening tools. These practices and ideas provide beneficial statistics

to hiring teams, however, it is noted that putting too much emphasis on these data points can have a negative effect. Hiring teams still have to determine whether or not the potential candidate is going to be a good fit (Flanigan, 2016). Despite these recent efforts, and through the review of the literature, it is well researched that many school districts and hiring teams are not using data, information, or any other type of tools to improve the hiring *process* (Liu & Johnson, 2006; Rutledge, et al., 2008; Ryan & Tippins, 2004). One area that the professional literature does not expand on is the hiring process used for student teachers, specifically within PDS school settings.

The idea of hiring high quality teacher candidates is even more vital when it comes to hiring student teachers upon graduation from the buildings in which they have student taught. First-hand evidence suggests that specific aspects of student teaching are predictive of teacher effectiveness (Boyd et al., 2006; Boyd, et al., 2009; Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). Building principals, cooperating teachers, and other hiring team members have the opportunity to observe these candidates for an extended amount of time during their field experience. To further identify the significance of the student teaching experience, Harris and Sass (2011) looked at several other facets of teacher education (i.e. number of courses required to complete) but found no evidence of a relationship between these observed components of the teacher education program and future teacher effectiveness. Ronfeldt, Reinenger, and Kwok (2013) encapsulate this idea by sharing:

Student teaching is typically the first-time prospective teachers assume lead teaching responsibilities for an extended period of time. In this way, student teaching functions as a ‘realistic job preview’ to help determine whether the work of teaching and the district are a good fit (p. 319).

Not only can building hiring teams at PDS schools gather vital information when deciding if the student teacher can effectively fulfill the responsibilities of being a teacher, it also gives the hiring teams an opportunity to gauge how well the student teacher fits in or has adapted to the PDS school's culture and the students' demographics. Goldhaber, Kreig, and Theobald (2017) support this with their finding that "teachers are more effective when the student demographics of the school are similar to the student demographics of the PDS school in which they did their student teaching" (p. 325).

Statement of the Problem

Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) noted that previous research findings suggest that teacher hiring is problematic. Improving the tools and processes of hiring has the potential to improve the quality of teaching and student performance. School and district administrators use a variety of tools; however, it is not clear if these tools are helpful in identifying the most effective applicants. These researchers also found that principals place a great deal of emphasis on the teaching candidate's performance during the interview in their decision-making process for potential employment. (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008). Schumacher, Gigsby, and Vesey (2015) echoed some of these same issues when they concluded that interview protocols need to be more highly aligned with teaching characteristics. As commercially produced interview instruments have been utilized with teacher hiring, these authors also found that these instruments focus more on teacher personal attributes rather than on teaching quality (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2015).

Engel and Finch (2015) further identified the issue stating that "several studies indicate that principals may not hire the most effective teachers" (p. 14). When reflecting upon these findings, it is apparent that district and school hiring teams have minimal information and time

when making a decision to employ a teaching candidate. One possible way to mitigate some of these issues is by focusing on ways to improve the hiring process pertaining to local student teachers within a district or PDS school. District and PDS school hiring teams have more opportunities and time to gather additional information about these specific candidates (Kreig, Theobald, & Goldhaber, 2016). District and PDS school hiring teams may have the opportunity to make informed employment decisions pertaining to student teachers completing their fieldwork within their PDS school or district setting.

One large problem facing United States public education is a shortage of teachers. There are many areas across the United States facing teacher shortages (Cross, 2016; Provasnik, et al, 2007; Showalter, et al., 2017). When looking at data accumulated from 1990-1991 and the 2016-2017 school years, it is apparent the pipeline continues to shrink (Cross, 2016; United States Department of Education, 2016). Corroborating with this data, there are also red flags regarding teacher attrition and retention in U.S. public education. Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) found that during the 2015-16 school year, the United States was short 60,000 teachers. These shortfalls are dramatically different than the teacher layoffs that occurred during the economic recession of 2008. As states were forced to eliminate support staff, reduce the number of new teacher hires, and increase class sizes, the recession left the public accustomed to a surplus of teachers and policymakers aligned their plans of action to this reality. As the economy has improved and more money began to come back into school systems, districts have begun to hire again, and teacher demand has rapidly increased with the reinstatement of lower-class sizes and educational programs (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). However, this hiring increase comes at a time when teacher preparation program enrollments have fallen 35% nationwide over the course of the last five years. This

equates to a total decrease of 240,000 teachers entering the profession (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

Teacher attrition continues to be an issue as eight percent of the educator workforce is leaving the profession annually. Of this eight percent, two-thirds (or six percent) of these professionals are leaving education before retirement age because of dissatisfaction surrounding different aspects of their teaching conditions (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Twenty-five years ago, the highest experience category in the United States was 15 years. Currently, first-year teachers are the largest experience category. Nearly 25% of the teacher workforce has less than five years of experience (Ingersol & May, 2012). Bastain, McCord, Marks, and Carpenter (2017) have identified the three reasons why this “greening” of the workforce is important to educational leaders. First, beginning teachers are typically less effective than veteran teachers. Second, beginning teachers are more likely to leave the profession. Finally, beginning teachers are disproportionately employed in higher-need schools and classrooms (Bastain, McCord, Marks, and Carpenter, 2017). These are three significant reasons why studying the hiring process of student teachers in PDS schools can be helpful to building principals.

In addition to teacher attrition, research has also found that teacher turnover can be a major issue as well. Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2016) identified the problems that large teacher turnover can contribute to. Teacher turnover often leads to a quantitative shortage or staffing problem and, under certain circumstances, can cause a qualitative shortage that jeopardizes the effectiveness of teaching (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016). Data on teacher turnover in the USA demonstrates an annual turnover rate of 15.6% that is evenly split between migration and attrition (Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010). More recently in the USA, it was found

that there is a 20% rate of teacher turnover, which demonstrates an upward trend in this data (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). The most troubling statistic contributing to teacher turnover may be the fact that the teacher dismissal rate is substantially less than one percent (Tucker, 1997; Weisberg, et. al., 2009). This means that high teacher turnover in schools is primarily a voluntary teacher decision.

While these statistics are alarming to school and district leaders across the United States, Rozman (2013) indicated it is not just how many educators are leaving the profession, but more importantly, *who* is leaving the teacher workforce. The author refers to a 2012 report that identifies many of the teachers leaving the profession as “irreplaceable” (The New Teacher Project, 2012). These “irreplaceable” teachers are categorized as the top 20% of staff members (as gauged by data from four urban districts) that generate five to six months more in student learning during a school year than a poor performing teacher (Rozman, 2013). In a recent study of Miami-Dade County’s public-school system, they found that “more effective elementary schoolteachers tend to move to more effective schools, though we cannot discern whether this results from differential personnel practices or from teachers’ preferences for more effective schools” (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Beteille, 2012, p. 288).

There are many reasons why these phenomena are occurring, however, some of the models being implemented to increase teacher satisfaction include teacher residencies, alternative paths to teaching, privately managed charter schools, salary incentives, and peer assistance/review initiatives (Boyd et al., 2011; Engel et al., 2014; Ladd, 2011). Whipp and Geronime (2015) studied the retention issue in urban settings and recognized that there are many reform models being implemented in high-poverty schools and school districts across the United States to counter the startling trend of urban teachers entering and exiting high-poverty schools

so quickly. They also distinguished that some of these reform models may have the potential to create the kind of working environments that teachers want to stay in rather than leave. Their study suggests that “any efforts to stop the revolving door and stabilize a strong teaching force in an urban school or school district must also include greater attention and focus on who is coming in the door” (Whipp and Geronime, 2015, p. 22).

A closer look into how educational leaders in PDS schools are using the hiring process to identify student teachers for future employment may assist in identifying some possible solutions to current teacher attrition, turnover rates, and dissatisfaction issues. One author stated that “teacher turnover is related to the fact that a surprising number of interns, just over 15% of all interns hired into an in-state public teaching position, are hired into the same school where they did their student teaching” (Goldhaber, Kreig, & Theobald, 2014, p. 107). This statistic refers to student teachers being hired for their first full time employment position at the same schools where they did their student teaching. Identifying and hiring local student teachers beginning their professional careers is a potential process that district and PDS leaders need to improve. According to Greenberg, Pomerance, and Walsh (2011), there are over 1,400 teacher education programs that produce 200,000 student teachers on a yearly basis. With the shrinking teacher pipeline, district and PDS school leaders will benefit from developing effective processes that provide evidence of how each student teacher fits within the PDS school/district culture and thus, hire and retain the best student teachers they encounter locally.

Research Questions

This research study contains one overarching research question and two sub-questions that provide the framework for investigation and exploration.

Overarching question: How does the hiring team identify effective student teachers to be employed at their PDS elementary school?

Sub-question #1: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify effective student teachers to be employed using Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI) techniques?

Sub-question #2: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify effective student teachers to be employed using teacher characteristics and abilities outlined in a state department's educator evaluator protocol?

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe an elementary PDS school's hiring processes, techniques, and preferences when selecting student teachers within one rural, Midwestern school district. This qualitative case study documents how defined personnel in a PDS elementary school utilize behavior-based interviewing (BBI) techniques and what teacher characteristics and abilities identified in a state department's educator evaluator framework are emphasized during the hiring process of student teachers. This state department's educator evaluation framework was designed to espouse support and acknowledgement of critical components of professional practice that ensures valid outcomes.¹ This qualitative case study investigation helps to understand how these experiences support the hiring team as they identify student teachers for employment that completed the student teaching portion of their undergraduate program within the PDS school.

¹ Information pulled from state department's educator evaluator handbook – not cited for confidentiality purposes.

Professional Development Schools

Professional development schools (PDS) are innovative models formed through partnerships between professional educational preparatory programs and PreK-12th grade schools. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) describes partnerships between these teacher preparatory programs and the PreK-12th grade schools as a four-fold mission focusing on the preparation of teachers, faculty development, inquiry directed at the improvement of practice, and enhanced student achievement. Teaching requires a clinical preparation and PDS schools are the real-world setting in which practice takes place for teacher candidates.

The partnering university's teacher preparation program in this study is a member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). NCATE identified five standards and/or characteristics of PDS partnerships. The first standard stated that PDS partnerships must support both professional learning for the teacher candidate and student learning. The next standard addressed the responsibility of a PDS partnership to uphold professional standards for teaching and learning. The third standard focused on the development of a unique university/school community which shares responsibility for the success of student teacher candidates across institutional boundaries. Equity and diversity are addressed in these standards, as the PDS partnership prepares professionals to meet the needs of diverse learners. The last standard addressed the infrastructure that a PDS partnership uses and/or creates to support its work. Currently, this nearby university is transitioning from the NCATE accreditation model to the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation model. The next cycle of student teachers who work through this teacher preparation program will be accredited through CAEP rather than NCATE at this nearby

university. Ultimately, PDS schools strive to improve both the quality of teaching and student learning. These PDS partnerships prepare qualified teachers to teach students in any school setting.

The university's website indicated that student teaching occurs during the spring or fall semester. The university had the responsibility of assigning the student teachers to accredited schools with licensed teachers in the primary field in which the student teacher was preparing to teach and acquire licensure for. The university identified two major purposes for student teaching. The first was to provide personnel the opportunity to evaluate student teachers under authentic conditions, and the second purpose was to provide a realistic teaching experience. The university also stated on their website that whenever possible, they place student teachers in PDS schools.

The university establishes a partnership with the school district and determine schools within the district that are defined as PDS schools. PDS schools sponsored by this university have a clinical instructor employed part-time by the university to work with university students in the field and where cooperating teachers have special preparation to work with the university's students. In addition to this, PDS schools sometimes have future student teachers complete mini-lessons or "blocks" during the semester before their student teaching in addition to their traditional coursework. This opportunity can create an experience that provides additional time in a field setting than available in other teacher preparatory programs. An agreement is also created by the university that is signed by the school district. This agreement outlines the purpose, duties and responsibility of the university, the duties and responsibilities of the school district, and mutual terms and conditions of the PDS school partnership. This agreement includes a description of the qualifications of the cooperating teacher, defines specific

components within the student teaching experience, including detailed information on how to report student teacher progress.

Non-PDS elementary schools can still work with university teacher preparation programs to provide a student teaching experience for prospective teachers. However, during the researcher's experiences, the PDS school model can provide a more well-defined structure to the clinical experience for student teachers in the final semester before graduation. The dynamics and characteristics of the student teaching experience at a PDS school can be impactful due to the additional support and requirements in how prospective teachers are prepared for the beginning of their professional careers. The unique features and resources available at PDS schools can create an engaging and rich experience for student teacher preparation; one that non-PDS schools have more difficulty providing.

Conceptual Framework

Clement (2013) has been researching the hiring and induction of K-12 teachers; specifically, in hiring qualified teachers for over twenty years. Clement (2013) describes an approach and model for hiring new teachers using behavior-based interviewing (BBI) techniques. The principles and philosophy of this model serve as the conceptual framework to inform and guide this qualitative case study. As Clement (2015) described how she developed this model, she began by studying the need for best practices in the hiring process. Previous authors also recognized this compounding need. Kersten (2008) identified that selecting outstanding teachers is critical. Marzano (2010) concluded that the single most powerful influence on student achievement is the classroom teacher. Donaldson (2011) found how principals hire and assign teachers has major ramifications regarding teacher quality. Finally, Rose, English, and Finney (2014) shared that one of the single greatest ways to improve any

school or district is by making quality hiring decisions. Based upon this information, Clement (2015) found the need for deliberate best practice pertaining to hiring. However, at the same time, Clement (2015) acknowledged that:

No one can provide a crystal ball to predict that a hire will or won't be successful, and will or won't stay in the position, the use of best practice in hiring will alleviate much of the uncertainty of the hiring process (p. 3).

There are also constraints that every hiring team faces such as time, money, contractual obligations, union issues, longstanding cultural norms, and the excessive centralization of the hiring process from many districts.

Clement (2015) identified that prior to the implementation of BBI, school and district leaders must first ask themselves, "What is your philosophy of hiring new teachers?". Important components in examining one's hiring philosophy include overall goals, faculty diversity, being user-friendly and thorough, how to create objective criteria, and a commitment to welcoming candidates. It is a challenge for educational leaders to tackle these aspects while still maintaining the highest selection standards (Clement, 2015). The researcher's personal communication with the author, Dr. Clement, clarified that the BBI model would be equally beneficial in the hiring of student teachers for the following reasons:

BBI is based on asking candidates to tell about specific experiences and skills. If a candidate can't explain how they have set up a grading scale for 3rd grade English/language arts in the past, they won't know how to do this when hired. Student teachers have so much experience now. They should be able to talk about what they did and what they learned from their teachers. Another example of this is (classroom) management. If a candidate can't talk about

establishing procedures, they won't be able to establish them (Clement, personal e-mail correspondence, Oct 10, 2017).

Clement added that the BBI approach has its advantages and can certainly be applied to the hiring of student teachers who completed student teaching within the same PDS school setting that they are interviewing at. The interview experience should offer insight into specific knowledge and qualities about the teaching candidate. The interview provides the hiring team with information about the quality of the student teacher's spoken language and their presence under pressure (Clement, personal e-mail correspondence, Oct 10, 2017). Clement did not acknowledge any disadvantages to using BBI with student teachers during the hiring process. If a student teacher is asked about something in the interview that he/she did not experience during their student teaching, they should still have some background knowledge from their college coursework and what they learned in class (Clement, personal e-mail correspondence, Oct 10, 2017).

BBI originated when Janz (1982) compared interviewers who were trained in structured behavior-description techniques with those who used standard interview techniques and found the behavior-description interviews to be significantly better predictors of job performance (Janz, 1982). BBI was then derived from Janz, Hellervik, and Gilmore's (1986) behavior description interviewing approach. They describe this technique as employing a structured pattern of questions designed to probe the applicant's past behavior for relevance to critical job events (Janz, Hellervik, & Gilmore, 1986).

Beebe (1996) studied the effectiveness of the BBI approach and focused on the importance of structure and preparation for implementing this framework. BBI requires a structured procedure that involves a prescribed method of questioning, a predetermined set of questions, and a scientific evaluation of the answers and of the candidate. The BBI approach requires both the recruiter and the

candidate to prepare and perform well to maximize the hiring process. It is also helpful to train the interview team in the basic functions of the entire BBI process. It is important for recruiters to avoid making judgments of candidates' personalities or traits that do not relate to job performance. Beebe (1996) also noted that "more recent behavior is a better predictor of future behavior than older behavior, and that long-standing trends are better predictors of behavior than isolated incidents" (p. 40). In spite of overwhelming evidence that the BBI technique predicts performance with greater consistency and more validity than unstructured, gut-feeling interviews, little of the data it draws from the candidate is quantitative, creating a very subjective evaluative process. In 1996, one firm projected that "20-30% of the nation's largest companies are using behavioral techniques in their staffing programs. The great number of Fortune 500 companies using behavioral interviewing demonstrates its effectiveness through reduced turnover costs and increased productivity in the selection process" (Beebe, 1996, p. 40-41).

In Fitzwater's (2000) book, *Behavior-Based Interviewing*, he further identified important BBI principles stating that an interview should not concentrate on what a prospective employee can do for you in the *future*, but more so on what has made them successful in the past and how they can use these traits for future productivity. Fitzwater (2000) described four phases in the BBI process. These four phases are gathering information, conducting the interviewing, interpreting behavior, and following-up. In the first phase, gathering information, Fitzwater (2000) outlined tasks to complete before conducting the interview. These tasks included reviewing the position description, consulting with those who have knowledge of the vacant position, developing job-related success criteria, reviewing position requirements, and reviewing/comparing the applicant's background and other credentials versus job-related criteria. During the second phase of the BBI process, conducting the interview, there are also specific steps that Fitzwater (2000) outlined for the interviewing team to complete. Developing interview questions, setting the interviewing parameters with the candidate, asking open-ended

questions, probing answers for detail and clarification, gathering job-related information from the interview, and observing and documenting job-related behavioral data are key components to complete during the interview. The third phase of the BBI process is interpreting the behavior. Fitzwater (2000) noted that this is when the interview team should analyze and interpret interview notes, evaluate behaviors against criteria, evaluate behaviors against a norm, assign a rating, and then decide. The fourth and final step Fitzwater (2000) identified in the BBI process is the follow-up stage. This is when the interview team must conduct any post interview follow-up and send the offer/reject letter (Fitzwater, 2000). For this qualitative case study, the first three phases of the BBI process will be studied.

This framework corresponds directly to the hiring process and can be applied to the hiring of student teachers as denoted by Clement in her correspondence with the researcher. Its foundation is based upon the idea that a candidate's past behavior is the best predictor of their future performance. Past behavior can be gauged during the candidate's student teaching experience. The focus of this qualitative case study is on the process an elementary PDS school uses to hire student teachers who completed their fieldwork experience within their respective elementary PDS school. Because of this focus, BBI appears to be a good fit as the conceptual framework for this study. This model strives to develop an approach to hiring that evaluates the applicant's preparation, experience, and expertise. Clement (2013) identified it as a practice that has been implemented in the business world for decades.

According to Clement (2013), BBI does not include typical hypothetical questions, nor does it focus on the applicant's philosophy. Question stems from the BBI model may often begin with the following: "tell us about a time...", or "describe how you have...", and "what are your experiences with..." The final piece of the BBI model is preparing a list of questions with a corresponding rubric or evaluation scale. Each member of the interview team follows the rubric

to place a numerical value next to each question based upon their interpretation of the candidates' response. At the conclusion of the interview, each interview team member tallies up their scores according to the rubric or evaluation scale to provide a data point that can be used objectively (Clement, 2013).

Strengths of the BBI model are inclusion of a consistent approach, format, and theory for the hiring team to implement when searching for a teacher candidate to employ. While still maintaining consistency, it also allows for flexibility for the hiring team to adapt the BBI approach and format to accommodate their school's philosophy on key interviewing topics (i.e. classroom management, assessment/grading, content knowledge, etc.). Clement (2013) also stated that the BBI technique creates a platform for the interview team to "begin to organize the structure with the end in mind" (p. 100). Therefore, the interview team has the capability to tailor and alter the process to gain the critical information needed to make a final decision on the candidate's employment.

The BBI model has been observed in the elementary school hiring process, however, it has not been studied as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers. Foundational principles of the BBI model have been researched and utilized in both the private and public sector for 35 years. Researchers (Beebe, 1996; Clement, 2013) have provided evidence of why this hiring model is an effective approach to use. This evidence substantiates the framework as a viable approach to examining the dynamics in the hiring process of student teachers. In addition to this, the BBI model also creates a platform of how interviewing teams can identify teacher characteristics and skills of prospective teachers. By using the BBI model and focusing on teacher characteristics and traits from a state department's educator evaluation framework, vital information in selecting student teachers for employment can be gained.

State Department's Educator Evaluation Framework

One additional framework to benefit this study is how the PDS school identifies effective teacher characteristics and abilities based on one state department's educator evaluation model. The principal and assistant principal participating in this study use this state department educator evaluator framework to identify whether teachers in their building are ineffective, developing, effective, or highly effective teachers once they are hired as certified professionals. There are many teacher characteristics and teacher skills identified on the state rubric that help building principals distinguish between ineffective, developing, effective, and highly effective teachers.

This framework was originally created by the state department of education and submitted to the state's board of education on June 14, 2011. It has since been amended eleven times starting June 17, 2011 and the most recent October 1, 2016. This evaluation framework describes educator level of proficiencies in professional practice. In order to do this, educators need guidance and expertise of supervisors and peers in identifying both strengths and areas of improvement. The philosophy and purpose of this contemporary educator evaluation framework is to reflect strategies that support and develop effective educators at all levels and years of experience. This state's educator evaluation framework is also designed to espouse support and acknowledgement of critical components of professional practice that ensures valid outcomes. This state department supports an evaluation framework that provides feedback to those being evaluated so that performance can improve over time and has as a major goal focusing on the improvement of student achievement.

This educator evaluation framework is not a requirement for all districts in this Midwestern state. All districts are encouraged to use this framework, but each district is allowed to submit their own evaluation system to the state department for approval. By evaluation, the

state department refers to the actual assessment of the teacher's effectiveness. Once again, as related to the BBI model, the idea of taking advantage of multiple opportunities to observe and interact with the student teacher is vital for PDS school principals. This essential belief makes this framework beneficial to include and provides a scale for the hiring team to determine a student teacher's effective (or ineffective) skills and characteristics outlined in the framework.

When designing this educator evaluator framework, the state department created a rigorous, transparent, and an equitable evaluation framework for all educators. It is rigorous in the sense that it provides multiple opportunities for teacher observations and data collection. The instruments mandate evidence-based performance decisions described in judgment rubrics. Highly effective teacher characteristics and skills are identified on these judgment rubrics. These include observations, valid/reliable student growth data, artifacts, and evidence of teaching and learning. This system is transparent because it provides multiple opportunities for input by the evaluator and person being evaluated. The process of evaluation is collaborative, includes self-reflection, goal setting, and continuous improvement. This model is equitable as it affords all teachers the same opportunities as other teachers in the district, including professional development, access to resources, and appropriate assistance in monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction. The PDS school principals utilize this system to evaluate all teachers (including first year teachers). The skills and characteristics on this framework can easily be adapted to the observations and interactions principals have with student teachers.

Finally, the state department identified that a quality evaluation framework is essential for continual improvement and is not just a requirement established by law. The evaluation framework design is supported by research and is both varied and comprehensive. The first resource referenced to design the educator evaluation framework is the Interstate School Leaders

Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) standards (Council for Chief State School Officers, 2008). The other framework referenced to create this framework is the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). This model meaningfully differentiates overall performance levels based on both instructional practice and student performance. The educator evaluation framework is also based on the collection of data, evidence, and artifacts to support effective instructional practices as well as student performance. This framework is intended to evaluate educators on a regular basis following all state statutes regarding the amount of observations and times teachers must be evaluated. The state department's educator evaluation framework provides useful feedback to educators and is a platform to inform equitable practices. Many of these aspects within the educator evaluation framework, specifically the teacher skills and characteristics, are factors that can have a role in the final decision in the hiring process.

There are many strengths of the state department's educator evaluation framework. It was created with the intention to account for both supervisor perspective and student performance growth data. It clearly defines both highly effective and ineffective teacher characteristics and skills. The state department designed this evaluation framework with the purpose of being transparent, rigorous, and equitable. This model also has different requirements for educational professionals at different stages in their career. The last strength of this state department's educator evaluation framework is that it was created from well-known research-based educator performance standards. Weaknesses of this framework applied to student teachers include that clear communication to student teachers is not typical when they begin interviewing or when attempting to secure future employment opportunities. Another weakness of the state department's educator evaluator protocol is that there is also little accountability from

the state department ensuring that this model is implemented correctly at the school site level². Overall, this framework, in addition to the BBI model, relates well to process outcomes this hiring team implements during their hiring process for this qualitative single case study.

Significance of Study

Student teaching is a nearly universal component of all traditional teacher education preparation programs (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). Furthermore, student teaching is often pivotal in the preparation program as it brings together an authentic experience applying classroom content knowledge in a real-life setting. Student teaching is the last requirement in the teacher education preparation program whereby candidates move directly into exploring employment opportunities. This study contributes to the literature by exploring the hiring process of student teachers as it relates to their student teaching in an elementary PDS setting. As Whipp and Geronime (2015) stated, it is a challenge to identify the impact of different portions of the student preparation program because there are so many facets of a prospective teachers' program including coursework, fieldwork experience, and observations. Therefore, focusing on the hiring procedures and techniques pertaining to local elementary PDS school student teachers can have significant influence for new teacher candidates. This study is specific to PDS schools because district and building leaders can observe and interact with student teachers within the dynamics of their school for an extended period of time before considering the potential for future employment within the school.

When it comes to attracting and retaining prospective student teachers, studies completed over time suggest that a combination of factors are the most important in a teacher's decision to

² Information pulled from state department's educator evaluator handbook – not cited for confidentiality purposes.

leave a particular school (Whipp & Geronime, 2015). These factors include the following: school leadership, collegial relationships, and mentoring support for new teachers (Boyd et al., 2011; Engel et al., 2014; Ladd, 2011). However, there is hardly any prior research regarding the process that is used for hiring local student teachers. Prior research identifies effective teaching as the most important factor in student learning (Cannata & Engel, 2012). Therefore, hiring high quality teachers is critical in providing opportunities for high quality student learning.

The potential benefits of this study include the possibility of identifying effective components in the hiring process for employment of student teachers. Through better understanding of the techniques, processes, and preferences of a participating elementary PDS school hiring team, the hiring process can be more fully understood. The other possible benefit from this study is centered on the idea of reducing staff attrition rates through the hiring of local student teachers. By completing this study, it may offer district and PDS school hiring teams a guide or fresh ideas to improve and re-shape perspectives on hiring student teachers once they have graduated to be placed in their building or district.

In addition to this, Engel and Curran (2016) identified there has been limited, if any, prior research completed in this area. Reports of teacher shortage and the shrinking teacher pipeline (Cross, 2016; United States Department of Education, 2016; Sutcher et al., 2016) make this study significant. A contribution to a gap in the literature would be filled in analyzing how hiring teams strategically identify the student teachers who are a good match to the PDS school and district culture and subsequently, considered for employment in the PDS school.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of the study was related to the data collection portion of this qualitative single case study. The interviews were conducted with a principal, assistant principal,

non-classroom teacher, and two classroom teachers; therefore, reliance on self-disclosure was a factor. Because some participants may have felt compelled to give responses not indicative of their true experiences during the hiring process, their answers to the interview questions (Appendix A & B) may have reflected this concern.

In addition to this, another limitation is that the interviews were all conducted within the same school. The responses may only represent this elementary PDS school's culture, which could be significantly different from that of other elementary PDS schools. Factors such as prior leadership, context of the school related to demographics or location, and professional development may be unique to this elementary PDS school and differ from others.

Finally, limitations of the BBI model include that it purposefully attempts to diminish the "gut instinct" feeling that many educational leaders rely on and trust when making an employment decision for a teaching candidate. Many interview teams also like to engage in extensive and deep dialogue about the candidates' strengths and weaknesses based upon the interview – coming from more of a qualitative approach when accounting for factors that influence the final employment decision. Whereas the BBI model identifies a rubric score as an aspect to quantify the rating of the teaching candidate resulting in a more quantitative approach to the hiring process. This made it difficult to relate the quantification of the teacher candidates' interview performance from the BBI framework to this specific case study, however; the primary focus of this study was on this elementary PDS school's hiring process pertaining to student teachers and not specifically evaluating the student teacher candidates' performance during their interview.

Delimitations of the Study

There were many parameters established for this study. Those invited to participate in this qualitative single case study were currently serving in the roles of principal, assistant principal, non-classroom teacher, and classroom teacher. There were many other participants that could have been selected from this study as many different staff members have served on the hiring team at certain parts of their career. The researcher worked with the principal to identify participants for this single qualitative case study that would be the most relevant to gaining the information to answer the research questions outlined in this study.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are defined as they relate to the topic of this study and of importance to this dissertation:

Principal: the person who is designated as the highest-ranking building administrator for a school.

Cooperating teacher: the classroom teacher in whose classroom the student teacher is placed and who guides the student teacher throughout the placement (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011). Also referred to as “mentor teacher.”

Field experience: a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which student teachers may observe, assist, tutor, instruct, and/or conduct research (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011).

Hiring process: the procedure that hiring teams use to employ prospective teachers within their respective school or district. Steps in this process may include recruiting, screening, interviewing, checking references; and studying any of the prospective teachers’ following documents: application, resume, letters of recommendation, work sample, and transcripts.

Hiring team: the group of professionals that work together to select prospective teachers for employment at their respective school or district. Individuals on this team may include building principal, assistant principals, lead teachers, cooperating teachers, instructional coaches, students, and any district personnel (i.e. human resources director, teaching and learning director).

Professional development school (PDS): a public school that fulfills duties outlined in an agreement between the public school and a university. The school must oblige to university students participating in educational field experiences, and in some cases, acting as student teachers.

Rural: a Midwestern area that has a population of less than 50,000 people in territory, population, and housing area (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

Student teacher: a teacher in training in a post-secondary teacher education program. Student teachers practice teaching under the supervision of regular classroom teachers. Also referred to as “student intern.”

Student teacher characteristics: the personal traits that student teachers demonstrate during their fieldwork experience. These are general personality traits that are not necessarily specific to the education field (i.e. compassion, trustworthiness, patience).

Student teacher abilities: the skills that student teachers demonstrate during their fieldwork experience. These are abilities that are unique to the education field (i.e. curriculum knowledge, classroom management skills, effective pedagogy techniques).

Teacher attrition: the rate at which teachers are leaving teaching altogether, either to take another job outside of teaching, for personal reasons, or retirement.

Teacher preparatory institution: the post-secondary university, college, or school that houses the teacher preparation program.

Teacher turnover: the rate at which personnel whose primary function is classroom teaching leave or separate from the district or change from their classroom teaching to another position from one school year to another.

Summary

In this chapter, a brief discussion of the teacher shortages currently facing United States public schools was described by Cross's (2016) report from the U.S. Department of Education. Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) also looked at this current issue, while focusing more on potential ramifications of a shrinking teacher pipeline based on statistics from the 2015-2016 school year. Elementary PDS schools provide a viable option to address these issues by considering student teachers completing their student teaching to fill vacancies within their respective schools. The practice of hiring student teachers upon their graduation is not a new concept to public education, however, it is a practice that is worth examining during these challenging times as a result of teacher shortages and a shrinking teacher pipeline. According to this one rural, Midwestern school district's assistant superintendent, the elementary PDS school selected for the focus of this study has a history of hiring student teachers who have completed their student teaching within this elementary PDS school. They have created an excellent school culture and have high student achievement data. This elementary PDS school considers the entire candidate pool when making any hiring decision but has a history of selecting student teachers who they believe are the best qualified for the vacant teaching position. Chapter 2 expands further on extant literature focused on hiring processes, principal preferences, hiring student teachers, and issues related to teacher attrition/retention.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

School leadership has an impact on everything within the school system and in shaping the educational environment. One of the biggest ways that school leadership can affect the school system and learning environment is through the hiring process and employment of quality teachers. In the U.S., school principals' autonomy and responsibility for administering and completing the hiring process has increased (Abernathy et al., 2001; Baker & Cooper, 2005; Cannata & Engel, 2012; Engel & Finch, 2015; Ingersoll, 2003; Liu & Johnson, 2006). Emley and Ebmeier (1997) acknowledged that recruitment, selection, and retention of teachers are complex, multistage processes for school and district leaders to complete. Brown and Wynn (2007) noted that effective principals can attract, support, and retain qualified teachers who are successful in the classroom. Crum, Sherman, and Myran (2009) echoed this finding when they identified that "successful school leaders are able to effectively manage the instructional program, which includes being able to staff the building with high-quality faculty" (p. 53).

However, teacher attrition is a challenge facing many schools and school leaders (Carlson, 2012; Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Goldring, et al., 2014; Gray & Taie, 2015; Kaiser, 2011; Keigher, 2010; Sutchter, et al., 2016). This phenomenon of teacher attrition is troubling to educational leaders as new teachers are leaving education in the early stages of their professional careers (Carlson, 2012; Kaiser, 2011; Perda, 2013). "One of the main factors contributing to teachers' decision to remain at or leave their positions is related to the support (or lack thereof) from the administrators at the school" (Carlson, 2012, p. 48). Gray and Taie (2015) with the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Statistics studied teachers who began teaching in the calendar year of 2007 and 2008 through the first five years in the profession to 2011 and 2012. They found that "among all beginning teachers in 2007-08, 10 percent did not

teach in 2008-09, 12 percent did not teach in 2009-10, 15 percent did not teach in 2010-11, and 17 percent did not teach in 2011-12” (Gray & Taie, 2015, p. 3). This data creates an uneasiness for educational leaders and the need to understand possible reasons for these alarming statistics.

One possible way school leaders can decrease teacher attrition trends is by identifying the best teaching candidates during the hiring process. It has been well documented that there is room for improvement within this process (Jacob & Lefgren, 2008; Liu & Johnson, 2006; Rutledge, et al., 2008; Schumacher, et al., 2012). When thinking about how school and district leaders can become more effective in this process, it is imperative to begin examining the root of the issue. With approximately 200,000 students completing teacher preparation programs across the U.S. annually, improving this process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers could have a tremendous impact (Krieg, Theobald, & Goldhaber, 2016).

There are several concepts and ideas pertaining to the hiring process of student teachers that were not clearly identified from the review of the professional literature. Some of these included the organizational structure and the roles of the hiring team members, determining if BBI principles are incorporated into the hiring process of student teachers, and what type of student teacher characteristics and skills are valued by the hiring team in addition to the school’s building principal.

The topic of the hiring process within the K-12 educational setting is expansive in nature and new literature continues to emerge around this topic. It would be impossible to address all of the facets within the hiring process. Therefore, the focus of this study revolves around a single elementary PDS school’s approach to the hiring process of student teachers who completed their fieldwork within this same elementary PDS school setting. Furthermore, this study will examine the roles, structure, BBI principles implemented, and emphasis or preferences of teacher

characteristics and skills of student teachers within this elementary PDS school's hiring process. Clement's (2013) BBI principles served as a framework to view the hiring process of teachers. The BBI theory has been implemented in both the private and public sector. It originated from the idea that a candidate's past behavior is the best predictor of their future performance. This model strives to develop an approach to hiring that evaluates the applicant's preparation, experience, and expertise. During the interview, questions do not focus on the candidate's philosophies or theories, but more so on the traits they possess and how past experiences can influence their future job performance. Finally, the state department's educator evaluation model provided insight into research-based educator responsibilities that play major factors in effective educator practices.

Schumacher, Grigsby, and Vesey (2015) summarized that "research supports that teachers are the most influential factor in student success" (p. 139). Given this foundational belief, it is essential to understand and to create more consistency as to how highly effective teachers can be better identified through the hiring process – specifically with the hiring of student teachers. One perspective on this subject is the idea of "considering the hiring process along a continuum from information-poor to information-rich" (Liu & Johnson, 2006, p. 332). How have educational leaders been able to make this process more "information rich" when examining their hiring processes pertaining to student teachers? The following sections focus on the prior research completed in several facets of the hiring process and pertaining to student teachers. These segments include teacher quality and effectiveness, an overview of the hiring process, principal preferences, teacher candidates' perspectives, the hiring of student teachers, and teacher attrition along with the current teacher shortage that is facing the United States.

Teacher Quality and Effectiveness

Before it can be decided how to identify who the high-quality teaching candidates are or who the most effective teaching candidates will be; it must first be understood what skills and personal attributes make a high quality or effective teacher (Baker & Cooper, 2005; Rutledge, et al., 2008). Baker and Cooper (2005) summarized this with their statement that “one of the most controversial aspects of studying the recruitment and selection of high-quality teachers is how to define and measure teacher quality” (p. 451). Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) found that it is difficult to put a statistical data point on the value of teachers because the estimates hinge upon many factors. Some of these factors include the persistence of teacher quality effects and the idea of effectiveness being constituted on student achievement in reading and mathematics as the sole indicator. They also added that “interpretations of research on teachers often confuse the effects of specific teacher characteristics with the overall contribution of teachers” (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010, p. 267).

Goldhaber (2007) found that the teacher licensure system is the primary screen used by all states to try to guarantee a minimum level of teacher quality. The author also noted that teacher licensure test performance is not the premier credential that can be used to predict teacher effectiveness. However, Goldhaber’s study established that teacher licensure tests are predictive of teacher quality, particularly in teaching mathematics, but that this can’t be used to clearly predict overall teacher effectiveness. The researcher’s examination of the teacher licensure test indicating “pass” or “fail” is solely identified and no further value placed on the licensure test results. Another major finding of his study was that “teachers are estimated to become more effective with experience: students of teachers with one to two years of experience

outperform students of novice teachers by three to seven percent of a standard deviation” (Goldhaber, 2007, p. 789).

Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, and Keeling (2009) believed that “school districts need to adopt a comprehensive performance evaluation system that fairly, accurately, and credibly differentiates teachers based on their effectiveness in promoting student achievement” (p. 35). These authors also noted that it is equally important that school districts implement the performance evaluation system with human capital policies and functions that include teacher assignment, professional development, compensation, retention, and dismissal (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern, & Keeling, 2009). State educational departments are striving to create evaluation protocols that include integrating student achievement, professional responsibilities, pedagogy, and curriculum knowledge as significant parts of the teacher evaluation protocol. By doing this, it is apparent that state education departments are taking a much more comprehensive approach to encapsulate all the different components that teachers must demonstrate proficiency in regarding their performance evaluation protocol.

Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) found that other than the importance of experience, educational researchers offer mixed data on characteristics of effective teachers, with many of these characteristics (i.e. enthusiasm and creativity) still being untested. In addition to this, these authors shared that “as long as there is ambiguity regarding the characteristics that comprise an effective teacher, it will be difficult to advocate for specific tools and process over others” on the subject of the teacher hiring process (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008, p. 258). This is another example of the varied moving parts in the hiring process and that there will never be a “golden equation” or perfect methodology to hiring educators. However, even with these obstacles, there is a need to examine the way PDS school and district leaders approach

the hiring process pertaining to student teachers. There is little professional literature in regard to the process used to select student teachers for employment. Identification of effective processes may pay huge dividends to educational leaders facing teacher shortages and high teacher attrition rates within their school districts and buildings.

Overview of the Hiring Process

Ingle, Rutledge, and Bishop (2011) stated that “regardless of the position or school setting; federal, state, and district mandates strongly influence how principals make sense of the hiring process and on-the-job performance” (p. 579). When thinking about how district mandates and processes can affect the local hiring process, there are several ways that human resource departments can contribute to effective employment methods. Behrstock and Coggshall (2009) have identified some of these techniques. First, shifting the hiring process to earlier in the year provides an opportunity to search for more highly qualified candidates and allows candidates to attend designated professional development meetings. Human resource departments can strive to determine hiring goals based on data, allow candidates to apply within schools or the district, define clear hiring start dates and deadlines, and streamline the application process. Human resource departments can also reduce bureaucracy and create an information-rich hiring process so that candidates clearly understand the dynamics of the district and schools (Behrstock & Coggshall, 2009).

It is essential for human resource professionals to both identify capable candidates and create a diverse workplace (Baker & Cooper, 2005; Ryan & Tippins, 2004). This can present a major challenge as building level leaders may not always strive to create a diverse workplace when selecting who they believe is the best teacher candidate. Baker and Cooper (2005) recognized that “creating greater equity with respect to student demographics in the distribution

of that workforce have become central policy concerns for state and local officials” (Baker & Cooper, 2005, p. 452). Some of the resources available to school districts that Ryan and Tippins (2004) reviewed are work samples, cognitive ability tests, structured interviews, job knowledge tests, and integrity tests. They found that effectively utilizing these resources could create “good validity for predicting work outcomes such as job performance, turnover, and absenteeism” (Ryan & Tippins, 2004, p. 308). Other resources utilized in this process include letters of recommendation, references, previous teaching experience, evaluations, videos of instruction, demonstration lessons, resumes, and coursework experiences. Of the resources school systems have access to and account for in the hiring process, the overall results from Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle’s (2008) study suggest that the interview, candidate’s experience, and letters of recommendation are the most important. In contrast, the resume and previous coursework are deemed as the least important (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008). Liu and Johnson (2006) described the hiring process as being characterized by a reliance on paper credentials and interviews with small use of demonstration lessons or videos of instruction. Cohen-Vogel and Osborne-Lampkin (2007) shared that teacher seniority can also play a role in teacher placement and the hiring process. Considering these strategies for meaningful implementation at the local level is the first step school districts can take to create more consistency as they execute the local hiring protocol and process.

Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) studied how human resource and hiring departments have used different tools and screening processes both in the private sector and school setting. They found that the “screening and selection process in teaching is not much different from occupations that have similar levels of job complexity” (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008, p. 237). In addition to this, employers used several tools during the

selection process such as physical measures of work, absenteeism, tardiness, accident rates, recommendations, reaction and response to training, and error rates on the job. Although many employers considered this information during the hiring process, they often relied on subjective judgments and informal processes. As district and school leaders work to gather as much information as possible about each potential candidate, investments in financial expense and time spent become important (Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, & Ingle, 2008). As these resources become limited, the natural reaction to focus on minimizing expenses begins to directly impact the effectiveness of the selection process.

There is substantial variance in the way school district human resource departments approach the screening and hiring of applicants (Liu & Johnson, 2006; Rutledge, et al., 2008). Liu and Johnson (2006) noted that some school districts with “highly decentralized” approaches allow individual schools to accept the applications and hire into open positions. Whereas in “highly centralized” approaches, district officials oversee the screening, selection, and assignment processes. Some school districts try to blend these two approaches where district officials screen applicants and school administrators select from those applicants – with or without teacher input (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Ultimately, human resource functions in organizations are vitally important and this certainly holds true in schools (Ingle, et al., 2011; Nathan, 2017). As previously noted, there is limited research on the ways local school district human resource departments impact the hiring process regarding student teachers.

Most people that have had the opportunity to participate in a hiring process can relate to the local dynamics that are often present. Some of these factors include socio-economic status, family background, and any other type of local ties that a prospective candidate might have to the school district or a particular building. Other elements that can contribute to the hiring

process are intra-district teacher transfers and the terms of the school district's negotiated agreement. Cohen-Vogel and Osborne-Lampkin (2007) studied how collective bargaining agreements can play a part in the teacher hiring and assignment process. They identified that political priorities may reflect teacher hiring and assignments based upon demand- and supply-side pressures. Teacher transfer requests, teacher reductions, and teacher re-assignments can create ramifications in the hiring process based upon contractual agreements and obligations. Many union critics, school administrators, and scholars argue for more flexible personnel management and hiring (Cohen-Vogel & Osborne-Lampkin, 2007). In addition to this, Reininger (2012), identified that teachers have a strong preference for "staying local," and are more likely to remain near their place of origin in comparison to other professions. This same concept also holds true for prospective teacher candidates who often stay close to where they attended college. However, there was no empirical data that translated to a local teacher being any more effective than a non-local teacher. The idea of teachers staying local had implications for "harder-to-staff schools" as many of these students were "less likely to perform well on academic achievement tests and less-likely to graduate from college as compared to their peers. The local nature of the teacher labor force creates particular problems for these disadvantaged schools" (Reininger, 2012, p. 141).

The prior research identified the influence of human resource departments, geographical location, and local politics on the hiring of prospective teachers. However, there is no prior research on how these dynamics play a part in the hiring process of student teachers.

Hiring Practices

When focusing on building level processes and strategies, the following quote from Schumacher, Grigsby, and Vesey (2015) prefaces this section well. "Principals' current practice

of hiring teachers based on intuition and likeability must change” (p. 139). Conversely, this same group of researchers admitted that the human element of the candidate is clearly taken into consideration by the hiring team. Some of the characteristics of prospective candidates considered by hiring teams are personality, empathy, and relational ability (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2015). The research illustrated the lack of clarity school principals face when defining the hiring process. Furthermore, the research on hiring practices pertaining to student teachers is jumbled and inadequate when viewed through the elementary PDS school principal lens, adding another element to the necessity of obtaining more research in this area.

When it comes to understanding how to hire new teachers, Clement (2013) shared the following perspective on how to eliminate intuition and likeability in the hiring process resulting from her vast experience and knowledge:

Behavior-based interviewing has been used in the business world for decades. This style of interviewing is based on the premise that past behavior is the best predictor of future performance. Behavior-based questions begin with phrases such as "tell me about a time when...", "tell about your experience with...", "how have you...", or "describe how you have..." This style of interviewing does not ask the candidate hypothetical questions and it does not ask for a statement of philosophy. Rather, the candidate is asked questions that require answers about their preparation, experience, and expertise in the areas of teaching (p. 100).

Another widely researched topic within the hiring process is the idea of including staff members, in addition to the principal, to be part of the interviewing process. Clement (2013) believed that a systematic approach to the hiring process can be improved with teachers being included. Through involvement of selected staff in the process, principals can distribute

leadership among other teachers and staff members and convey the message that teachers have a voice in the decision-making process to potential applicants. Gronn (2002) defined distributed leadership as “a mode of action in which multiple individuals pool their expertise to solve a problem and that these collaborations may be spontaneous or ongoing” (p. 430).

Implementing screening interviews is another hiring strategy for all potential teacher candidates. Many building administrators have limited experience with prescreening applicants, but this is becoming more popular. In Sawchuck’s (2014) article, the author looked at some of Goldhaber’s prior research from teacher-hiring practices in the Spokane, Washington school district. The school district leaders and authors noted that the development of a two-tiered screening process did not identify a silver-bullet plan. Their process begins with the central human resource office scoring applicants on a 21-point scale by examining resumes’ and recommendations from supervisors. Next, the principals request lists of candidates that meet an identified cut score, and then use a 60-point evaluation tool to look through these documents for information that further showcases flexibility, experience, and instructional skills. The researchers evidence found some predictive power in terms of student achievement (Sawchuck, 2014).

Emley and Ebmeier (1997) researched the effectiveness of screening policies and practices in regard to selecting the “best” teachers. They found that what most often measured success was based off the administrators’ perceptions of teacher performance. Based upon the study’s results, the pre-screening of applicants from surveys, inventories, and other self-reported instruments holds more promise than what may be widely believed or practiced. “The pre-interview questionnaire data could be viewed as value-added information that could increase the validity of the selection process or at least reduce the number of questions during the formal

interview” (Emley & Ebmeier, 1997, p. 53). Major benefits to implementing this strategy is the possibility of reducing the overall time required for interviews and adding confirmative information to the data gathered during the interview process. The initial evaluation of potential candidates during the interview process can also be considered the most important of all evaluations (Emley & Ebmeier, 1997). This is a practice that has been researched; however, there is no evidence of the screener data being disaggregated by candidates with previous experience and data disaggregated by candidates that were student teachers and were applying for their first employment position after completing their student teaching at the same school. An examination of data derived from this study may provide insight for elementary PDS school leaders to make meaningful, data-based, hiring decisions concerning student teachers.

District and school leaders must also consider studying prospective teachers’ portfolios and letters of recommendation throughout the hiring process. Many potential teaching candidates bring a portfolio to the face-to-face interview that they were required to create during their student teaching experience in their undergraduate program. Theel and Tallerico (2004) considered the effectiveness of how portfolios can be examined and used as part of the teacher selection process. The results of their case study discouraged the practice of using portfolios during employment interviews. However, if principals can find time outside the face-to-face interview to examine the portfolio during the hiring process, it can be a beneficial practice in considering prospective teachers (Theel & Tallerico, 2004). Mason and Schroeder (2012) believed this also holds true for letters of recommendation. “In the field of education, letters of reference are necessary and integral to the hiring process” (Mason & Schroeder, 2012, p. 307).

In their work with organizations, Ryan and Tippins (2004) found that many hiring managers made blanket statements that screening potential employees is not worthwhile. “The

power of ‘gut instinct’ and ‘chemistry’ seems to override hard data and rational arguments” (Ryan & Tippins, 2004, p. 306). Even when these managers were presented with evidence of strong relationships between screening scores and job performance, many of these managers deny that these data structures are better than less structured alternatives (Ryan & Tippins, 2004). There is evidence that school districts and building principals across the United States are implementing the use of commercialized teacher selection instruments as part of the teacher selection process. There is little research on how these commercialized teacher selection instruments integrate with and impact the hiring of student teachers.

Schumacher, Grigsby, and Vesey (2015) found that the availability of these instruments profess a level of objectivity and predictability to the hiring process. One of the more popular instruments has been created by Gallup Incorporated called *TeacherInsight* (Delli & Vera, 2003). Gallup has conducted research over many years to create its structured interview process. The company began this initiative by revamping the interview questions on themes such as mission, empathy, and activation. If the candidate answers these questions in alignment with what Gallup Inc. has concluded as “correct” responses based upon their research, then it proclaims these candidates will be high-quality teachers and should be hired. Many commercially produced interview instruments, such as Gallup Inc.’s do not focus on teaching quality, but rather on teacher personal attributes (Schumacher, Grigsby, & Vesey, 2015).

Metzger and Wu (2008) identified commercial teacher selection instruments as a significant topic because many school districts are spending considerable resources on them without a lot of feedback from policy makers or researchers. However, it is understandable why school and district leaders are attracted to these selection instruments because they “claim to provide objectivity by offering a quantifiable, efficient, and non-discriminatory system for

sorting and selecting teachers” (Metzger & Wu, 2008, p. 924). The most popular of these selection systems over the past few decades has been the Teacher Perceiver Interview (TPI), the tool focused on in Metzger and Wu’s (2008) study.

In addition, Metzger and Wu’s (2008) study noted that the “TPI’s teacher quality scores show that the strongest relationship are with administrator ratings and teacher attendance, stronger than the relationship with student ratings, student gain scores, and outside observer ratings” (p. 931). The TPI best predicts which teachers will have the best attendance and be most revered by their administrators. As the authors stated, “this pattern suggests that the affective orientations gauged by the TPI may have a greater bearing on teachers’ general work ethic than on their teaching ability” (Metzger & Wu, 2008, p. 931). Another finding of the study was that the relationship between a teacher’s TPI score and administrator rating becomes stronger the longer the teacher has worked in the school. Metzger and Wu (2008) postulated that this could mean the instrument simply identified the teacher’s ability to be liked by their administration.

Commercial teacher selection instruments, such as the TPI, do not really measure effective teaching but instead claim to identify teacher candidates who can communicate the same professional values and dispositions as the “best” teachers (Metzger & Wu, 2008; Schumacher et al., 2015). The last two issues with the TPI found in Metzger and Wu’s study were that the same themes and interview questions are used for elementary, middle, and high school teachers; and that these themes generate a teacher’s total score that may be confounded with each other (Metzger & Wu, 2008). Despite the findings in these studies, using any type of hard data during the interview process could be beneficial to the principal in the hiring process. It is important to remember that these selection instruments should be used as a tool to

supplement other information collected and analyzed during the hiring process and used to inform decisions. This idea is difficult for educators to accept because the human element (i.e., personality, empathy, relational ability, etc.) present in the hiring process has always been one of the most important components when making hiring decisions in the school hiring process (Ryan & Tippins, 2004; Schumacher et. al., 2015).

Principal Hiring Preferences

Studies indicated that principals may not hire the most effective teachers (Engel & Curran, 2016; Engel & Finch, 2015; Rutledge, et al., 2008). This statement epitomizes the need to study the elementary school hiring process in greater detail. Author Mimi Engel (2013) interviewed 31 Chicago Public School (CPS) principals, representing both elementary and secondary levels, about some of the hiring practices that they implemented. Results of her study show that principals focused more on behaviors and skills rather than qualifications. Some of the behaviors and skills that principals consistently spoke about included caring about students, classroom management, and being willing to work beyond contractual obligations. These same principals seldom mentioned content knowledge and teaching skills as abilities they looked for within teacher applicants. Also, many of the interviewed principals shared that they do not look specifically for teachers with prior teaching experience and a third of these principals actually preferred teachers with little or no experience. The reasons cited by principals who preferred teachers with little or no experience were less experienced teachers were reported to exhibit enthusiasm, new perspective, and “moldability” (Engel, 2013).

Engel and Finch (2015) analyzed these interviews and found that nearly all the 31 CPS principals interviewed reported using committees when hiring new faculty; and the faculty that

the administrators appointed to participate in the hiring process was determined by the position vacancy. The authors also found that:

Principals were most likely to report collaborating, or using their hiring committee, during interviews. Principals who interviewed collaboratively reported both valuing discussions about candidates and trusting committee members' opinions. Principals often described debriefing with their team after conducting interviews (p. 29).

However, principals did describe a wide range of variance on how they collaborated with their staff members when making hiring decisions. Some principals collaborated extensively, others indicated that they relied almost completely on the committee to make the decision, while some principals only used the committee's input in a limited fashion or not at all. Engel and Finch's (2015) study also found that elementary school principals were less likely to collaborate during the hiring process than high school principals. Some of the ways that these two types of principals differed was the way that they assembled and worked with their hiring teams. They also determined who made the final decision on which candidate they wanted to hire. Most of the principals in this study did share that they were supportive of the selection from the participating faculty because they would be the ones working closest with the new hire (Engel & Finch, 2015). This exemplifies how principals can continue to look at the principles of distributed leadership when collaborating on these important decisions. Bush (2013) stated that distributed leadership is uncoupled from positional authority. Leadership may be present anywhere in the organization and is not confined to formal leaders. "There is evidence of beneficial effects on schools of wider leadership distribution" (Bush, 2013, p. 543). When considering these key elements of distributed leadership, principals can collaborate and include more voices when making hiring decisions to increase effectiveness in the process.

In the same study that Engel and Finch (2015) conducted highlighting 31 CPS principals, there were several differences in principal preferences as to how they carried out finding the right candidate to hire. Most of the principals reported that they attended at least one job fair to find prospective teachers. Interestingly, CPS principals from lower achieving schools reported going to human resources for assistance, while one principal shared his favorite resource to find a prospective teacher was through dialogue with his own faculty. This study also determined that “principals in higher achieving schools were more likely to report networking within their schools, other CPS principals, and colleagues outside CPS. These principals were also less likely to report hiring their own substitutes and student teachers” (Engel & Finch, 2015, p. 35).

Engel and Curran (2016) used the same information from this study and determined ten hiring practices that they coded as strategic. The hiring practices coded as strategic were derived from researchers such as Engel (2013), Levin and Quinn (2003), Hill, Rowan, and Ball (2005), and Pounder (1988). Each of these strategies were also found in the district’s education plan. “On average, the Chicago Public Schools sample principals reported engaging in approximately five of the ten hiring practices coded as strategic” (Engel & Curran, 2016, p. 179). Nearly all the nine most strategic principals reported taking referrals and mentioned their emphasis on content knowledge among prospective teachers. These principals also reported having the prospective teachers engage in teaching a sample lesson (Engel & Curran, 2016).

Ballou (1996) found that neither attending a highly selective university or having a better grade point average (GPA) did not necessarily increase the chance of a prospective teacher being hired. Baker and Cooper (2005) had similar findings from their study indicating principals do not give preferences to teachers who attend highly selective universities. GPA was not a focal point of their study. Baker and Cooper (2005) also discovered that “principals’ undergraduate

backgrounds matter when it comes to recruitment, selection, and retention of teachers with strong undergraduate academic backgrounds” (p. 468). These findings support that the principal’s educational background is more important than the candidates’ educational background when it comes to the hiring process.

Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) used 42 interviews of 21 school principals in a mid-sized Florida district and found that résumé components or candidate’s coursework is one of the more important tools principals use. The authors recognized the previous research that found teacher experience is important, but in the eyes of the principals of this study, more experience is not necessarily better. They also noted that multiple studies have shown that principals’ search for a variety of characteristics when selecting candidates but prefer the candidates who are enthusiastic while demonstrating strong communication and organizational skills. Principals look for both professional and personal characteristics that match those of teachers currently on staff but can also reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. The authors noted a downfall with this practice when administrators focus too much on personality and too little on professional skills and abilities. Nevertheless, the principals in their study stated they strive to find a good balance between the two. As far as specific teacher abilities and characteristics, principals reported these as the most important among applicants: strong teaching skills, caring, knowledge of subject, works well with others, experience, enthusiastic, and communication skills. At the elementary level, principals were less concerned about teacher intelligence than their ability to work well with others. “Hiring teachers is arguably the most important task of schools leaders, and school principals are typically at the center of it” (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2010, p. 243).

Ingle, Rutledge, and Bishop (2011) studied the information from the Florida principal interviews and identified some additional findings pertaining to principal hiring preferences. School type (i.e., elementary, secondary) influenced principals' perceptions and preferences on teacher characteristics, but so did the principals' personal beliefs, background, and experiences. The school's poverty level can also effect the principals' perceptions and preferences on teacher characteristics. Although principals reported that each vacancy is different and is highly dependent on the position, team, and individuals; the interviews showed surprising consistency towards certain characteristics such as caring, subject matter knowledge, and pedagogy. Once again, these authors found that principals also considered the characteristics and abilities of the teachers already working on staff. Policy-compliance, student test scores, and the number of discipline referrals were factors influencing principal hiring preferences (Ingle, Rutledge, and Bishop, 2011).

Cohen-Vogel (2011) interviewed principals in two elementary schools from five different school districts in Florida to find that hiring practices were related to "staffing to the test." Overall, these principals described "hiring, developing, and removing teachers in an effort to increase their school's overall Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) performance, reported paying particular attention to student test scores in their decisions to reassign teachers within their schools" (Cohen-Vogel, 2011, p. 491). All the principals in this case study reported using student achievement data in a variety of different ways when making hiring decisions. Principals in more than half of the sample reported that they attempted to request the performance history and/or test score data of applicants with prior teaching experience from their previous principal via phone call. Whether the principals were at higher-performing or lower-performing schools, they shared that they looked for evidence that candidates made data-driven

instructional decisions. They also united behind hopes that prospective teachers used student achievement data to improve their own instructional practices and techniques (Cohen-Vogel, 2011). In this study, it appeared that principals valued student achievement data, although, variance existed from one setting to another.

Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell (2001) also looked at what principals' value in the hiring process. Their study was structured differently as they simultaneously accounted for what prospective teachers, personnel directors, and teacher education (post-secondary) faculty valued in the hiring process. The authors had each of these entities rate the importance of 18 factors when evaluating applicants for teaching positions. Items that principals viewed as critical were colleagues' opinions about an applicant's ability, skill, and reputation. Along with these factors, principals ranked the use of technology and the demonstration of implementing examples of assessment practices much higher than prospective teachers and the teacher education faculty. One characteristic that principals emphasized was the candidate's ability to manage a whole class. Most of the characteristics valued by principals were similar to the traits that teacher educator faculty and personnel directors valued as well; with the major difference being that each group valued hiring factors originating in their own environments. More specifically, principals valued the traits that would make a student teacher successful in a public elementary school setting, teacher education faculty valued the traits that related to a successful student teaching experience, and students valued traits such as their GPA making them believe they were successful students (Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell, 2001).

When accumulating the research completed on principal hiring preferences, it is easy to understand that there is a large continuum of how 'Principal A's' preferences differ from 'Principal B's' preferences. It is also evident that the variety of elementary school hiring

processes and structures can contribute to the incongruity in principal hiring preferences. Most importantly, the prior research focused on principal hiring preferences. There have not been any studies completed on what the elementary school PDS principal's hiring preferences are regarding student teachers. By further examining the process that elementary PDS school hiring teams use when hiring student teachers upon graduation, vital information can be attained.

Candidates' Perspective

When looking at the hiring process from a new teacher's perspective, labor market studies have found that some of the factors influencing teachers' decisions to enter, remain, and leave teaching are heavily tied to working conditions and wages (Engel & Finch, 2015). Although building level principals may not have much influence on wages, they can have a strong impact on working conditions. There is the perception that both employers and potential candidates believe that the interview process doubles as an opportunity for the prospective candidate to interview the employer to make sure it is right for them as well (Clayton, 2014). Positive recruiter affects (smiling, nods, eye contact, etc.) resulted in questions being seen as less difficult and the participants liking the interview more (Gilmore, 1989). Therefore, it is important for principals to build a strong culture and consistent hiring process that creates an environment conducive to making teacher candidates feel comfortable as they begin their professional careers.

Liu and Johnson (2006) reported that fewer than half of new teachers interviewed with current teachers at the school. Only 33% of new teachers interviewed with a school-based administrator other than the principal. Hardly any new teachers received the opportunity to interact with current teachers, parents, and students to gain valuable insight about what a school is like during the interview process. Many new teachers in California and Florida reported that

they were hired extremely late in the year or after the school year had already begun. The authors criticized the hiring process as being “late” and “rushed” (Liu & Johnson, 2006). Unfortunately, for many principals and district human resources departments, there are often extenuating circumstances that cannot be forecasted, creating the type of hiring process Liu and Johnson (2006) described.

Cannata (2010) surveyed and interviewed prospective elementary teacher candidates from six different universities primarily applying to one metropolitan area to examine what qualities they look for in schools. The author’s qualitative research found that prospective teachers report that fit and familiarity are important factors to where they apply during their job search. Similarly, prospective teachers focused more on district characteristics than listing preferences for specific schools. The findings in this study also included that “there are also several other characteristics that influence teachers’ career decisions, including salary and benefits, geographic location, working conditions, principal support, mentoring and induction, and the social organization of schools” (Cannata, 2010, p. 2890). Another interesting part of this study focused on how prospective teachers’ logic is structured – which is primarily based upon their social and cultural background. This logic created a perception that lead them to ignore schools in other districts and focus their attention on only a few, certain school districts. New teacher trainings, a supportive principal, school familiarity, school location, personal relationships, and perceived comfort were also espoused preferences from teacher applicants (Cannata, 2010). Cannata (2010), however, did recognize the fact that many of the attributes that teacher applicants verbalized did not always match the attributes of the districts they preferred. It is difficult to understand or identify teacher candidates’ preferences when it comes to school attributes and characteristics (Cannata, 2010). There are unique settings located in high transient

areas, such as a military installation, that provide building leaders opportunities to examine applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and geographical locations. Cannata's (2010) findings support how these two factors play such a vital role in a prospective teacher's school preference.

Engel, Jacob, and Curran (2014) continued to look at the recruitment and retention of effective teachers in response to President Obama's "Race to the Top" initiative. The authors found that prospective CPS applicants were far less likely to apply to schools with a high poverty rate. Teacher candidate's preferences for school characteristics varied by applicant's characteristics; for example, African-American applicants were more likely to apply in schools within CPS that had a predominantly higher African-American population. Reinforcing Reininger's previous findings, the teacher candidates in this study sought familiar contexts that were geographically close to where they lived or where they were from (Engel, Jacob, and Curran, 2014).

It is also important for school districts and schools to understand what characteristics teaching applicants believe are the most important for incoming prospective teachers to possess as they enter the education profession. Considering Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell's (2001) study, teacher candidates placed value on grade point average, classroom management, and performance during their student teaching or internship experience. These same teacher candidates did not place as much value on writing ability, technology implementation, and the total number of certificates held. In comparison, principals did not place much value on these same characteristics according to this study. Overall, results revealed that students do understand what principals look for during the hiring process and the importance of the field

experience when it comes to transitioning from student to teacher (Abernathy, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2001).

General Student Teacher Information

Prior studies and surveys of new teachers suggest that student teaching is the most important, beneficial, and predictive part of their teaching training experience (Greenberg, et al, 2011; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Ronfeldt, 2012). No other aspect of a teacher's undergraduate coursework, observations, or any other task compare to the semester spent student teaching and the value of those experiences. Rowan's (1994) findings support the importance of student teaching as he compared the teaching profession to other occupations using data from the U.S. Department of Labor. The conclusions of his study show that by level of job complexity, teaching shares characteristics with both professional and non-professional occupations. However, when it comes to worker functions, teaching ranks second highest in the level of complexity when it comes to working with data, people, and using reasoning and language. These results suggest that in terms of skill requirement and level of formal training, teaching is located in the upper quartile of occupations (Rowan, 1994).

Greenburg, Pomerance, and Walsh (2011) believe advancing the overall performance of beginning teachers should be goal number one for teacher preparation programs:

The primary aim of teacher preparation programs should be to improve upon the overall performance of novices through better preparation. A study of New York City teachers found a correlation between the teachers who were most effective in the classroom and the degree to which their preparation program had focused on overcoming obstacles to success in the first year of teaching. Our own analysis

found little evidence that institutions provide student teachers with sufficient guidance and feedback to improve first-year performance (p. 29).

The authors also found a lot of variance on how student teaching is structured across teacher preparatory institutions located both in the United States and internationally. The data from the author's sample (134 U.S. elementary teacher preparatory institutions) identified that 99% of teacher preparatory schools require full-time student teaching and 100% require at least ten weeks of student teaching. During these student teaching times, 75% of the preparatory schools require that their student teachers share the same responsibilities as the cooperating teacher, 68% require their student teachers to be present on the first day of school, and 91% prohibit extra course work to encourage student teachers to focus on their teaching responsibilities. Neither the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) nor the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) mandates or addresses the duration, start time, or additional coursework during student teaching (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011). From an international standpoint, student teaching also varies widely in length, lasting anywhere from three weeks to as many as 80 weeks. Previous studies of the structure of international teacher preparatory institutions are vague in the manner of how student teachers are governed, supervised, and evaluated. Finally, this study concluded that supervisors are not expected to visit and evaluate student teachers frequently. When supervisors did evaluate student teachers, the quality of the instruments they used were inadequate (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011).

Another focus of the student teacher program is to ensure that undergraduates possess the proper knowledge base as they gain experience through this opportunity. Clark, Byrnes, and Sudweeks (2015) found that student teaching provides the perfect setting for prospective teachers

to better understand their own perception of their ability to teach. “These perceptions should be high enough to encourage persistence and confidence, but low enough to provide a good understanding of the complexities involved with teaching students” (Clark, Byrnes, & Sudweeks, 2015, p. 180).

There are several factors that can make student teaching the most conducive learning opportunity for prospective teachers. One of these factors is the student teacher’s field placement. This can also play a huge role in where student teachers begin their professional careers. Ronfeldt (2012) studied how field placement school characteristics impact student teachers’ effectiveness and retention. He noted that there are competing theories on where to place student teachers. There is the philosophy that underserved, difficult-to-staff schools are more challenging settings therefore are less supportive settings for developing professional practice and can lead to student teachers feeling overwhelmed. Another philosophy is based on the idea that student teaching shouldn’t occur in easy-to-staff schools, which tend to have more privileged student populations, and could leave teachers underprepared for the challenges they may encounter in the future. Ronfeldt’s study (2012) of New York City PDS schools found many advantages for prospective teaching candidates that completed their student teaching from easier-to-staff schools which included being more effective at raising test scores and more likely to stay in New York City schools during their first five years in the profession. Even when student teachers did their fieldwork in easier-to-staff PDS schools and began their professional careers in more difficult-to-staff PDS schools, they were associated with better retention and achievement gains. This study made it clear that prospective teachers are learning something from easier-to-staff PDS schools. Possible beneficial outcomes of this study included persistence, ability to learn important skills, and learning the most about effective instructional

practices from other teachers who were better equipped to mentor prospective teachers (Ronfeldt, 2012).

Ronfeldt (2015) continued to examine the field placement of student teachers focusing on how placement can affect instructional effectiveness. Previous research identified the three PDS school characteristics that are most related to instructional performance: school climate and collaboration, effectiveness at raising achievement data, and school turnover. These three conditions contribute to a better setting for teacher growth and learning. In his study of over 750 student teachers in over 250 PDS schools, Ronfeldt (2015) found PDS schools that were lower performing, harder to staff, and less collaborative were more likely to be used as field placement schools. Although there were some exceptions, teachers did not perform any better or worse when they gained employment in schools with similar characteristics to the PDS schools they student taught in. The findings of this study, however, indicate that some field placement PDS schools, like those with better collaboration, are inherently better contexts for promoting instructional effectiveness regardless of where teachers are previously employed. Other field placement PDS schools appear not to be inherently better to the degree they match the schools in which these student teachers eventually are employed. This may indicate that school leaders need to consider where prospective teachers completed their student teaching and whether those PDS schools match their own characteristics (Ronfeldt, 2015).

When prospective teachers are completing their student teaching, their cooperating teacher can be one of the most impactful factors during this experience. Ronfeldt, Reininger, and Kwok (2013) studied mentor teacher characteristics and student teaching to find that student teachers reporting better cooperating teachers who allowed more autonomy in instructional decisions felt better prepared and possessed stronger efficacy as they began their career. The

conclusions of their study also identified that few field placement PDS school characteristics were related to student teacher self-perceived quality or career plan measures. They also found that teacher characteristics were more predictive than features of clinical preparation (Ronfeldt, Reininger, & Kwok, 2013). McCann and Spangler (2012) dug deeper into the importance of a strong cooperating teacher and found that good mentors negotiate the careful balance between providing critical guidance and allowing autonomy. These authors found that “there are three guidelines for making the student teaching experience as productive and meaningful as possible for both mentors and their interns: competence, autonomy, and relatedness” (McCann & Spangler, 2012, p. 85-86). As these authors identified some of the ways strong mentors can positively impact a student teacher, it is safe to say that weak mentors have a negative impact on a student teacher as well. All in all, there is “little evidence that characteristics of an intern’s cooperating teacher are predictive of entry into the public-school workforce” (Goldhaber, Kreig, & Theobald, 2014, p. 107).

Engel and Curran (2016) shared that when principals observe student teachers, they can determine which teachers are most effective. By doing this, hiring student teachers after upon graduation may be strategic (Engel & Curran, 2016). This can be essential information when considering school superintendents’ perspective on the student teachers that are joining the workforce. “School district superintendents often express dissatisfaction with the caliber of teachers coming out of many institutions” (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011, p. 41). Student teaching can also play a major role in a prospective teachers’ initial job placement. This is precisely what Goldhaber, Kreig, and Theobald (2014) have studied over the past few years. Interns endorsed to teach in “difficult-to-staff areas” like math and science, special education, and English Language Learning are far more likely to be employed in public schools than interns

endorsed in other areas. These same interns were also hired more quickly (Goldhaber, Kreig, & Theobald, 2014).

Kreig, Theobald, and Goldhaber (2016) recently researched where student teachers are initially placed. They found that nearly 40% of teacher candidates who found a job were hired into the same district and 15% of them were hired into the same school that they completed their student teaching. Their study confirmed that prospective teachers are more prone to work in a setting near their hometown or the college they attended. Student teachers with higher licensure test scores and undergraduate GPAs were also more likely to complete their student teaching in more advantaged districts, however, this relationship was not statistically significant when controlling proximity to hometown. To add to this, their study indicated that a student teacher is almost 60 times more likely to be hired in their student teaching school district than in a school district 30 or more miles away. When looking at gender, male teachers are more likely to teach farther from where they student taught, and older student teachers are more likely to teach closer to where they student taught. All things considered, student teaching placements play a bigger part in explaining patterns pertaining to new teacher hiring than either hometowns or teacher education program locations. As a result, some student teachers may prefer to teach in a particular learning environment and express this request for their student teaching placement. Also, hiring schools and districts gave preferences to prospective teachers who student taught in similar settings to theirs (Kreig, Theobald, & Goldhaber, 2016).

There are a couple of ways that universities have attempted to help both student teaching candidates and school districts transition these prospective teachers into employment vacancies that school and district leaders have been unable to fill. Maier and Youngs (2009) described the matching of teaching candidates at Michigan State University to student teaching assignments as

a two-stage process. First, candidates can choose the region in the state where they want to do their student teaching. Second, the university coordinators work with local PDS schools and districts to assign candidates to student teaching schools and cooperating teachers. In addition to this, these authors suggested that teacher preparation programs can facilitate the creation of social networks among candidates and between candidates and PDS schools. This allows for greater access to information about one another – information that is sometimes not easily gleaned from traditional hiring techniques (i.e. interview, resume, cover letter, reference letter, etc.), which can lead to better matches between candidates and PDS schools. When these better matches are created, it can have a tremendous impact on overall production and effectiveness while diminishing teacher turnover (Maier & Youngs, 2009).

What is it that these hiring teams are looking for when hiring student teachers from their elementary PDS school or district into a full-time position as these student teachers begin their professional careers? Content area and proximity to hometown/college attended are two factors that have been studied in relation to this question. Mason and Schroeder (2012) also analyzed letters of recommendation from student teachers. They identified that written letters of recommendation can be an effective vehicle to screen potential hires. However, principals prefer verbal references in the hiring process because of two primary reasons. These included “issues of validity due to superlative inflationary aspects of letters and issues of reliability due to variation in focus and evaluation by letter writers” (Mason & Schroeder, 2012, p. 308). The authors also found there are no formal guidelines to writing a letter of recommendation so the ideas and values can vary widely both from the writer’s perspective and the potential employer’s perspective. When it comes to student teachers’ letters of recommendation, the cooperating teacher has the most to say about the prospective teaching candidate when compared to a letter

written from the building principal or university supervisor. All in all, the overall quality of the letters fluctuates greatly among these three viewpoints. Testimonials (i.e. “the best student teacher I have ever worked with”) were the strongest predictor of letter quality; and despite the fact that the authors were able to examine how letters of recommendation were perceived, they did not find a link between letters of recommendation and actual teacher quality for student teachers (Mason & Schroeder, 2012).

Hiring the highest quality teacher is one of the top priorities for any building principal. Engel and Curran (2016) noted that it is arguably one of the most important levers available to school leaders that have autonomy in this responsibility. They have also found that of the few hiring practices reported by principals, there is substantial room for improvement (Engel & Curran, 2016). It is also evident that most US principals are the primary decision makers in teacher hiring (Cannata & Engel, 2012). The recruitment, reduction of inequity disbursement, development, and retention of effective teachers has been one of the top priorities of federal education policy in the USA (Kreig et. al., 2016; United States Department of Education, 2010). Prior research on the hiring process highlights the apparent lack of consistency or methodology in how building principals/school districts approach and structure this process. Operative teacher hiring can create many positive outcomes within a school. One example of this includes how hiring can lead to teacher effectiveness, which can implicate teacher job satisfaction and retention (Liu & Johnson, 2006).

Goldhaber, Kreig, and Theobald (2014) communicated an excellent source of data that represents the need to further investigate the hiring processes that effective elementary PDS schools use to hire student teachers:

Teacher turnover is related to the fact that a surprising number of interns, just over 15 percent of all interns hired into an in-state public teaching position, are hired into the same school where they did their student teaching. This suggests that student teaching serves not merely as a means of training teachers but also as a way for schools with open positions to get an early look at prospective teachers, screening them for fit and ability (p. 107).

These same authors also provided some data points that make incoming education professionals among the most important employees within the public sector since there are over 3.5 million teachers, most of whom are trained similarly through undergraduate coursework with an opportunity to student teach for an extended period of time towards the end of their program. The frequency of hiring student teachers upon graduation from PDS schools suggests that the student teaching experience serves a dual role: training novice teachers and screening potential new hires (Engel & Finch, 2015; Goldhaber, et al., 2014).

As noted, other than hiring teams examining the student teacher portfolios and letters of reference, there is little information in the literature on the process schools use to consider student teachers in the hiring process. There are additional aspects within the hiring process of student teachers that need to be studied in addition to portfolios and letters of recommendation. As Goldhaber, Kreig, and Theobald (2014) eluded to, there are worthwhile opportunities for elementary PDS school leaders and hiring teams to gather more information when hiring a student teacher that has completed their student teaching within the same school site. It is essential for educational leaders to better understand the practices that these elementary PDS school hiring teams incorporate when making decisions to employ one of their student teachers.

Teacher Attrition and Retention

As aforementioned, there is limited research in hiring student teachers upon their graduation. Engel and Curran (2016) noted that future research should explore the idea of how elementary school hiring teams strategically identify which student teachers to employ. The United States Department of Education is facing two major problems regarding teacher shortage and high teacher attrition rates. “Low salaries and poor working conditions often contribute to the difficulties of recruiting and keeping teachers, as can the challenges of the work itself” (Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 31). Identifying findings and conclusions on this topic may prove beneficial to district and elementary PDS school hiring teams.

Carlson (2012) referenced data from the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey, sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics citing reasons why teachers are leaving the profession at a high rate. This survey indicated that a significant portion of teachers felt that the administrators in their schools were not promoting an environment where teachers are valued, supported, and recognized. The survey results also indicated that “strong leadership from the principal of the school has a direct connection to the job satisfaction of the teachers in the school and the teachers remaining in their teaching positions” (Carlson, 2012, p. 51). Based upon the survey results, distributed leadership may be an effective way for building leaders to increase the value of teachers. Bush (2013) stated that those in formal leadership positions should create the conditions where leadership capacity is built, supported, and sustained in a purposeful way (Bush, 2013). The lack of support or recognition can also be improved by implementing more distributed leadership opportunities through staff relations. “Interactions between people are more important than the precise nature of leadership roles” (Bush, 2013, p. 543).

Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) studied many different determinants that affect teacher mobility: job characteristics, alternative opportunities, school personnel policies, and heterogeneity of teacher preferences. However, these authors did not delve into any type of research or literature that studied how or what type of impact the hiring of student teachers can have on the retention challenges that educational leaders face on an annual basis. In addition to these factors, educational leaders need to look at circumstances that they can control to diminish these issues.

Freddie Cross, senior statistician for the U.S. Department of Education, created a report identifying exactly where the teacher shortage areas are in the U.S. (2016). “A teacher shortage area is defined as an area of specific grade, subject matter or discipline classification, or a geographic area in which the Secretary determines that there is an inadequate supply of elementary or school teachers” (Cross, 2016, p. 4). The data in this report is broken down by state, position, and grade levels between the 1990-1991 school year and 2016-2017 school year. Looking at the data collection, nearly all states faced more teacher vacancies in the 2016-2017 school year when compared to the 1990-1991 school year (Cross, 2016).

Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) put together a comprehensive study on teacher shortage, teacher attrition, and teacher retention. The authors found that special education is seeing the greatest teacher shortages of all. Altogether, forty-eight states plus the District of Columbia have identified shortages of teachers in special education. Teaching positions for mathematics, science, and bilingual education/English learner education also report significant shortfalls. Statistics also suggest that teacher departures and shortages often have a disproportionate effect on the most disadvantaged students (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Gray & Taie, 2015; Sutcher, et. al., 2016). With this being such a major issue, the federal

government has implemented programs such as the TEACH Grant Program, the Pam Douglas Teacher Scholarship Program, and loan forgiveness and/or deferment opportunities to attract student teachers to these areas (Cross, 2016).

In addition to the abovementioned reasons on the current teacher shortage, forecasts show this will only worsen over the next decade (Sutcher, et al., 2016; United States Department of Education, 2016). There has been a steady decline in the number of students completing teacher preparation programs across the U.S. In 2010-2011, a total of 217,492 higher education students completed their teacher education program compared to only 172,139 in 2014-2015 (United States Department of Education, 2016). King (2018) found that the number of undergraduate education degrees awarded annually peaked at almost 200,000 in the early 1970s and is less than 100,000 today. In addition to this, there may be a spike in student enrollment by three million students (to 53 million total) because of higher birth rates and immigration. Pupil-teacher ratios also may shrink from 16 to 1 to pre-recessional levels closer to 15.3 to 1 which would require nearly 150,000 more teachers by 2025 (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

One area highly impacted by the significant shortage of teachers is in rural America. This also may have a larger role in teacher shortages than what most people may think. More than one in four of America's public schools are rural, and nearly one in six of the nation's students are in rural areas. Despite higher costs for some services in rural and smaller schools, only 17 percent of state education funding goes to rural districts (Showalter, Klein, Johnson, & Hartman, 2017). Public schools in rural areas in the early 2000's experienced the greatest difficulty in filling teacher vacancies – particularly English as a second language and foreign language positions (Provasnik, KewalRamani, McLaughlin-Coleman, Gilbertson, Herring, & Xie, 2007). Because most teacher preparatory programs are located at colleges in urban areas, this

puts rural school districts at a disadvantage when it comes to hiring student teachers upon their graduation. Therefore, it is even more important for rural school districts and rural PDS schools to examine their hiring processes when it comes to hiring any student teachers who complete their fieldwork within the rural setting and to consider advantages of selecting quality student teachers to fill vacancies. Compared with public school teachers in cities, rural public-school teachers averaged more years of experience in 2003-2004 (Provasnik, et al., 2007). This data highlights the need in rural public PDS schools to seek access to quality teachers through PDS/student teacher placements and to consider employment potential in these candidates.

However, additional factors play a role in teacher shortages within rural areas. “In many states, rural school districts are simply at a competitive disadvantage in the market for teachers” (Showalter, Klein, Johnson, & Hartman, 2017, p. 22). “Public school teachers in rural areas earned, on average, lower salaries in 2003-2004 than their peers in towns, suburbs, and cities, even after adjusting for geographic cost differences” (Provasnik, et al., 2007, p. 108).

Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) noted that there simply are not enough qualified teachers applying for teaching jobs to meet the demands in all locations and fields. During the 2015-2016 school year, there was a shortage of approximately 60,000 teachers. This estimate was created from the number of positions that were not filled or were filled by people that were not qualified for specifically licensed teaching assignments. If the supply trends continue, this shortfall could increase to 112,000 teachers by 2018 (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

These researchers also found that as policymakers focus on recruiting more teachers into the profession, the need to retain existing teachers is equally important. Teacher attrition continues to be an issue; eight percent annually are leaving the profession with two-thirds of

these teachers departing before retirement age because of dissatisfaction with aspects of their teaching conditions. This attrition rate is nearly twice as high as teacher attrition rates in countries like Finland, Singapore, and Ontario, Canada. Much of the demand for teachers is created by attrition. Over the past five years (2011 - 2016) teacher attrition has accounted for 95% of demand and will continue to account for 85% of annual demand if it remains at current levels. If this rate were to be cut in half from eight percent to four percent, it would virtually eliminate current teacher shortfalls and allow for increased selectivity in hiring, leading to more high-quality teachers in our nation's classrooms (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

The principle of teachers constantly changing schools and teaching assignments creates a negative appearance of a 'revolving door' for public education and can be a characteristic that jeopardizes the overall quality of teaching (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010; Perda, 2013). Ingersoll and May (2012) described the impact that teacher turnover can have on schools. Migration, which does not directly affect the overall supply and demand of teachers at the national level, places massive strain on schools themselves. Because of this supply and demand factor, schools are constantly competing with one another to recruit new teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2012). Donitsa-Schmidt and Zuzovsky (2016) acknowledged that turnover is normal and can have benefits (i.e., new employees bring new ideas).

Teacher attrition and turnover creates substantial costs for replacing teachers who leave (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Keesler, 2010; Levy et al., 2012; Meier & Hicklin, 2007; Sutcher, et al., 2016). During the 2005-2006 school year, it was estimated that these expenses cost \$18,000 per teacher in certain urban districts, leading to an estimated \$7 billion a year.

When adjusting for inflation, these costs would currently be more than \$8 billion a year today. Along with these financial costs, teacher attrition creates educational costs. Impact on student achievement, collegial relationships, lack of institutional knowledge, training expenses, and lack of shared planning/collaboration are additional ways schools are impacted as a result of teacher attrition (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

Guha and Kini (2016) researched one way to combat recruitment and retention issues. This approach created an alternative pathway to teacher certification through clinical training based upon the medical residency model. These teacher residency programs are being created to try to fill the teacher shortage, typically in positions where shortages are most prominent. Many of these students receive benefits such as living stipends and tuition support as they learn to teach in exchange for their commitment to teach in the same district for three to four years beyond their residency. Early research suggests that these residency programs bring greater gender and racial diversity into the teaching workforce, reduce teacher attrition, and create more effectiveness in teaching math after the fourth year in comparison to new and veteran teachers (Guha & Kini, 2016). Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2017) also looked at this new idea and identified that early studies of teacher residency programs are resulting in high retention rates of graduates, even after several years in the profession. These new programs are creating positive steps in addressing teacher shortage and attrition but may not be long-term solutions. Many states and school districts have limited resources to support these residency programs creating the need for educational leaders to look more internally at how to fill vacancies. As elementary PDS school leaders find constructive ways to address wide-scale issues at the local level, being mindful of effective hiring processes that identify student teachers already immersed in their school culture may have advantages.

Summary

The literature review provided an understanding of research on key findings related to the elementary school hiring process, student teachers, and teacher attrition/retention. This review included general information on the hiring process focusing on the elementary school perspective. This literature review also offered a broad perspective on the hiring procedures that different educational entities have implemented in the past. While there remains much to learn about student teachers in the elementary PDS school hiring process, this literature review identified the methods and adjustments to those methods that are evident in current practice.

This literature review also focused on what types of preferences principals exhibit throughout the hiring process and described teacher characteristics and abilities they believe create a high quality teacher. The literature review also identified the hiring practices that principals implement and how those practices shape their preferences when it comes to hiring prospective teachers. A clearer understanding of how a principal's academic background, use of data and previous assessment scores, and school context/setting impacted hiring preferences.

The literature review also highlighted teacher candidates' perspectives on the hiring process along with general information about student teachers and their experiences. Information included future teacher candidates' thoughts on the timing of teacher interviews, what they believe should be valued the most in the hiring process, and the types of school settings of interest to beginning career professionals. Data presented in the literature review included the number of student teachers, the requirements held in teacher preparatory programs, and the type of settings student teachers typically encounter in their first years on the job.

Concluding this literature review are statistics regarding the current teacher attrition rates in the United States. Using data from the U.S. Department of Education and the Learning Policy

Institute, specific teaching positions and teacher shortage areas were identified. The percentage of teachers leaving the profession pre-retirement, the reasons for leaving the profession, and the financial costs this creates were outlined. Finally, ideas on how student teachers can serve as a valuable human resource pool to offset the shrinking teacher pipeline culminated the literature review.

Through a qualitative case study approach, research will be conducted to examine the hiring process of student teachers in a rural, Midwestern, elementary PDS school. In the next chapter, the research questions, research design, researcher's paradigm, unit analysis, and anticipated obstacles of the case study are discussed. A description of the setting and participants will identify the phenomenon studied as well as a review of the data collection and data analysis methods that were executed in this study. To conclude, a subjectivity statement and trustworthiness methods are presented.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The purpose of this study was to focus on the hiring process an elementary PDS school used to identify student teachers to employ that completed their student teaching at the respective site. This study focused on several portions of the hiring process used to identify student teachers to be employed at this elementary PDS school. Areas of the hiring process that were examined were the structure and roles, the presence, and lack thereof any BBI techniques, emphasis or preferences placed on teacher characteristics and skills, and how results were assessed and analyzed. In order to document how this hiring process was executed in this elementary PDS school, a qualitative case study approach was conducted.

Qualitative case study research presented many advantages to this study which included the ability to use multiple sources of data to better understand, in depth, the hiring processes this elementary PDS school used as they identified which student teachers to employ. This qualitative case study documented how this elementary PDS school implemented and intertwined the different facets of the hiring process to effectively identify the student teachers to begin their professional careers at the same site where they completed their student teaching. The research methodology used in this study is described in this chapter. This information is organized into the following sections: (1) research paradigm, (2) research questions, (3) research design, (4) defining the case, (5) unit of analysis, (6) anticipated obstacles, (7) participant recruitment, setting, and selection, (8) data collection, (9) data analysis, (10) subjectivity statement, and (11) trustworthiness.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm offered a conceptual background for understanding and making sense of research. The most important idea of a research paradigm is that it shapes the

researcher's perceptions of the world. This included how the researcher perceived the entire research process and how the researcher's beliefs were reflected in the design of the research. The way data was collected, analyzed, interpreted, and presented also affected the researcher's perceptions.

With educational research, a focus on social phenomena existed which was primarily educational in nature. The conceptions, perceptions, and interpretations the researcher had possessed allowed him to create research questions in education that fell into the research paradigms that have evolved over the course of time. With qualitative case study research, and the methodology used in this particular study, it corresponded primarily with two of these research paradigms: positivism and constructivism.

Yazan (2015) identified the three major approaches to case study methods in education from Yin, Stake, and Merriam. One of the first things identified in these approaches is what research paradigm each of these methodologies originated and falls within. Yin falls into a positivist approach, which often represents a traditional form of research. A firm belief of Yin's is that case study research is not limited to qualitative research methods and does not distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methods (Yazan, 2015).

In addition to this, a positivist approach to case study research identified three notions that are fundamental in this research paradigm according to Crotty (1998): orientation in research, objectivity, and generalizability. This essentially means that the findings in case study research, according to a positivist, will yield established facts, or as close to established facts that can be established from the research (Crotty, 1998).

The second research paradigm that case study research lends itself to is constructivism. Crotty (1998) defined the constructionist view of meaning as not being discovered but

constructed. Constructionists claim that meaning cannot be described simply as “objective” or “subjective,” and that before there was consciousness on earth capable of interpreting the world, the world held no meaning at all. “What constructionism claims is that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). When looking at Yazan’s (2015) three major approaches of case study research from Yin, Stake, and Merriam; it was easy to identify Stake’s methodology falling into the constructivism research paradigm. Stake (1995) shared that the “constructivism view encourages providing readers with good raw material for their own sharing” (p. 102). This perspective on constructivism shared the same principle with the positivist approach that many associate with Yin’s research background.

This qualitative research study originated and identified itself within the constructivist research paradigm. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to better understand the process this elementary school used to identify and hire student teachers. The goals of this qualitative case study were associated with the constructivism paradigm more so than the other aforementioned positivist paradigm. The researcher maintained a focus throughout this study that meaning is constructed by humans based upon their interpretations of the world around them.

Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this study was: How does the hiring team identify effective student teachers to be employed at their PDS elementary school? Two additional sub-questions served to further guide the study. Sub-question #1: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify effective student teachers to be employed using Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI) techniques? And, sub-question #2: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify

effective student teachers to be employed using teacher characteristics and abilities outlined in a state department's educator evaluator protocol?

Research Design

For this research project, the best method to obtain more data and information about the hiring process was through a qualitative case study analysis. Therefore, a qualitative single case study was selected for this research study. A single case study was associated with Stake's (1995) belief that the focus of this study was particularization, not generalization. Another important reason that a qualitative single case study was selected was because it provided an opportunity for the researcher to conduct this study within its natural setting. The first step the researcher took in this particular case was to understand this case contextually and holistically. Once the researcher immersed himself in the data, the next focus was identifying what core patterns emerged from the data collection and then to recognize what made this single case unique. The researcher understood that valid modification of generalization from the audience occurred in this single case study, but the primary reason why the single case study was selected is because of the study's particularization (Stake, 1995).

In addition to this, the researcher selected a qualitative single case study because it provided an opportunity for the audience to better understand the context of this study. The context of this qualitative single case study included everything from background knowledge of the school to the physical setting of where the interview process took place at this school. Another major advantage to this qualitative single case study was that the hiring process occurred in its natural setting. By better understanding the context of a qualitative single case study, this also allowed the researcher to complete a more comprehensive view, collection, and analysis of the data. This qualitative single case study provided a platform for the researcher to

triangulate the data from multiple sources that was then extrapolated to identify patterns and trends. Finally, this single case study occurred within a system (or boundaries). The boundaries of this study were much more defined within a single case study approach rather than any format of a multiple case study.

The researcher implemented an intrinsic methodology for this qualitative single case study. Stake (1995) suggested that an intrinsic methodology approach is associated with a researcher that has a genuine interest in this case. With this methodology, it is primarily understood that the case doesn't necessarily represent other cases or illustrate a particular trait or problem. More so, intrinsic methodology was of interest to the researcher because of its particularity and ordinariness. The researcher understood that the purpose of an intrinsic methodology for qualitative single case study research, as Stake (1995) described, was *not* to come to understand some abstract construct, generic phenomenon, or to build theory.

According to authors deMarrais and Lappan (2004), case study research can often involve the close examination of people, topics, issues, or programs. These studies seek to answer focused questions by producing in-depth descriptions and interpretations over a short time span typically between a few weeks and a year. Case studies tend to explore contemporary issues for the purpose of understanding, decision making, or to discover casual links. One of the most important aspects of case study research is that it is left up to the audience or consumer to determine the meaning and worth as it applies to their own situation. This concept is in opposition to the idea of case study research striving to project meaning onto the consumer or audience (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004).

deMarrais and Lappan (2004) also stated that generalization is not a concern for case study. The main purpose of the case study approach was to delve into and understand what was

unique about the situation. Case study researchers are expected to find things that cannot be generalized to other populations (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004). Also, “naturalistic generalizations, transferability and fittingness all rely on the researchers to provide readers with the thick description and vicarious experiential accounts they need to determine if and how they use the information in their own lives” (Melrose, 2009, pg. 2). Melrose (2009) also commented that naturalist generalization is all tied to the reader’s personal experiences. Even the smallest sample size or single case studies can inform and enlighten the reader. When completing case study research it is vital to understand “the goal of naturalistic generalization is not to prescribe conclusions” (Melrose, 2009, pg. 5). Rather, case study research can provide insights and descriptions that evolve naturally for readers to compare and utilize in their own personal settings (Melrose, 2009).

The design of this case study research was focused on a single issue, problem, or facet within a program. It was not intended to look at everything going on in the area, so it was important to select the specific site the study focused on. One thing that is extremely essential in case study research is that the researcher set boundaries. This allows a study to maintain attention to the primary focal point rather than creeping away from the original focus. deMarrais and Lappan (2004) identified ways to keep the case study focused. First, it was imperative to define the actual “case” for the study. The researcher also defined the unit of analysis and where the researcher obtained their data. It was vital to determine the length of the study before it began, develop strong research questions; and decipher when new questions came up during the case study, and to decide which questions should be incorporated into the study or set aside and saved for future research (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004).

The biggest strength of the case study approach was the triangulation method when it came to data sources to drive the research study. “Triangulation is when the researcher uses multiple sources of data and multiple methods for each research question” (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004, pg. 228). Examples of data sources that can be used in case study research are documents, records, letters, reports, charts, interviews, field notes, and observations. Interviews have proven to be the most important data source in case study research, but as mentioned previously, multiple sources of data can be used to corroborate the interview data. When gathering this data, the researcher visited the site prior to the interviews and before the observations to establish understanding and build rapport with those in the research study. Analyzation of this data was challenging because of the volume of data that was produced from the case study. The researcher looked to identify patterns within the data, while not discounting single occurrences that may have explained or connected patterns.

Finally, in this case study, it was important that the final report was written toward the intended audience. deMarrais & Lappan (2004) stated that the case study needs to be rich in describing the research site and that information should be included near the beginning of the final report. Effectively portraying the context of the study to the audience helps the reader better understand the meaning of the results. This description should include visuals, unique traits, and vital players in the study. This report should also include a description of the researcher’s perspective, relationship to the study, bias, and any other additional factors that may help the audience understand the focus and results of the case study. Another key practice in case study reporting is to provide a draft of the final copy to the research participants to allow them the opportunity to validate or refute any of the results or assumptions of the study (deMarrais & Lappan, 2004).

Defining the Case

Yin (2014) referred to case study as a particular kind of research inquiry. The term “case study” is paralleled with other types of inquiries such as “experiment,” a “survey,” and a “history” (Yin, 2014, p. 24). Yin’s definition was in two parts, beginning with the scope of a case study – “understanding a real-world case and assuming that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions pertinent to your case” (Yin, 2014, p. 16). The second part of Yin’s definition covered the features of the research that comprised an all-encompassing method. This entails “covering the logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis” (Yin, 2014, p. 17).

The scope and features of this qualitative case study were to explore the process of hiring student teachers upon their graduation that have completed their fieldwork in one rural, Midwest public elementary PDS school. More specifically, this qualitative case study focused on the following: the hiring process structure, how the process was implemented; and the data, teacher characteristics, and teacher abilities that were valued by the hiring team. A “common qualitative case study” approach was conducted to document the process used to hire student teachers in this elementary PDS school (Yin, 2014, p. 52). The ability to triangulate multiple forms of data through a qualitative case study provided much clearer and detailed findings than other methodologies. The basis for this study was to better understand the context and experiences that an elementary PDS school implemented and/or used in their approach and process when hiring student teachers upon graduation.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this qualitative case study was the process the hiring team used to identify student teachers for future employment who completed their fieldwork at this rural,

Midwestern public elementary PDS school. This elementary school's inaugural school year was in 1984-1985 and then completed facility renovations before the 2012-2013 school year. The principal at this school has held this position since 2001-2002. During this time, the principal has worked in a team with either one or two assistant principals and has experienced minimal turnover among her assistant principals throughout her tenure. For the 2016-2017 school year, there were 53 certified staff members employed at this elementary school. This school has received numerous awards in the past including the U.S. Department of Education recognition as a Blue-Ribbon award-winning school.

There are several characteristics that make this elementary school unique, apart from its distinction as a PDS school in this district. This school has a commitment to continually improving their school culture and exemplifies strong school leadership. In addition to the student achievement awards this school has received, the school also has data from stakeholder perceptual surveys, staff perceptual surveys, and surveys conducted by outside agencies that reinforce the commitment to sustaining a positive school culture focused on student learning, professional development and support for teacher learning, and high expectations for staff performance. The school leadership has several years of experience in education in several different roles (i.e., secretarial staff, special education teacher, classroom teachers, lead teacher). This diverse educational background and sustained leadership has cultivated an understanding among staff that truly values shared leadership and responsibility for the expectations that maintain this focus on excellence at all levels.

Yin (2014) identified that classic case studies usually focus on an individual person as the case. He also noted that the individual person is the case being studied, and the individual is the primary unit of analysis. In addition to this, case studies can be some event or entity other than a

single individual. Examples of prior case studies have been about small groups, communities, decisions, programs, organizational change, and specific events. To summarize, “the general guide for defining the unit of analysis in your case study should be related back to the design of your research questions” (Yin, 2014, p. 31). After reflecting on the research questions, this qualitative case study focused on the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school pertaining to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this same PDS school.

The elementary school selected for this study began their partnership with a nearby university to become a PDS site during the 2001-2002 school year. The school district began their partnership with a nearby university in 1994 with a smaller elementary school in the district. Two other elementary schools in the district became PDS schools between 1994-2001. The elementary school in this qualitative case study was the fourth elementary school in the district to partner with the nearby university to become a PDS school during the 2001-2002 school year. In the agreement from the university, it stated that the school must respond to university students participating in educational field experiences, including student teachers. All the student teachers in this elementary PDS school were from the same nearby university

The nearby university and local school district worked together to fulfil obligations outlined in the agreement. One of the guidelines in the partnership stipulated that no student teachers from any other universities could complete their student teaching in the elementary PDS schools partnering with the nearby university. The elementary PDS school for this case study also had a clinical instructor employed to oversee and support the interns. The clinical instructor provided professional development for the student teachers at this PDS school and acted as an advisor/mentor. The clinical instructor also worked closely with the school’s principals, university, and the licensed teachers to determine cooperating teachers and assign student

teachers for the next semester. Under the guidelines, cooperating teachers must have at least three years of experience before having a student teacher in their classroom. The university provided the plans outlining the timeline of responsibilities for student teachers. While the school district strived to adhere to these guidelines, they also maintained an obligation to do what was best for the development of both the students and the student teacher.

There were no expectations from the district or the university that elementary schools interview student teachers at designated elementary PDS schools. The district leadership for the elementary PDS school in this study reported that they often conduct mock interviews with student teachers. These same leaders expressed that the hiring process was the same for all candidates being considered for open positions including the student teachers. The human resources director shared that she obtains the names of effective student teachers from PDS sites from building principals and clinical supervisors and provides this information to other buildings for possible interviews. District leadership explained that they believe that being a PDS school has an advantage because the student teacher knows what the schools prefer and value.

The principal shared some interesting statistics from the time they began partnering with the nearby university to become a PDS school at the time of this writing. They had hired nearly 20% of its staff via student teachers who completed their student teaching at this same elementary school or within this same school district. This elementary PDS school had hired 130 teachers during this period and 25 of these teachers were student teachers within this same elementary PDS school or school district. Of the 25 student teachers hired by this elementary PDS school, 11 of these student teachers were still employed at this PDS elementary school and two other student teachers were employed elsewhere in the school district. One district leader shared that the focal elementary PDS school of this study had hired more student teachers than

many of the other elementary PDS schools in the district. Through a single case study, the unit of analysis focusing on the *process* this school used, will help provide other hiring teams information on potential hiring techniques to identify student teachers for possible employment³.

Anticipated Obstacles

The most significant anticipated obstacle in this study would be the unwillingness of the subjects to participate in the interviews or allowance of the researcher to observe the hiring team throughout the hiring process. The primary point of contact for the researcher was the elementary PDS school's principal. The first strategy the researcher used to overcome this obstacle was visiting the school prior to the start of data collection. The researcher also worked on scheduling a face-to-face meeting with the principal. By doing this, the researcher articulated the purpose of the study, the approach to the study, and most of all, the potential benefits of the study. This allowed the principal to better identify any concerns about having the research study conducted in this particular setting. This proved to be a valuable strategy for the researcher because it allowed the researcher and principal an opportunity to establish a road map, timeline, and to clarify important details moving forward.

The second anticipated obstacle for this study was the timing to complete the observations of the elementary school's hiring team in the hiring process. The hiring team was only going to be involved in the process at certain points in the year as an awareness of what positions were open for the following year. This hiring team wanted to move forward with filling open teaching positions as soon as permission was granted from one school district's

³ Information obtained from participating PDS elementary school's head principal; the school district's assistant superintendent, teaching and learning director, human resources director, and partnering university's website – not cited for confidentiality purposes.

human resources department. When talking to the human resources director and leaders from the teaching and learning department, they all described the hiring process as a combination of both de-centralized and centralized. Applicants were compiled into an electronic system that principals have access to. District level personnel recruited and kept a master list to monitor specific candidates to track. The human resources director also communicated to principals when they could begin hiring. At that point, the process became much more de-centralized and as long as principals executed the hiring process legally by following district guidelines, district level involvement was minimal. One district level leader shared that the current district structure for hiring had evolved over time as principals used to have full autonomy in the hiring process. The researcher had to work with the principal to identify the dates and times to schedule the initial interviews before the observations took place. This created a short time frame because the hiring team at this elementary PDS school wanted to move quickly with filling their teaching vacancies for the next school year. The principal allowed the researcher to communicate directly with the participants to schedule the initial interviews before the observations. Once those were completed, the researcher worked with the principal to schedule the observations. Because of time constraints and schedule conflicts, the researcher had to schedule the initial interview with the principal after the observations took place.

Finally, the principal had the discretion to select who participated on her school's hiring team, therefore, it was unknown by the researcher who exactly the participants would be. The researcher, once again, met with the principal prior to collecting data to identify exactly who the participants were going to be in this study. Also during this meeting, the researcher communicated with the principal a plan to work through the consent process, eliminating any challenges in this area for the researcher.

Participant Recruitment, Setting, and Selection

The participants in this qualitative case study were selected through convenient sampling. This was a non-probability type sampling method that relied on data collection from population members who were conveniently available to participate in the study. In this sampling method, all the primary data was used for the research study without any additional requirements. The elementary school principal, one assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher were recruited and secured as participants. Information obtained from one school district's personnel department and teaching and learning department was analyzed to help select the school site. The teaching and learning department confirmed that this elementary school was a professional development school in a partnership with a nearby university. The personnel department also provided information that confirmed this elementary school had employed several of the student teachers who completed their fieldwork within this same elementary school.

The school district where this elementary PDS school was located was considered a rural school district, however, it possessed some characteristics that would be described as a small urban school district. According to the building report card found on the state department's website, this elementary school's enrollment in 2015-2016 was 588 students in kindergarten through 5th grade, making this one of the larger elementary schools in the district and state. A breakdown of the school's race/ethnicity was: 56.5% White, 15% African-American, 16.5% Hispanic, and 12% Other. The population of this elementary school was transient and diverse as students arrive at this elementary school with a variety of backgrounds. During the 2015-2016 school year, 70.4% of the students were identified as being economically disadvantaged at this school whereas the state average was 49.3% economically disadvantaged. In student

achievement data, this building had a history of high student performance. In the 2015-2016 school year, this elementary school had 89% of their students in grades 3-5 score in the proficiency category or higher on state assessments. The state average was 74% with this same criterion. In reading, the elementary school had 90% of their students in grades 3-5 score in the proficiency category or higher on the state assessments. The state average for this criterion was 77%.

This school was a Title I school and met this qualifying classification for several years. This elementary school received additional funding because of its Title I status and provided additional education programs, staff members, and other expenditures allocated from these funds. Mobility played a role in the turnover of the staff at this elementary school, however, its proximity to a university provided an opportunity to hire teaching candidates completing their bachelor's degree in education and who were entering the teaching profession for the first time.

The researcher followed the research policy outlined by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The first step the researcher took was setting up a meeting to discuss the scope of the study with the principal. During this meeting, the researcher discussed the purpose and timeline proposal of the research study with the principal. The researcher explained the data collection methods. The first method included face-to-face interviews with the principal, one assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher. The researcher recorded these initial face-to-face interviews with the assistant principal, classroom teachers, and non-classroom teacher. Because of time constraints and schedule conflicts, the researcher had to schedule the initial interview with the principal after the observations took place. The interview with the principal was also recorded.

The second data collection method involved observations of the hiring team during the hiring process. The researcher worked with the principal to observe the hiring team in the hiring process with three student teacher candidates. The researcher also used a recorder during all observations to capture discussions during the observed interviews. The researcher studied hand-written field notes and the audio recordings from the observations. Finally, follow-up face-to-face interviews were conducted with the principal, one assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher. Once again, these face-to-face interviews with the researcher and the participants were recorded.

An invitation letter was sent (Appendix C) to prospective participants to describe the anticipated study. This letter described the elements and scope of the study, along with the purpose of the study, what would be done with the data from the study, and the time commitments for participating in the study. The letter also identified the measures and ethical commitment from the researcher to ensure all participants remained completely anonymous during the study.

The consent form (Appendix D) was obtained from each of the participants in this study. It was important for the researcher to explain the importance of gaining consent from participants. The consent form included participation in both the interviews and the observation portions of the research study. The researcher worked together with the principal to determine the best way to gain consent from selected staff members participating in the hiring process. Based upon input from the principal, the researcher gained consent from the principal, assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and the non-classroom teacher just prior to the initial face-to-face interviews. Once student teacher candidates were identified that the hiring team was going to be interviewing during the hiring process, the researcher went around to each of the three

student teacher candidates the day before their interviews and gained informed consent from the three student teacher candidates. An additional informed consent form was acquired from an additional assistant principal who was going to part of the interview team that the researcher was observing. This occurred right before the interview observations and did not create any issues. In summary, this process included the researcher traveling to this elementary school to visit each individual student teacher candidates' classroom; obtaining the consent form the day before the interview/observation began in the natural setting.

The researcher conducted member checking as a means of establishing trustworthiness with the principal, assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and non-classroom teacher participants in this study. The researcher began the debriefing process with the principal after all the data had been collected and analyzed. The researcher refers to member checking and the debriefing process interchangeably. The researcher set up a meeting at the principal's office to conduct this debriefing (Appendix E). Member checking was also conducted with the assistant principal, non-classroom teacher, and two classroom teachers that participated in this study through written communication. In this written communication, the researcher asked the assistant principal, non-classroom teacher, and two classroom teachers to review the major themes and respond to the researcher with any changes or suggestions.

The researcher met with the principal shortly after the data was analyzed and the themes were identified. The debriefing process lasted approximately one hour where the researcher described the themes and findings from identified from the study to the principal to ensure accuracy of the elementary PDS school's hiring process. Once the principal confirmed accuracy of the themes and findings, the researcher completed the member checking with the other participants through written communication via e-mail using the debriefing form. Similar to the

debriefing process with the principal, the themes were communicated to the participants and confirmation of accuracy was received from the assistant principal, non-classroom teacher, and two classroom teachers through written communication.

Data Collection

Yin (2014) identified that the preparation for data collection can be complex. If this is not done correctly, the entire case study can be jeopardized. In order to adequately prepare, the researcher must first possess the desired skills and values to perform the set of technical procedures of case study research. Yin identified some of these skills and values: asking good questions, being a good listener, staying adaptive, having a firm grasp of the issues being studied, avoiding biases, and protecting human subjects. In addition to this, as the researcher collects evidence, he/she must quickly review the evidence and continually ask why these events or facts appear as they do (Yin, 2014).

Yin (2014) believed that the strengths of conducting interviews as a data collection method lie in the researcher's ability to target specific topics and gain insight from participants. Interviews can focus directly on case study topics and provide explanations as well as personal views, such as perceptions, attitudes, and meanings. However, he also identified several weaknesses with interviews. These shortcomings included bias due to poorly articulated questions, response bias, inaccuracies due to poor recall, and reflexivity. Reflexivity is when the interviewee gives an answer, he/she believes is what the interviewer wants to hear (Yin, 2014).

Stake (1995) referred to the interview as the main road to multiple realities. He believed the purpose, for the most part, is not to get simple yes and no answers but description of an episode, linkage, or explanation. During the interview, it is most important to listen. This may include "taking a few or many notes, but the researcher must stay in control of the data

gathering, thinking about what form the account will take in writing” (Stake, 1995, p. 65). Stake also shared that the main questions must be kept in mind, probes carefully created, and be the interview’s repository. Immediately after the interview, the researcher should work to capture the key ideas and episodes in written form. He believed it is more important to focus on listening, take a few notes, and ask for clarification, as this can be much more effective than writing furiously. The most important thing to implement when collecting data from an interview is scheduling ample time immediately following the interview to prepare interpretive commentary (Stake, 1995).

For this qualitative case study, data was collected through the interview guide approach from the principal, one assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher on the hiring process of student teachers at this elementary school. These interviews were semi-structured interviews using a specific set of questions while adding probing questions to gain better and deeper understanding. These interviews occurred at the participant’s natural site – in their elementary school conference room. This was also facilitated by the geographical proximity of the researcher to the participant’s school. The anticipated length of the first interview was 45-60 minutes and the second interview was 20-30 minutes. The interview questions were derived from the research questions aforementioned in Chapters 1 and 3, Clement’s (2013) BBI principles, and potential teacher characteristics/abilities found on the state department’s educator evaluation framework. These questions provided insight into the process that this elementary school used to identify and hire student teachers who completed their student teaching at this elementary school.

With these interviewing descriptions and tips in mind, Patton’s (1990) three types of qualitative interviews were vetted. The first type of interview Patton describes is the informal

conversation interview which occurs spontaneously during actual fieldwork and is often performed without the interviewee's knowledge. This can lead to challenges when both collecting and analyzing the data from this type of structured interview. The second type of interviewing described by Patton is often considered the most common – the interview guide approach. This is a much more systematic approach to the interview, with the researcher providing an outline or topics to be discussed. During the interview guide type of interview, it is important for the researcher to probe to clarify and create more in-depth responses. Patton describes the third interviewing approach as the standardized open-ended interview type. This approach follows a very strict script with adherence to the questions. This is the best type of interviewing when using multiple participants as it provides a platform for consistency (Patton, 1990).

The interview type that was implemented in this qualitative single case study was Patton's (1990) standardized open-ended interview type. The researcher followed the questions with fidelity and asked only minimal follow-up questions. The researcher wanted to create as much consistency as possible among the participants and allow them to answer the questions with the maximum amount of authenticity.

One of the primary goals of the first interview in this qualitative case study was to obtain as much information pertaining to how the interview process was structured and the roles of the staff members that were active on the team. Secondly, the researcher worked to gather additional data connected to BBI principles that were integrated into the process. The first three phases of the BBI protocol were the primary focus for gathering this additional data connected to BBI techniques. These three phases were gathering information, conducting the interview, and interpreting behavior. The third primary goal of these initial interviews allowed the researcher to

learn more about potential teacher characteristics and traits from the state department's educator evaluation framework that the hiring team valued in the hiring process of student teachers. The first interviews occurred in February 2018.

The follow-up interviews served as a platform for the researcher to collect data from the participants pertaining to the results and outcomes this PDS school had experienced with implementing their hiring process with student teachers. The researcher also got a good idea of the perception of support the hiring team had received from both the district and building level during the hiring process. The second interviews were conducted after the first interview and after the observations of the hiring process. These second interviews occurred during April 2018.

These interviews were tape recorded so that a verbatim account was available. A transcript was then created that was reviewed and coded to identify themes from the data. There were a few notes taken during the interview, however, the focus of the researcher was primarily on listening to the answers provided by the participant. These notes were kept in a reflective journal that included personal comments and reflection about the interviewer/interviewee. This journal provided a platform to capture key ideas and episodes from the interviews directly after they occurred. Stake (1995) relayed this to be important to the interview process.

In addition to the interviews, the researcher directly observed the hiring team in action as they worked through the hiring process. These observations took place in February 2018. Yin (2014) identified the following strengths of collecting data through direct observations: immediacy – covering actions in real time, and how contextual this experience is. He also shares that direct observation can be challenging because of the time involved for the researcher, along with the selectivity and reflexivity of the participants. The direct observation instrument “can be

developed as part of the case study protocol and a fieldworker may try to assess the occurrence of certain types of behaviors during certain periods of time in the field” (Yin, 2014, p. 113). Yin also shares that taking photographs of the observation site can help to convey important characteristics to outside observers.

Stake (1995) identified that observations provide the researcher with greater understanding of the case. During observation, the case study researcher must keep a good record of events to provide a relatively incontestable description for further analysis and ultimate reporting. Stake (1995) described this as the researcher “letting the occasion tell its story, the situation, the problem, resolution, or irresolution of the problem” (p. 62). Similar to what Yin described as essential, Stake shared that the researcher needs to schedule time directly after the observation to write up the observation while it is still fresh. These qualitative observations should work with episodes of unique relationship and significant moments to fashion a story or exclusive description of the case to reveal its unique complexity (Stake, 1995).

Each participant in both the interview and observations completed a background information form (Appendix F). The observational data was used as additional information about the hiring process at this elementary school that was not identified through the interview method. It was also used to reinforce or contradict data that was collected during the interviews. This once again took place in the natural setting of the participant’s school – the conference room. The researcher observed the team as they worked through the hiring process with a student teacher in its entirety. This included observing the team as they shared dialogue and collaborated before and after the actual face-to-face interview and concluding with discussion around whether or not to hire the student teachers invited to interview. The hiring team did not make any final hiring decisions during the observations, however, the principal shared during her

follow-up interview that the team decided not to offer employment to any of the three student teacher candidates that were observed by the researcher. During this time, confidentiality continued to be the top priority for the researcher as the hiring team was sharing dialogue on the student teacher candidates' strengths and weaknesses.

The number of observations was contingent upon the number of student teachers the participating elementary school scheduled with their respective student teachers. The researcher made a request with the principal to observe all student teachers in the hiring process at this Midwestern, PDS elementary school and was able to observe three student teacher candidates involved in the hiring process. Researcher observation field notes of the hiring process were recorded during this time. These researcher observation field notes were numbered, scanned in electronically, and archived on a secured server. The original hard copy of the researcher observation field notes was shredded once the researcher observation field notes had been archived on the secured server.

The researcher also collected participant field notes that were used and referenced during this PDS elementary schools hiring process with student teachers. These participant field notes included the questions that the hiring team asked the student teacher candidates, and the notes that the hiring team members wrote down as the candidates answered each of the questions that the hiring team asked. These participant field notes were also numbered, scanned in electronically, and archived on a secured server. The original hard copy of the participant field notes was shredded once the documents had been archived on the secured server.

Data Analysis

It was imperative that the researcher looked beyond the surface when analyzing the data he had collected. The researcher worked to understand how the data was connected and how it

was “talking to each other.” With qualitative research, the analysis was based on the idea of reducing the data and interpretation by identifying categories and themes. Bogden and Biklen (2007) identified the following phases for the qualitative researcher to work through when analyzing the data: discovering, coding, discounting, and asking questions about the data.

During the discovery stage, the researcher read, reread the data, and then began recording categories, themes, hunches, ideas, interpretations, and then created tentative lists of emerging patterns. Upon the creation of this list, the researcher began to create classification schemes for Clement’s (2013) behavior-based interview conceptual framework. Once again, the first three phases of the BBI protocol were the researcher’s focus. These three BBI phases included gathering information, conducting the interview, and interpreting behavior. The interview questions were designed to help the participants share perspectives and obtain subsequent data regarding each of these phases of the BBI protocol. Along with this, additional interview questions were created based upon teacher characteristics and abilities found on a state department’s educator evaluator framework. By reviewing the literature and data again, the researcher began to integrate and connect tentative themes to one another that had been identified from the data.

The next step in this process was the coding phase. During this phase, the researcher worked to develop coding categories and coded all the data related to these categories. Once the data was coded, data was sorted into categories to begin refining the analysis by continuing to look across the themes and connections. Bogden and Biklen (2007) identify two important tips during the coding phase: look at the “leftover” data and think about what is *not* in the data.

When discounting data, the researcher really focused on the context in which the data was collected. Thinking about the following factors was important at this phase of the data

analysis process: solicitation/un-solicitation of the data, observer's influence of setting, participants, and most importantly, the researcher's own assumptions. Finally, Bogden and Biklen (2007) recommend the researcher needs to ask questions about the data. What stands out in the data? What are the patterns and silences? What questions are related to the conceptual framework? These can all serve as a final check to tie the data together (Bogden and Bilken, 2007).

This provided the outline that the researcher followed when analyzing the data for this single qualitative case study. The researcher attempted to follow these steps with fidelity and consistency throughout the data analysis process. The three areas that the researcher focused on included the organization of the hiring process pertaining to student teachers, the first three phases of the BBI process, and teacher characteristics and abilities identified on a state department's educator evaluation protocol.

Subjectivity Statement

It was apparent in this qualitative research study that the primary resource for data collection and analysis was the researcher himself. Because the human was the research instrument and primary research tool, the researcher must acknowledge their own bias, limitations, and views. Stake (1995) described the many roles that the researcher can play: teacher, participant, observer, interviewer, reader, storyteller, advocate, artist, counselor, evaluator, consultant, and others. He noted that even though research can seem prescribed and restrictive; the styles, design, and writing can vary considerably. He believed that the researcher determines how much emphasis to place on each role. "With a constructivism approach, the role of interpreter, and the gathering of interpretations, is central" (Stake, 1995, p. 99).

Growing up, the researcher was the oldest of a well-respected, hardworking, middle class family in a rural town. He came from a family of educators as his grandma, mom, and sister all received teaching degrees in elementary education. The researcher's dad attended the same schools that the researcher and his siblings attended with some of the same teachers, so these dynamics made it interesting for the researcher growing up.

With the researcher being an assistant principal over the past six years, he has had the opportunity to interview a diverse population when it comes to potential teaching candidates. He spent the first three years of his professional career teaching fourth grade. For the next six years, the researcher had been an assistant principal at a different elementary school. Currently, the researcher has taken a principal position in a Preschool-5th grade elementary school in a different district located about 30 miles from the previous district he was a teacher and assistant principal in. In this role, the researcher schedules and tracks all assessments and data, plans professional development, operates the school's site council, manages student behavior, evaluates certified and classified staff members, develops and modifies schedules, and works through the hiring process for potential incoming teachers.

When working through the hiring process, the researcher has had many opportunities to identify, analyze, and evaluate information pertaining to prospective teacher and student teacher candidates. The sources of the aforementioned information include resumes, letters of recommendations, reference information, interview performance, portfolio/teacher work samples, and information from the student teacher's cooperating teacher. The researcher has completed these hiring process tasks both independently and cooperatively with other teachers, assistant principals, head principals, and district level personnel. The candidate pool has included applicants from different corners of the USA that have been through many different

types of educational programs during their college experience. These diverse and extensive experiences enhanced what the researcher brought to this case study. On the other hand, being geographically located near a large university, the majority of the candidates in the hiring process were student teachers coming straight from this university. This geographic location was a potential dilemma for the researcher since approximately 80% of the student teachers the researcher has worked through the hiring process with had attended the same undergraduate program in this same nearby university.

The researcher has had many different experiences with the hiring process in his time as an educational professional. Both his administrative colleagues and teacher leadership team approach the interview process with the philosophy of hiring new, inexperienced teachers that can be molded to the school's culture and established expectations. This philosophy has induced a lot of turnover among staff because of teachers getting married, moving back home, and being relocated. In the researcher's six years as an administrator, the hiring process has never been consistent – even within the same school and school district. This statement also holds true in the researcher's experiences of hiring student teachers upon their graduation. Because of these experiences and the researcher's relationship with the focus school, credibility was enhanced in data collection, analysis, and interpretation of this qualitative case study.

Trustworthiness

Stake (1995) shared that all researchers recognize the need not only for being accurate in measuring things but logical in interpreting the meaning of those measurements. To do this, Stake shared that the researcher must go to efforts beyond simple repetition of data gathering to more deliberative efforts to find the validity of data observed. Much of the data collected is left up to interpretation by the researcher. Therefore, it was essential to collect multiple units of data

to minimize researcher assumptions about the meaning of the data and to authenticate the true meaning of the data. Triangulation of the data was of the utmost importance when creating trustworthiness, validity, and reliability from the data (Stake, 1995).

Stake (1995) also noted some practical steps for the researcher to consider when validating assistance to readers' naturalistic generalizations. These steps involved striving to include accounts the readers were familiar with to gauge accuracy and completeness. Providing adequate, raw data prior to interpretation allows readers to consider their own alternative interpretations. The researcher must describe the methods of case research used in ordinary language along with how the triangulation is executed, especially the confirmation and efforts to disconfirm major assertions. Information should be made available, both directly and indirectly about the researcher and other sources of input. The researcher should provide the reader with reactions to the accounts from data sources as well as other prospective readers, especially the researcher's intended audience. Rather than de-emphasizing the idea that validity is based on what every observer sees, on simple replication; the researcher should emphasize whether or not the reported happenings could have or could not have been seen.

It was the responsibility of the researcher to assist readers in their ability to arrive at a high level of understanding related to the findings. In order to achieve this, it is important that the researcher's analyses and interpretations parallel that of the intended audience. By using multiple sources of data and a credible subject and PDS school site; interpretations were well grounded in the data. Once again, the researcher also completed member checking with each of the participants in this study.

Summary

This study used a qualitative single case study research design with semi-structured interviews as the primary source of data. Participants from this PDS elementary school included the principal, an assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher.

Researcher observation field notes were recorded about this elementary school's hiring process of student teachers. The researcher only observed the hiring process of student teachers rather than the hiring process involving all teacher candidates. These researcher observation field notes included information about the setting and environment in which this school conducted their hiring. The researcher worked with the principal to observe the hiring team in the hiring process with three different student teacher candidates. The bulk of the data for this study originated from the interviews. Once the interviews were completed, they were transcribed to begin the coding and analysis process that will be described in chapter four. The researcher observation field notes and participant field notes from the observations also contributed to the themes that were developed from the interview transcripts. The behavior-based interview techniques and the state department's educator evaluation system were used as frameworks to examine the data.

Chapter 4 - Analysis of the Data

Research contributing to scholarly literature on the topic of the hiring process in schools is a subject of great importance to the future of public education in the United States. However, there are few specific studies that have focused on how PDS elementary schools use the hiring process to identify student teachers who have completed their student teaching in the same PDS elementary school setting for employment. Rather, the majority of prior research has concentrated on licensed teachers that have already completed their student teaching and are certified educators with either minimal or several years of professional experience. For this single qualitative case study, data from the hiring process that a PDS elementary school used to select student teachers to employ was analyzed. Each of the student teacher participants in this study completed their student teaching at this same PDS elementary school.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore one PDS elementary school's hiring process for student teachers who completed their student teaching at this same PDS elementary school site. This PDS elementary school provided data in the form of interviews describing the structure and roles of the hiring process, a brief historical perspective, what is valued, and related challenges with the hiring process used with student teachers. Simultaneously, BBI approaches and a state department's evaluation protocol pertaining to effective teachers were studied through the implementation of this hiring process.

Analysis Choice and Rationale

The analysis choice for this qualitative single case study originated from Yin's (2010) strategy of relying on theoretical propositions. With this strategy, the researcher followed the

theoretical propositions that led to the qualitative single case study. These propositions reflected a research question, review of the literature, and new propositions (Yin, 2010).

This study examined the proposition that student teachers' fieldwork experiences at their respective PDS elementary schools "serves not merely as a means of training teachers but also as a way for schools with open positions to get an early look at prospective teachers, screening them for fit and ability" (Goldhaber, Kreig, & Theobald, 2014, p. 107).

Yin (2010) identified an analytic technique within this analysis strategy – pattern matching. These patterns may be related to the dependent or the independent variables of the study. An experiment may have multiple dependent variables, or a variety of relevant outcomes. If, for each outcome, the initially predicted values have been found, and at the same time alternative "patterns" of predicted values have not been found, strong causal inferences can be made (Yin, 2010).

In this study, based upon the researcher's review of the literature and subjectivity, the researcher attempted to identify what values the hiring team had regarding hiring student teachers upon graduation that completed their student teaching at this PDS elementary school. By analyzing the data on multiple occasions, the researcher identified patterns and alternative patterns to categorize hiring practices and techniques the hiring team used to identify which student teachers to employ during the hiring process.

Stake (1995) shared many of the same philosophies to Yin pertaining to the pattern matching analysis strategy. Stake believes that the values will also be known in advance, drawn from the research questions, and will serve as a template for the analysis. Just like Yin, Stake identifies that sometimes patterns will emerge unexpectedly from the analysis (Stake, 1995).

Data

Data sources for this study came primarily from the transcriptions of the principal, assistant principal, non-classroom teacher, and classroom teacher interviews. In addition to these transcriptions, researcher observation field notes and participant field notes from the observations were primary data sources. The researcher did not transcribe the dialogue from the student teacher candidates observed in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school. Reflective notes were taken after the interviews and observations, which were used to interpret the data during the analysis process as well as to provide understanding of the findings. These notes included descriptive information that detailed the school setting, date, and time, as well as the researcher's perception of the participants' environment and interactions. The primary goal of these reflective notes was to better record information about the context of the case study process, analysis, and interpretation.

The primary source of data came from interviews from the participants, representing the bulk of the analysis. Primary and follow-up interviews were conducted with the principal, one assistant principal, three classroom teachers, and one non-classroom teacher. For the purpose of this study, data from only two of the classroom teacher interviews were analyzed (rather than all three classroom teacher interviews). Three classroom teacher interviews were completed because the principal was unsure of what classroom teachers were going to be participating in the hiring process during the researcher's observations. Therefore, the researcher only analyzed the interview data of the two classroom teachers that were both interviewed and observed participating in the hiring process. Once these ten interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed these interviews verbatim which created approximately 50 pages of transcriptions derived from the interviews.

Researcher observation field notes and reflection notes were recorded immediately during the interviews and the observations. The researcher was able to observe the hiring process this PDS elementary school used with three student teachers who completed their student teaching in this PDS elementary school. The researcher observation field notes focused on the physical setting and environment to help capture the context of the data collection process. The initial reflection notes of the researcher's observations were intended to capture the researcher's immediate perceptions and thoughts from the hiring process.

The researcher worked with the principal and collected participant field notes that the hiring team used during the interviews. These participant field notes included the teacher interview questions that this PDS elementary school used when hiring both teachers and student teachers, the hand-written notes from each of the hiring team members, and the schedule of interviews that the hiring team had scheduled for that week. No other participant field notes were collected by the researcher per the recommendation of the principal.

It was important that the researcher visited the participants' school to conduct the interviews. The researcher did this on two separate occasions. The researcher met with the principal prior to the recruitment of the participants to outline the goals and structure of the study. The researcher also visited the school a second time to obtain informed consent from each of the student teacher participants prior to data collection. Each of these interviews occurred in the school's conference room (Appendix G). This allowed the participants' to be in the natural setting in which they work. The researcher's observation field notes also took place in the conference room, which was the natural interview setting where this elementary school conducted their interviews.

Methodology Process

After the interviews and the observations were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed, and the researcher observation field notes and participant field notes were accumulated and organized. Due to the compilation of data, the researcher then tackled the challenging task of choosing the data analysis approach. Patton (1990) claimed:

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (p. 371-372).

The following paragraphs detail the analytic process and interpretations for the interviews, researcher observation field notes, and participant field notes collected for this qualitative single case study.

To tie into and dig deeper into Yin's (2010) and Stake's (1995) pattern matching analysis, the researcher relied on Rubin and Rubin's (2012) analytic strategies. The first step the researcher took when analyzing the data was to review the researcher's observation field notes, participant field notes, and the initial reflections that immediately followed the interviews. The next step in the data analysis process involved the researcher breaking down the interview transcripts into data units from the summary notes as recommended by Rubin and Rubin (2012). Then the units on the same topic were combined. Rubin and Rubin defined data units as blocks of information that are examined together. Once the data units were established, the coding process continued by labeling each data unit and sorting these codes into single categories. Rubin and Rubin (2012) stated that "using published literature to suggest concepts and themes by which to code is perfectly legitimate" (p. 210). With this perspective, the categorical

aggregations used by the researcher were: organization of the hiring process, BBI protocol (Appendix H), and teacher characteristics and abilities identified on a state department's educator evaluator protocol. The BBI protocol has been a successful practice in the business world for decades and Clement recently adapted this model to education. During the sorting and labeling process, these categories enabled the researcher to have both clarity and consistency during the data analysis process.

The researcher began with a line-by-line analysis of what the principal, assistant principal, the two classroom teachers, and the non-classroom teacher were saying as they answered the interview questions. During these first readings, the researcher highlighted key words and phrases, making notes regarding general impressions and initial ideas about common patterns in what Rubin and Rubin (2012) described as a memo file (Appendix I). Rubin and Rubin (2012) indicate that researchers should include notable quotes in their memo file. "Notable quotes are easy to recognize because they are well phrased, sum up hours of conversation, provide a moral to the story, and provide a direct answer to a research question" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 207).

Researcher Observations Field Notes

Researcher observations field notes for the three student teacher candidates participating in the interview process at this elementary PDS school were then completed. Researcher observation field notes were recorded during the observations and the dialogue throughout the observations were recorded. The researcher observation field notes detailed the physical setting and environment. After the first read of the transcribed interviews, the researcher observation field notes and recordings were reviewed. The researcher then completed a researcher observation field notes memo file capturing notable quotes from the participants and data to

contribute to the themes that were threaded across all of the researcher observation field notes, participant field notes, and interviews.

The researcher found it vital to visit the school site as part of the data collection process to become immersed in the physical setting in which the participants worked. The physical setting gave the researcher a better understanding of the structure and organization of the hiring process that this elementary PDS school used when selecting student teachers to employ. Once again, each of the student teacher interview candidates identified in this study completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school. The researcher observation field notes helped provide information specific to the setting and the environment where this hiring process physically occurred. Each of the three student teacher interviews observed occurred in the elementary PDS school's conference room. The elementary PDS school personnel that participated in the observed hiring process included the same two classroom teachers, non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal that were interviewed for data collection purposes. In addition to these same five participants, an additional assistant principal was a part of the hiring team that the researcher observed (but was not interviewed by the researcher). The researcher did not exclude the data and contributions from the additional assistant principal in the researcher observation field notes in this study. Given the context of the observations, it would have been extremely difficult to eliminate or differentiate the information the researcher gathered during the observation from the assistant principal that was not interviewed by the researcher. Each student teacher candidate sat at the head of the conference room table, with three members of the hiring team on each side of the table. The principal, an assistant principal, and a classroom teacher sat on one side of the table and the assistant principal, classroom teacher, and the non-classroom teacher were positioned on the other side of the table.

The primary emotion observed from both the hiring team and the student teacher candidates was laughter before, during, and after the actual interviews. Each member of the hiring team contributed to the dialogue; however, the principal took the lead on initiating the interviews and explaining the basic structure of the elementary PDS school's hiring process. The principal began by sharing the current and potential teaching openings that they were hiring for. The principal also shared that they were skipping introductions because each student teaching candidate knew each member of the hiring team through their experiences as a student teacher at this respective elementary PDS school. The hiring team then took turns asking questions from the same pre-determined list of questions. The question handouts were on the table in front of each member of the hiring team. The principal shared during her interview with the researcher that the team not only changes the pre-determined set of questions each year, but they may even change the questions when interviews are conducted for different positions in the same year. The principal shared that the team does this because they want to see how well the candidates can respond to questions without having an opportunity to prepare an answer beforehand. Probes to clarify candidate answers to interview questions are incorporated into the process when needed. Each member of the hiring team took notes on the copy of questions that they had in front of them as the student teacher candidate responded to the question asked. In these observations, there were minimal follow-up questions asked during the interviews as the team stayed consistent by asking the candidates the same questions from the pre-determined list. The team did add one question to the pre-determined set of questions; "What was the last costume you wore?".

The researcher observation field notes recorded perceptions that gave insight into the structure and organization of the hiring process that this elementary PDS school implemented

with student teachers who were presently completing their student teaching requirements at this respective elementary PDS school. Interactions between the hiring team and the student teacher candidates were both professional and positive. The perception of the researcher was that the hiring team made an effort to create an environment that was light, relaxed, and personal. At one point, the principal said, “okay this is actually an interview,” to which the student teacher candidate responded “it doesn’t feel like an interview.” The hiring team was perceived to be confident in their thoughts and were encouraged to share their perspective with the entire hiring team. One of the classroom teachers on the hiring team did share that this was her first time being a part of the hiring team. The other hiring team members appeared to be more comfortable and experienced with participating in the interviews.

Participant Field Notes

Participant field notes were collected from the hiring team after the observations were completed. The participant field notes that the principal gave to the researcher were strictly from the three observations, and no other documents were made available to the researcher from any of the other student teacher candidate interviews that the hiring team may or may not have completed. The participant field notes were reviewed by the researcher after the first reading of the transcribed interviews, and the researcher observation field notes and recordings were studied. The researcher then completed a participant field notes memo file that captured information from the participants and data to contribute to the themes that were threaded across all the researcher observation field notes, participant field notes, and interviews.

The participant field notes were important as they included the pre-determined list of questions that this elementary PDS school hiring team used and took turns asking the student teacher candidates. In addition to this, the participant field notes included each member of the hiring team’s interpretation of the student teaching candidates’ answers and responses to each of

the questions that the hiring team asked. However, the researcher was unable to identify which hiring team members recorded which answers. Each of the participant field notes did include the names of the specific student teacher candidates that the notes corresponded to.

There was a total of 15 questions listed on the pre-determined set of questions that each hiring team member referenced (Appendix J). All the hiring team member responses were handwritten underneath each corresponding question. There were also a few (but limited) notes made in the margins and at the bottom of the participant field notes for information that may have been pertinent to the hiring team member but didn't exactly fit within a specific question asked.

The researcher analyzed data according to the two conceptual frameworks, the BBI and state department's educator evaluation protocol. The only questions that were related to the BBI approach asked the student teacher candidates to describe their prior experiences with children along with their most challenging experience and a follow up question asking what was the last costume that the candidate wore. There were several questions that aligned to the state department's educator evaluation protocol pertaining to necessary characteristics and skills that need to be demonstrated. These questions focused on a classroom management approach, building relationships with students and parents, being flexible, collaboration skills, assessment and curriculum knowledge, technology proficiency, student engagement techniques, and the ability to contribute/fit into the school's culture (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Summary of Questions Relating to Conceptual Frameworks

Question	Framework Question Related To
Please tell us about experiences you have had working with children. To date, what has been your most challenging experience in teaching?	BBI Model

Explain what type of classroom management plan you would implement in your classroom and why you would choose that system.	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
Discuss how will you develop positive relationships with your students in the first thirty days of school.	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol.
Rank these in order of your priority and tell us why: discipline, student engagement, assessment, and collaboration.	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
If a student in your classroom does not pass their formative assessment, what will you do?	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
What do you know about STEM education and how would you implement this in your classroom? Give an example of a STEM lesson.	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
What are the benefits and barriers of using technology in the classroom and how can you use it to create deeper thinking and engagement for students?	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
If you knew a parent was upset with you over a classroom management procedure what steps will you take?	State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol
What is the last costume you wore? (Follow-up question – not found in appendix)	BBI Model

Interviews

Upon completion of the 10 interviews, the researcher worked to capture initial reflections, thoughts, and important perspectives of each interview by allocating time immediately following each interview to highlight major messages and perspectives shared by the participants. These initial reflections were completed in a 10-15 minute window directly following each interview and were written in narrative form. Once the initial reflections were completed, the next step the researcher took was transcribing the audio recordings for analysis. Approximately 50 pages of interview transcripts were accumulated during the course of this study.

During the first readings, the researcher highlighted key words and phrases, and made notes in a memo file regarding general impressions, initial ideas about common patterns, and capturing the notable quotes that Rubin and Rubin (2012) described important to qualitative data analysis. The researcher created the memo files by electronically grouping the highlighted key words, phrases, and points as a way to segment the data into like categories. The researcher then reread the memo files again, looking at key words, phrases, and thoughts. From these readings, codes representing meaningful categories were developed. After this, the transcripts were reread and coded using tentative codes to ensure that the meaningful units in the body of the data were accounted for. This process included all the data from each of the classroom teachers, non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal interviewed in this study.

For this study, three main categories of codes were used for analysis: organization of the hiring process, the BBI approach, and a state department's educator evaluation protocol characteristics. In the first category, organization and role codes emerged from the data. In the second category, BBI codes were used. The third category was made up of codes from teacher characteristics derived from a state department's evaluation protocol associated with teacher effectiveness. These three coding categories provided the analysis framework to complete the coding process.

Main Code (A). Recurring categories that emerged from the data included those that related to the elementary PDS school's hiring process organization (A) (Table 4-2). The elementary PDS school's hiring process organization refers to the structure and role. Therefore, under the elementary PDS school's hiring process organization main category (A), two broad codes of structure (A1) and role (A2) were used as level two codes. The structure (A1) is

defined in this study as those attributes associated with the overall elementary PDS school's hiring process including the following:

- How the elementary PDS school's hiring process was implemented
- Scholarly literature or professional development referenced to create the elementary PDS school's hiring process
- Identification of personnel selected to participate on the elementary PDS school's hiring process, and
- Outcomes and results produced by the elementary PDS school's hiring process.

Role (A2) is defined in this study as those attributes specific to the actual responsibilities of the elementary PDS school's hiring team members. The role definition included the following:

- What responsibilities are assigned to each member of the elementary PDS school's hiring team?
- What qualifications or criterion are needed for participation on the elementary PDS school's hiring team?

The researcher determined that these two codes, structure and role, were still broad, and therefore, developed level three sub-codes within these level two codes to organize the responses with more clarity. The level two code for structure (A1) included: scholarly literature/professional development (A1a), identification of personnel selected to participate on hiring team (A1b), importance of the hiring process pertaining to student teachers (A1c), formal/informal processes implemented in hiring process (A1d), evidence of success with hiring process (A1e), and challenges associated with hiring process (A1f). The other level two code of role (A2) focused on the responsibilities of the hiring team personnel (A2a).

Table 4-2 Summary of Code A

Main Code	Level 2 Sub-Code	Level 3 Sub-Code	Category
A			Organization of Hiring Process
A	A1		Structure
A	A1	a	Scholarly Literature/Professional Development Referenced
A	A1	b	Identification of Personnel Selected to Participate on Hiring Team
A	A1	c	Importance of the Hiring Process Pertaining to Student Teachers
A	A1	d	Formal/Informal Processes Implemented in Hiring Process
A	A1	e	Evidence of Success with Hiring Process
A	A1	f	Challenges Associated with Hiring Process
A	A2		Roles
A	A2	a	Responsibilities of Hiring Team Personnel

Main Code (B). With the interview questions being influenced by the BBI model, this category was established as a second main coding category (Table 4-3). Within the BBI category (B), six additional sub-codes were developed within this category: prior experiences with student teacher candidate (B1), reference calls/checks listed by student teacher candidate (B2), letters of recommendation provided by student teacher candidate (B3), student teacher candidates' resume (B4), student teacher candidates' cooperating teacher's input (B5), and hiring team's implementation of a written scoring rubric (B6).

Table 4-3 Summary of Code B

Main Code	Level 2 Sub-Code	Category
B		Behavior Based Interviewing Approaches
B	B1	Prior Experiences with Student Teacher Candidate
B	B2	Reference Checks Listed by Student Teacher Candidate
B	B3	Letters of Recommendation Provided by Student Teacher Candidate
B	B4	Student Teacher Candidates' Resume
B	B5	Student Teacher Candidates' Cooperating Teacher's Input
B	B6	Hiring Team's Implementation of a Written Scoring Rubric

Main Code (C). The third category is comprised of the skills and characteristics identified on a state department's evaluation protocol pertaining to effective teachers (Table 4-4).

This main category was broken into two broad codes: teacher characteristics (C1) and teacher skills (C2) identified and preferred by this PDS elementary hiring team. The first broad code, student teacher characteristics (C1), was broken down into six sub-codes within the state department’s evaluation protocol pertaining to the skills demonstrated by effective teachers in this category. These six sub-codes included: fits within current culture (C1a), collaborates/communicates with colleagues (C1b), adapts to change (C1c), respect for diversity (C1d), exemplifies a commitment to professional development (C1e), and reflective practitioner (C1f). The second broad code, student teacher abilities (C2), was broken down into five sub-codes within the state department’s evaluation protocol pertaining to the abilities demonstrated by effective teachers in this category. These five sub-codes were: builds relationships with students (C2a), collaborates/communicates with parents (C2b), effectively manages the classroom (C2c), differentiates instruction (C2d), and student teacher abilities not emphasized (C2e).

Table 4-4 Summary of Code C

Main Code	Level 2 Sub-Codes	Level 3 Sub-Codes	Category
C			State Department’s Evaluation Protocol Pertaining to Effective Teachers
C	C1		Student Teacher Characteristics
C	C1	a	Fits within Current Culture
C	C1	b	Collaborates/Communicates with Colleagues
C	C1	c	Adapts to Change
C	C1	d	Respects Diversity
C	C1	e	Exemplifies a Commitment to Professional Development
C	C1	f	Reflective Practitioner
C	C2		Student Teacher Abilities
C	C2	a	Builds Relationships with Students
C	C2	b	Collaborates/Communicates with Parents
C	C2	c	Effectively Manages the Classroom
C	C2	d	Differentiates Instruction
C	C2	e	Student Teacher Abilities Not Emphasized

A summary of all coding categories was created (Table 4-5). Once the data were entered and coded, the researcher sorted the dataset into electronic files by code. These codes yielded findings within each main category. By doing this, it allowed the researcher to view the data by code and determine if the data was appropriately coded within each main category.

Following each narrative description of the codes, tables summarized responses that captured the articulation of a particular concept. Similar meanings were grouped under each code. These findings were derived by the researcher’s interpretation of what consistent patterns had emerged from the researcher’s observations, participant field notes, and interview data. At the end of each section (A, B, C) before the tables are presented, findings in narrative form are discussed. The data comes from the interview of the five participants (principal, assistant principal, two classroom teachers, and non-classroom teacher), along with the observations of the hiring team and participant field notes collected from the elementary PDS school’s hiring team as they worked through their hiring process. The tables denote where the data revealed findings when disaggregated by role (principal, assistant principal, classroom teacher, and non-classroom teacher). The discussion of the findings uses quotes from the participants to increase understanding and provide more detailed description of the case. Quotes are verbatim except for editing for grammatical purposes.

Table 4-5 Summary of Coding Categories

(A) Organization of Hiring Process	(B) Behavior Based Interviewing Approaches	(C) State Department’s Evaluation Protocol Pertaining to Effective Teachers
A1 Structure	B1 Prior Experiences with Student Teacher Candidate	C1 Student Teacher Characteristics
A1a Scholarly Literature/Professional Development Referenced	B2 Reference Checks Listed by Student Teacher Candidate	C1a Fits within Current Culture

A1b Identification of Personnel Selected to Participate on Hiring Team	B3 Letters of Recommendation Provided by Student Teacher Candidate	C1b Collaborates/Communicates with Colleagues
A1c Importance of the Hiring Process Pertaining to Student Teachers	B4 Student Teacher Candidates' Resume	C1c Adapts to Change
A1d Formal/Informal Processes Implemented in Hiring Process	B5 Student Teacher Candidates' Cooperating Teacher's Input	C1d Respects Diversity
A1e Evidence of Success with Hiring Process	B6 Hiring Team's Implementation of a Written Scoring Rubric	C1e Exemplifies a Commitment to Professional Development
A1f Challenges Associated with Hiring Process		C1f Reflective Practitioner
A2 Roles		C2 Student Teacher Abilities
A2a Responsibilities of Hiring Team Personnel		C2a Builds Relationships with Students
		C2b Collaborates/Communicates with Parents
		C2c Effectively Manages the Classroom
		C2d Differentiates Instruction
		C2e Student Teacher Abilities Not Emphasized

Organization of Hiring Process

This section will examine the organization of the hiring process used by this elementary PDS school as it pertained to the student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this respective school. The researcher placed data units regarding the hiring process organization under the level two codes of structure and role. Once again, with these level two

codes being so broad, the researcher established level three sub-codes under the level two categories of structure and role. The level two codes for structure and each sub-code underneath are presented in Table 4.6. The findings related to structure are then presented.

Structure

Scholarly Literature/Professional Development Referenced

Liu and Johnson (2006) identified the different ways that the hiring process can be implemented from the district level and how that guides the structuring of the hiring process at the building level. Some “highly decentralized” approaches allow individual schools to accept the applications and hire into open positions. Conversely, in “highly centralized” approaches, district officials oversee the screening, selection, and assignment processes. Some school districts try to blend these two approaches whereby district officials screen applicants and school administrators select from those applicants, with or without teacher input (Liu & Johnson, 2006). However, the references from Liu and Johnson (2006) are not specific to the structure of the hiring process pertaining to student teachers.

The elementary PDS school hiring team members that participated in this study were asked if they were aware of any type of professional development or literature that was referenced when creating and implementing the hiring process as it pertained to student teachers. Both classroom teachers and the non-classroom teacher indicated that they were unaware of any type of professional development or literature that was referenced to create the structure of the hiring process this elementary PDS school implemented (Table 4-6). The assistant principal and head principal did share some extant literature that they believed may have played a part in the shaping of the hiring process, but neither one was able to clearly identify any type of literature that the structure of their hiring process was adopted from. They both referred to school and

district initiatives along with prior experiences that they valued that may have indirectly helped them formulate the structure of the hiring process used with student teachers. These initiatives included the behavior management systems such as Love and Logic (Fay & Funk, 1995) and Safe and Civil Schools (Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 1998); as well as Ruby Payne’s work on poverty (Payne, 2005), the Haberman surveys/STAR teacher reports (Haberman & Kappa Delta Pi, 1995) that are used for hiring new teachers. To summarize, the principal shared:

I’m sure there is over the years [a reference to professional literature when framing their hiring process] but you know now I’ve just done it for so long that now you know, I just kind of created my own style of how to develop it.

Abbreviations used in coding tables for the participants are as follows:

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher.

Table 4-6 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1a)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
Professional development or literature that was referenced when creating and implementing the hiring process as it pertains to the student teachers who completed their student teaching at this elementary PDS school.	Not aware of professional development or literature referenced. 2-CT, 1-NCT	“Not to my knowledge.”
	Doesn’t really know, currently using Love and Logic at school and Safe and Civil Schools at the district level with new teachers. 1-AP	“Not in specific to the hiring process.”
	Have not used any formal literature, created own style possibly evolved from experiences with Ruby Payne’s work, Haberman	“I don't really know like with the hiring process itself, with our new teachers we are using a lot of love and logic right now obviously with where the districts moved we are

	surveys, or STAR Teacher reports. 1-HP	using the safe and civil schools because that's all the foundation the teachers need right there.”
		“There's been some (pause) information that the professional development schools have put out that I've read in the past about interview questions and reading. Reading more into the interview then just the answers to the questions and that sort of thing.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The majority of the participants were unaware of any professional development or literature used to create and implement this elementary PDS school’s hiring process pertaining to student teachers.
- The principal referenced professional literature such as Ruby Payne’s work on poverty (Payne, 2005), the Haberman surveys/STAR teacher reports (Haberman & Kappa Delta Pi, 1995) that *may* have influenced how she created and implemented the hiring process at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers.
- The assistant principal identified both school and district level professional development initiatives such as Love and Logic (Fay & Funk, 1995) and Safe and Civil Schools (Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 1998) behavior management techniques that guided a part of the structure for how this elementary PDS school created and implemented their hiring process with student teachers.

Identification of Personnel Selected to Participate on Hiring Team

The identification of personnel selected to participate in the hiring process typically were comprised of building administrators and one classroom teacher representing a grade level (Table 4-7). The student teachers' cooperating teacher may or may not have been a part of the interview team. As one classroom teacher shared, "for the most part if the cooperating teacher is not on the hiring team, then the team leader or one of the grade level teachers usually is." The selection of the team leader or grade level team member is based upon their experiences and familiarity with the elementary PDS school's expectations.

Another factor that played a role in the identification of school personnel selected to participate on the elementary PDS school's hiring team was related to what grade levels had open teaching positions. If one grade level didn't currently have any teaching vacancies, then they did not have anyone identified to participate on the hiring process team as it pertained to the selection of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this elementary PDS school.

Table 4-7 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1b)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The identification of school personnel that is selected to participate on the elementary PDS school's hiring team.	Hiring teams typically have one member of every grade level on that team. 1-CT	"For the most part if the cooperating teacher is not on the hiring team, then the team leader or one of the grade level teachers usually is."
	Hiring team membership varies and is made up of principals and a team leader or grade level team member with experience or someone familiar with school expectations. 1-CT, 1-NCT	"The interview team is comprised of our principals, our administrators, and then people who need to be there for the interview."

	Cooperating teacher may or may not be a part of the hiring team. 1-NCT, 1-AP	“Sometimes the cooperating teacher might be on the interview team. It doesn't necessarily mean they always will be though.”
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P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The administrative team is part of the elementary PDS school’s hiring team as it pertains to student teachers.
- Approximately half of the participants shared that grade level team leaders or teachers are selected to participate in the hiring process this elementary PDS school used to consider student teachers for employment.
- Approximately half of the participants shared that the student teachers’ cooperating teacher may or may not have been selected to participate in the hiring process this elementary PDS school implements pertaining to student teachers.

Importance of the Hiring Process Pertaining to Student Teachers

The principal shared that the importance of the hiring process itself was significant because it influenced the most valuable part of the school organization, such as student achievement and the school culture (Table 4-8). Engel and Curran (2016) shared that when principals observe student teachers they can determine which teachers are most effective. By doing this, hiring student teachers upon their graduation may be strategic (Engel & Curran, 2016). As the assistant principal noted:

That's how you make an effective school is by having the right people in here because you get a few of the wrong and things can change quickly and that, that's not where we want to be and so I think that's the bonus to having interns is yeah

they're not you and you got to put a lot of work into them but you know who they are and you see them at the raw state and can help and they're getting great guidance from some highly experienced teachers in our building too.

Table 4-8 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1c)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
Hiring team members from the elementary PDS school express the importance of the hiring process pertaining to student teachers and the potential impact it can have.	Emphasize hiring process specifically with student teachers because of the time and energy invested in training them. 1-CT	“In many ways it’s a lot like any other interview with any other candidate except I would say we kind of place a little bit more (pause) stake in those candidates. Just because we spent so long training them already.”
	The hiring process with student teachers diminishes the fear of the unknown that may occur with non-student teaching candidates. 1-AP	“I think one of the huge benefits [of hiring student teachers] is you know what you're getting, you know who you're getting.”
	The hiring process (not specifically pertaining to student teachers) effects components within both student achievement and school culture. 1-HP	“But (pause) the success of the building occurs at the interview table... hundred percent how successful our school is with student achievement, with culture, with climate, with collaboration all of that happens at the interview table.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- A classroom teacher on this elementary PDS school hiring team valued the hiring process as it pertained to student teachers because of the commitment they have already made to improving the student teacher candidate.

- The assistant principal identified the importance of the hiring process that this elementary PDS school used for student teachers because of the prior background knowledge they already had pertaining to the student teacher candidate.
- The principal identified how any teaching candidate (not particularly student teachers) can have a tremendous impact on nearly all facets in the school system.

Formal/Informal Procedures Implemented in Hiring Process

There were many different procedures that this elementary PDS school implemented as it pertained to the hiring process used with student teachers. The participants were asked what type of formal and/or informal procedures were implemented in their hiring process of student students (Table 4-9). A couple of the participants shared that many of the procedures administered in their hiring process for student teachers are the same procedures executed for any interview (whether the candidate was a student teacher or not). The assistant principal did identify how both the formal/informal processes blend together with student teachers:

But when you're looking more at people [student teachers] that are in your building, that formal piece kind of overlaps with the informal piece because there's a lot of conversation that goes on that's not necessarily the formal, but it would be the informal.

One of the interesting statements made by the non-classroom teacher was in reference to how the hiring team observes the student teachers during staff meetings: “We even look at their behavior during professional development or faculty meetings, or in the hallway, or the connections that the student teachers make with the secretaries and just everybody in the building.” Many of the processes that were mentioned are aligned with the prior research that has been associated with hiring processes. In Engel’s study (2013), she found that principals

focused more on behaviors and skills rather than qualifications. Engel's (2013) finding was supported by comments made from the principal, assistant principal, and non-classroom teacher in this study when they referenced that they account for the student teacher's contributions during meetings, interactions with other staff members, as well as the student teacher's observed characteristics and abilities.

Engel and Finch (2015) described a variance in the way principals collaborated with their staff members when making hiring decisions. Some principals did this expansively, others relied completely on the committee to make the decision, while other principals limited the use of the committee's input (Engel & Finch, 2015). In this case study, the principal collaborated with the hiring team comprehensively and strived to allow the interview committee to make the decision; however, at certain times was not afraid to make an isolated decision. The non-classroom teacher summarized this by stating: "If the administration with their experience obviously sees something that we don't see or has a feeling that we don't have of course that's extremely valuable and they have the final decision."

One area that the hiring team differed from some of the extant literature on strategic hiring practices was in the area of reviewing letters of recommendation and resumes. As one classroom teacher stated: "We often don't have time to read the letters of recommendation. We will, however, read letters of recommendation ahead of the interview if time permits." Mason and Schroeder (2012) found that letters of reference are necessary and an integral part of the hiring process. Whereas the principal shared that: "How much emphasis I place on the letter of recommendation will often be (pause) the value that I place on that individual's ability to effectively (pause) evaluate an individual." Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) recognized that resume components are one of the more important tools principals use when

making a hiring decision. Interestingly, the principal made the comment: “I would say it’s probably not uncommon for me to hire an individual and have never looked at their resume.”

Table 4-9 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1d)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
Formal and Informal processes implemented by the elementary PDS hiring team pertaining to student teachers in their hiring process.	Follow typical formal hiring procedures. 1-CT, 1-AP	“In many ways, we approach the student teacher candidate interviews like we would any other interview.”
	Administrative team reviews positions needed to be filled and collects background information about candidates. 1-CT	“We come, and we sit in the room and then we're briefed very quickly... hey this is what we are doing today.”
	Administrative team completes reference checks. 2-CT, 1-AP, 1-P	“You have to value it [reference calls], because you know (pause) it’s a one-time experience here in our building so... there's a lot of past history that can go on there.”
	Hiring team will read letters of recommendation and resume. 2-CT, 1-AP	“Those letter of recommendations, you're going to look at, but the reference calls, the one on one - mean more than the letters of recommendation.”
	Observe student teacher characteristics and abilities during student teaching. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“We also account for our classroom observations of the student teacher to identify their strengths and areas of growth.”
	Involve cooperating teacher’s perspective. 1-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“The student teachers are not coming to the table if the cooperating teacher is saying ‘no, they're just... they're not a fit for us.’”
	Dialogue with other people throughout the building about student teacher candidate’s interactions with other staff members. 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“I'm looking at how they are interacting with their colleagues, how they're interacting with the secretarial staff, how they're

		interacting with the administration team.”
	Observe student teacher’s behavior/contributions during meetings. 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“We do a lot of observing during meetings. You know you can tell a lot by a person when they're sitting in a meeting.”
	Administrative team reads letters of recommendation and resumes. The hiring team does not. 1-NCT	“The interview team... I have never seen a resume... so... (pause) In my position, none (laughs).”
	May or may not read resume – only looks at prior employment experience from resume. 1-P	“I would say it’s probably not uncommon for me to hire an individual and have never looked at their resume.”
	Decide which student teachers are going to be interviewed and which ones are not. 1-AP, 1-P	“Sitting at the interview table, I do not believe I've ever read or seen a letter of recommendation. I think the principals probably prescreen those and just make sure that there's nothing negative (pause).”
	Review social media practices and use. 1-AP	“And where there is so much social media out there that you're definitely always looking at that.”
	Hiring team makes a team decision on which student teachers to employ, however, administrative team makes the final decision. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-HP	“We've all been really involved in it and I think that's one thing that's really important to note is that it's not just an administrative decision.”
		“Well, I mean on that you're hiring team... it's critical it's a team decision. I mean that's... that's what it is. That's the purpose behind bringing the teams in is because you don't want it to be administrative decision. ”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The principal and assistant principal shared that one of the first steps in the hiring process is identifying which student teacher candidates will be interviewed and which ones won't receive an interview.
- About half of the participants shared that the elementary PDS hiring team follows the same formal hiring procedures for student teachers as they would for any other candidate.
- Nearly all of the participants acknowledged that the administrative team completes the reference checks on student teaching candidates.
- All of the participants stated that observations of the student teacher's characteristics and abilities are accounted for in the elementary PDS school's hiring process regarding student teachers.
- Nearly all of the participants mentioned that they involved the student teacher's cooperating teacher's perspective in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school.
- The principal, assistant principal, and non-classroom teacher accounted for the student teacher candidate's interactions with other staff members and observed the student teacher candidate's behavior and contributions during meetings as part of the hiring process at this elementary PDS school.
- There were variables and discrepancies among the participants in how often and what hiring team members reviewed the student teacher candidate's letters of recommendation and resumes in the hiring process.

- The assistant principal reviewed social media practices and use during their hiring process as it pertains to student teachers at this elementary PDS school.
- All of the participants shared that the hiring team strives to make a team decision on which student teachers to employ, however, ultimately it is the administrative team that makes the final decision on which student teachers to employ.

Evidence of Success with the Implementation of the Hiring Process Pertaining to Student Teachers

The success that this elementary PDS school has had implementing the hiring process pertaining to student teachers is evident with the familiarity of the curriculum, school processes, school personnel, and the school's established positive culture (Table 4-10). Several of the elementary PDS school hiring team member participants shared that many former student teachers at this elementary PDS school that were eventually hired have been important contributors to the positive culture of the school. As one classroom teacher shared:

Well I think just looking at the culture of our building you can tell that our staff works really well together you know and having kind of grown our teachers through students teaching and then hiring them, we kind of developed the kind of teachers that we want to see here. And kind of indoctrinate our culture into them as they're teaching here so you know just looking at how little... how little we have to do when they start as far as teaching them about the culture of this place and getting them acclimated to that, they are already aware of how things go and already part of our culture because they've been with us for a while still so.

One of the other ways that the non-classroom teacher identified that the hiring process implemented with student teachers has been successful was because it allowed these new staff

members to transition into the classroom rather seamlessly. She stated: “They don't have the simple questions that non-interns have. They know where things are in the building, they know how things are run and then they know the curriculum as well.” To add to that, the assistant principal talked about how the hiring process that this elementary PDS school implements with student teachers has resulted in some longevity with their most important staff members. “We got a lot of core people that were interns that are still the heart and soul of our building that are still here.”

Finally, the principal referenced some of the data that they collect and analyze at the school level that she believed is a result of some of the student teachers who they have hired in the past:

The positive culture of our school, our climate survey results, our Greenbush survey results just the things that people say about our building when they're in it... I think that that's indicative that we've done a good job (pause) you know indoctrinating our new teachers into the culture.

Table 4-10 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1e)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS school identifies the evidence of success with implementation of the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers who completed their fieldwork at this respective PDS school.	Has increased candidate pool to select from. 1-CT	“The impact it has had on the school kind of I mean... like the first-grade team we all have interns so then all but two of them applied.”
	Familiarity with curriculum, school process, grade level teams, etc. 1-CT, 1-NCT	“The student teachers have been teaching the curriculum and everything but yeah I think it... it impacts the school in a positive way though just being able to see

		when we get interns in, I feel like we view it as okay, you could possibly be on our team next.”
	Selection of student teachers who will be, or have resulted in being, a good fit for the positive culture previously established. 1-CT, 1-NCT. 1-AP, 1-P	“It has a positive impact because they have had that entire semester to learn the different programs that we use to learn the curriculum that the district uses, they've learned the verbiage that we use with our kiddos.”
	Student teachers who have been hired have become longest tenured staff members. 1-AP	“They are already comfortable with our culture and they're aware of what our kids needs are and kind of how things are run at the school.”
	Creates an opportunity for teachers to be successful early on in their career. 1-P	“And so, they're aware of that culture they're not trying to learn how to fit in as far as building friendships and camaraderie among their colleagues and things like that.”
	Student achievement results, climate survey results, and things people say about our building when they're in it. 1-P	“I think that you could just look at the longevity of people who have been student teachers here in the building and who have been hired and that are still here.”
		“The fact that they're [former student teachers] pretty successful early you know they... we don't have a lot crashing and burning.”
		“I just think student results, climate survey results, return rate and overall climate and culture tells us whether we were successful.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Nearly all the participants identified that the selection of their student teachers have resulted in being a good fit for the positive culture previously established as evidence that this hiring process has been successful.
- Increasing the candidate selection pool, familiarity with the curriculum/school processes, opportunity for employment longevity, student achievement results, and survey results were other identifiers that this hiring process implemented by this elementary PDS school pertaining to student teachers is successful.

Challenges of the Hiring Process Pertaining to Student Teachers

This PDS elementary school did acknowledge challenges faced with the student teacher hiring process (Table 4-11). However, many of the dynamics that the participants described as challenging were not necessarily described as part of the actual hiring process but considered more as effects of their hiring process. One description that the non-classroom teacher shared was:

We always have a great number of interns and sometimes they are not hired and with us hiring early, we announce hires at staff meetings and so those interns that are not hired are sitting in that staff meeting hearing that. And they knew already but then it's announced again and so I do think that that's difficult, a challenge for me because I need to keep a level playing field because I'm observing them and challenging them to be better prepared for their first teaching job.

The principal identified a struggle she had with colleagues as a result of the hiring process they use pertaining to student teachers:

You get them a whole semester or maybe longer than that if they do their blocks with you know to really get them into your culture and your climate and so, by the

time you hire them they've been with you for a year and a half you know, and they really know the expectations. Well that causes... I can't think of the word I want to use... your colleagues are resentful of your pipeline of student teachers. And so you end up getting calls from your human resource director or you know you hear through the grapevine that such and such doesn't think it's fair never mind the work you put into your student teachers and the supervision that you provide of your student teachers and the courageous conversations you have with your student teachers and the dismissal of the ineffective student teachers that you go through.

Another uncontrollable factor adding to the difficulty of the hiring process for this elementary PDS school pertaining to student teachers was when they can actually begin implementing their hiring process. The participants described that they can't automatically begin filling their teaching openings as they receive resignations, etc. Before any school in the district can begin hiring, they must receive permission from central office personnel. As the assistant principal described:

One of the biggest challenges can be the timing of the hiring process. If it is too early in the semester, we really don't get an opportunity to get to know the student teachers, but if it is too late in the semester, we risk losing the student teachers to another district.

Behrstock and Cogshall (2009) have identified the importance of the hiring timeframe. By shifting the hiring process to earlier in the year, an opportunity to search for more highly qualified candidates is possible and also allows candidates to attend designated professional development meetings.

Table 4-11 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Structure (A1)

Sub-Code (A1f)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS school identifies the challenges with implementation of the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers who completed their fieldwork at this respective PDS school.	Identifying the best candidate. 1-CT	“Trying to figure out who's the best fit for that team, those kids...to me that was the largest challenge or like when we have only five positions available but we really like seven candidates and you know how do you figure out you know who's going to do the best job.”
	Knowing that each cooperating teacher/teammate advocates for their own student teacher. 1-CT	“And it just seems like every cooperating teacher always pushes for their own student teacher to be hired. Whether that is because of the time and energy they have committed to them or they want to be loyal, I’m not really sure.”
	Timeline of the hiring process that district leadership sets. 1-CT, 1-AP, 1-P	“Sometimes the cooperating teacher and hiring team don’t always have an opportunity to get to know student teacher candidates depending on how early the district informs schools they can begin filling their teaching openings.”
	Working with student teachers not hired for the remainder of the semester. 1-NCT, 1-AP	“Other times the good student teachers have already been snagged by other districts because we haven’t been able to begin filling teaching openings very early.”
	Not being able to talk to those student teachers about their interview performance. 1-NCT	“Not everyone's going to get picked [for an interview] so then there's the struggle of well you didn't pick me for this building and so there can be that animosity between you know typically would be

		more towards us or you know towards the other interns.”
	Not allowing all of the interns an opportunity to interview. 1-AP	“I can’t offer them advice on you didn’t interview well or you didn’t let this show or anything like that. So, I do think that is a challenge because it just you know you just have to stick to conducting a lawful interview process.”
	Being stymied by colleagues for hiring all of the good student teachers from the pipeline. 1-P	“It’s a challenge to invest a lot of time and energy into your student teachers just to see them get hired by another district because we haven’t been able to get permission from district leadership to begin hiring.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Most of the participants described the timeline of the hiring process as being a challenge associated with the implementation of this hiring process pertaining to student teachers.
- The assistant principal and non-classroom teacher described the dynamics of having to work with the student teachers not selected for an interview or for employment for the remainder of the semester as a challenge associated with the implementation of this hiring process pertaining to student teachers at this elementary PDS school.
- One classroom teacher pronounced the challenge of all cooperating teachers advocating for their student teachers to be selected for employment as a challenge this elementary PDS school faces when implementing their hiring process with student teachers.

Roles

Responsibilities of the Hiring Team Members

The responsibilities of the hiring team members described by the participants in this case study differed based upon their full-time role within this elementary PDS school (Table 4-12). Whether it was a classroom teacher, non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, or principal; each participant described a different perspective of what they thought their personal role was, or the roles of hiring team members in general. The principal, assistant principal, and one of the classroom teachers shared that the first thing they do is identify what student teacher candidates will receive an interview. As the classroom teacher stated: “They kind of adopt our building’s ways of doing things. And so, we kind of (pause) I think we interview those candidates we are especially looking for you know... are they [PDS Elementary School Name] material?” This statement supported Emley and Ebmeier’s (1997) research on the effectiveness of screening policies and practices in regard to selecting the “best” teachers. They found that the initial evaluation of potential candidates during the hiring process can also be considered the most important of all evaluations (Emley & Ebmeier, 1997).

Abernathy, Forsyth, and Mitchell (2001) also looked at what principals’ value in the hiring process. Items that principals viewed as critical were colleagues’ opinions about an applicant’s ability, skill, and reputation. The assistant principal reiterated how important it is that everyone on the hiring team’s perspective is included even though they may differ:

And you know we don't always agree when we're at the table either as I may like somebody you know, [the principal] may like somebody different but at the end of the day it's always about what's best for our kids, what's best for our teachers.

Engel and Finch (2015) examined interviews from CPS principals and found that nearly all of the 31 CPS principals interviewed reported using committees when hiring new faculty. The principals in this study described a wide range of variance on how they collaborated with their staff members when making hiring decisions. Some principals collaborated extensively, others indicated that they relied almost completely on the committee to make the decision, while some principals only used the committee’s input in a limited fashion or not at all (Engel and Finch, 2015). The principal shared how this elementary PDS school makes a hiring decision with a student teacher candidate with this quote: “We rarely ever overrule a decision that the hiring team would make.”

Table 4-12 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of Role (A2)

Sub-Code (A2a)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS school hiring team members identify their responsibilities associated with the implementation of the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers who completed their fieldwork at this respective PDS school.	Teachers on the hiring team represent their colleagues. 1-CT, 1-P	“I try to represent not only my personal views, but also the team I am representing.”
	Understand the student teacher candidate’s background. 2-CT, 1-P	“One thing I try to do is understand their [student teacher’s] background (where they are from, their year plan, family, etc.)”
	Contribute dialogue with principals and hiring team. 1-CT	“I’m looking for just what were those life experiences that developed your work ethic.”
	Identify student teacher candidate’s personal qualities during the interview. 1-CT, 1-AP	“I think we look for those personal qualities during an interview because we can grow, support, and teach

		someone how to be a good teacher.”
	Identify student teacher candidates to select for an interview. 1-CT, 1-AP, 1-P	“We really try to identify those traits and skills that can be changed or adapted to fit our building’s current culture.”
	Dialogue with other staff members throughout the building about student teacher candidates. 1-NCT, 1-AP	“They [hiring team] discuss with the classroom teachers (pause), several people throughout the building and then the student teachers go through a traditional interview like all applicants do.”
	Evaluate student teacher candidate’s performance and communicate with principal. 1-NCT	“There are interns that have had issues and because of my position and because [principal’s name] is our principal, I have shared issues with her... (clears throat) if there have been issues and the intern was able to overcome the issues and kind of persevere through it and figure out a plan.”
	Value hiring team member’s opinions. 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“You don’t want it to be administrative decision, but at some point in time we may have to guide and say ‘you know what we’ve been doing this a while here some things that we see that you may not have seen’ and we throw those out on the table.”
	Review application documents (resume, letters of recommendation, cooperating teacher’s rubric, etc.). 1-AP, 1-P	“Interns put so much emphasis into their resumes you know and their applications and all of that and (pause) we pay very little attention to that. You know the only things I am really looking on a resume for are did you hold employment,

		have you previously held employment you know.”
	Share administrative perspective to the hiring team. 1-AP, 1-P	“I will sometimes really buffer or measure how much I'm going to share. So, if I just have some things that I just kind of want them to consider but I'm worried that will really heavily influence their decision one way or the other and I still believe that this person can be successful here then sometimes I just got to keep those things to myself.”
	Share with other principal colleagues recommendations of student teachers to hire. 1-P	“I just (pause) because I want to treat them and have the same expectations for them that I have for the teachers. Because when one of my colleagues calls and wants to know if we recommend this individual you know, for them to interview or they want to hire... I have got to answer that with my integrity on the line.”
	Focus on questions that the student teacher candidates were not expected to be asked. 1-P	“I'm looking for the question that they did not expect you to ask you, and then I want to see how well they think on your feet. You know, honest reflections and then you're looking for all the body language when they answer those questions.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Some of the participants in this study believe the role of hiring team members is to represent the grade level/teaching teams that they are a part of in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers.

- Both classroom teachers and the principal expressed that part of the role of hiring team members within the hiring process at this elementary PDS school is to understand the student teacher candidates' background.
- Both administrators and a classroom teacher shared that the first responsibility they have on the hiring team at this elementary PDS school is to identify which student teachers will be granted an interview and which student teachers will not.
- Most of the participants in this case study mentioned that it is their responsibility to value each hiring team members' perspective and thoughts in the hiring process.

The findings from the organization of this hiring process focus on its structure and the role of the hiring team members at this elementary PDS school. These findings provide insight into the details of how the process is administered and adapted at this elementary PDS school. The following section delves into the BBI approaches that are implemented by the hiring team at this elementary PDS school.

Behavior Based Interviewing Approaches

Prior Experiences with Student Teacher Candidate

Past experiences with the student teacher candidate play a huge role in the decision-making for the hiring team as they work through the hiring process at this elementary PDS School (Table 4-13). Accounting for these experiences directly ties to Mary Clement's (2013) BBI approach. Its foundation is based on the idea that a candidate's past behavior is the best predictor of their future performance. Past behavior can be gauged during the candidate's student teaching experience. The non-classroom teacher summed up how this elementary PDS school implements this belief:

I always tell the interns on the first day you are on a job interview from day one.

If you do not make personal connections with your interview is going to be difficult and uncomfortable, but if you have made personal connections throughout the building, your friends will be sitting at the hiring table.

The principal also summarized how she considers the student teacher candidate’s semester long work in the hiring process. She shared that:

I can tell who's a [school mascot name]. There's just a certain personality, and not that you are trying to collect people that all think alike and act alike, you don't want that at all because it’s that differentiation that makes you a strong unit.

However, one could also argue that this statement reflected a reliance on the “gut instinct” factor that the BBI philosophy aims to contradict. Finally, one classroom teacher asked this question recapping how he accounted for his experiences with a student teacher candidate: “Is this student teacher the kind of teacher I want teaching my kids?”

Table 4-13 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B1)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS school hiring team members account for their prior experiences with the student teacher candidate in the hiring process.	Identify the student teacher candidates’ strengths and weaknesses. 1-CT	“You know, what are some of the areas of strengths and weaknesses that we have personally seen in the classroom throughout the semester?”
	Identify the student teacher candidates’ skills and characteristics. 1-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“Ultimately, it’s going to be passion and those relationship skills that make a quality teacher. A lot of other stuff can be learned but those are two things that are either very difficult to learn or impossible to learn and so (pause) we definitely look at

		how that works through their field experience as well.”
	Observe the student teacher’s experiences in our culture. 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“I think one of the huge benefits [of hiring student teachers] is you know what you're getting, you know who you're getting. You know what you're going to get.”
	Observe the student teacher’s behavior during team/staff meetings. 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“We even look at their behavior during professional development or faculty meetings.”
	Observe the student teacher in the classroom. 1-NCT	“One of the things I attempt to do while I’m observing a student teacher in the classroom setting is analyze their soft skills.”
	Evaluate interactions with the students. 1-AP	“In terms of abilities I am spending so much time looking for characteristics, I don’t know how much time I am spending looking for abilities.”
	Evaluate interactions with the principals. 1-AP, 1-P	Another thing I account for is how well my personal interactions have been with the student teachers.”
	Observe the student teacher’s body language. 1-P	“One thing I am looking for is positive body language.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Nearly all the participants on this elementary PDS school’s hiring team mentioned that they strive to identify the student teacher candidate’s characteristics and skills through their prior experiences.
- The non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal observed how the student teacher candidate fits into their current culture and their interactions, behavior, along with contributions during staff meetings.

Reference Checks

The hiring team collectively acknowledged that reference checks listed by the student teacher candidates play a huge role in the decision making for the hiring team as they work through the hiring process at this elementary PDS School (Table 4-14). Researchers Mason and Schroeder (2012) found that principals prefer verbal references in the hiring process over letters of recommendation. There were two reasons why the principal in this study preferred this which included challenges gauging the validity of the letters and the focus/evaluation of the authors of the letters (Mason & Schroeder, 2012). One of the classroom teachers shared the same perspective:

I think more value is probably placed on those reference calls then on what the candidate provides as far as like a reference letter and a resume because it's not what that person is telling us. We are already getting what the person can tell us in the interview, they're telling us whatever they want to tell us. And but when you're... when it's a reference check you're hearing from a different person and their opinion and (pause) we want to balance so we don't want just what that person tells us in their interview.

The other classroom teacher interviewed in this study added this remark about the importance of completing verbal reference checks: “I feel like people sometimes could be more honest on just a conversation then writing that letter that you hand to your intern.” The assistant principal made a statement about how much she valued reference checks that also supports one of the key goals of the BBI approach as it pertains to completing reference checks. This BBI goal of trying to understand as much of the teaching candidate’s past behavior in hopes to predict future performance was summarized through this statement: “You have to value it, because you know (pause) it’s only a one-time experience here in our building.”

Table 4-14 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B2)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS hiring team utilizes reference checks listed by student teacher candidate in their hiring process.	Administrative team completes the reference checks. 2-CT	“I feel like, again, that’s administration. Like we don't hear as much (pause) of that. I guess. The content of what happens on the reference checks.”
	Hiring team shares dialogue about reference checks before the interview. 1-CT	“But they [the administrators] will tell us before the teacher comes in sometimes, you know hey, during the reference check, this person said that the candidate is really, really good at this but really, really bad at that. Just to kind of give us... give us a kind of a listen for these kinds of things.”
	Hiring team discusses reference checks after the interview and an employment decision has been determined. 1-NCT	“It's more authentic I think... (pause) the reference calls.”
	Values the reference checks and also who the student teacher lists as their references. 1-AP, 1-P	“The reference checks are more so after the fact especially for a student intern. I mean with them being here in the building, like I said we don't even hear about the reference checks until we make a decision and then the references are called.”
	Completes additional reference checks based upon the confidence they have in the student teaching candidate they are selecting for employment. 1-P	“And that's why you to make sure they're good reference checks... you know you don't want neighbors, you don't want family members, you don't want friends, you want people in the field you know, that have seen them with kids

		and seen them with other adults and see what they do.”
		“If I am not confident... I am not completely confident in the selection, then I will solicit more feedback from other places.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The administrators are primarily responsible for conducting the reference checks in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teaching candidates.
- The principal and assistant principal shared that they value the reference checks, but also value who the student teacher candidates list as their references in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school.

Letters of Recommendation

Mason and Schroeder (2012) believe that when it comes to the field of education, letters of recommendation are an essential and important part of the hiring process. However, many of the responses from the participants in this study didn’t exactly echo the same sentiment as Mason and Schroeder (Table 4-15). Many of the participants in this study shared why they don’t place a lot of value on letters of recommendation. The principal had this to say about letters of recommendation provided by student teacher candidates:

You know when there is another clinical instructor that every one of them is just glowing, it’s just glowing. It’s all 4’s and 5’s. And you know it used to be 9’s and 10’s, now its 4’s and 5’s top of the scale. And just positive, positive, positive... well when they are all equally wonderful, they are rendered useless.

The assistant principal shared how she analyzed letters of recommendation from student teacher candidates:

People will write things in a letter, you know, and you kind of watch in letters to see what to put in there. Do they put like valuable, meat stuff, like that they, you know, worked well with kids and they took initiative and they had... they carried out great lesson plans and they were adaptive? What, you know, you look for things like that.

The classroom teacher shared that they will look at student teacher candidates' letters of recommendation if they aren't exactly sure who to select to employ:

Now if we have a candidate and we interview them and then we're just kind of not sure... well you know they just seemed really... really nervous? Then, you know, there's a chance we might go back and look through some of their letters of reference.

The participants in the study did not totally discount the value of letters of recommendation. This supports the findings from Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) when they studied the resources school systems have access to and account for in the hiring process. They suggested that the interview, candidate's experience, and letters of recommendation are the most important resources for hiring teams to examine.

Table 4-15 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B3)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS hiring team utilizes letters of recommendation provided by student teacher candidate in their hiring process.	Attempts to read letters of recommendation, but value other information much more. 2-CT, 1-AP	“Those letter of recommendations, you're going to look at, but the reference calls, the one on one - mean more than the letters of recommendation.”

	Principals/Leadership team read the letters of recommendation. 1-CT, 1-NCT	“I feel like people sometimes could be more honest on just a conversation then writing that letter that you hand to your intern.”
	Reads letters of recommendation, but values who writes the letter more than the content of the letter. 1-P	“Sitting at the interview table, I do not believe I've ever read or seen a letter of recommendation. I think the principals probably prescreen those and just make sure that there's nothing negative.”
		“I am (pause) pretty familiar with a lot of the clinical instructors and teachers and so how much emphasis I place on the letter of recommendation will often be (pause) the value that I place on that individuals ability to effectively (pause) evaluate an individual.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The hiring team at this elementary PDS school accounts for the student teacher candidates’ letters of recommendation, however, the team placed more value on other information collected throughout the hiring process (i.e. reference checks).

Resumes

The hiring team at this elementary PDS school does, at certain points in the hiring process, integrate information from the student teacher candidates’ resumes (Table 4-16). However, there are times that the resume was completely disregarded and the hiring team, collectively, communicated a greater emphasis on the information collected during the reference checks. This coincided with the previous research on the role resumes play in the hiring process.

Rutledge, Harris, Thompson, and Ingle (2008) found that the resume and previous coursework are deemed as the least important data sources used during hiring.

The principal shared that when it comes to reviewing material on the resume, the hiring process differs a little bit as it pertains to student teachers who completed their fieldwork at an elementary PDS school in comparison to teacher candidates that did not have the opportunity to complete their student teaching at the elementary PDS school. The principal communicated that “I will look at resumes of people who are not interns in the building. But the intern’s resume probably seldom even look at it.”

Table 4-16 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B4)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS hiring team utilizes information placed on the student teacher candidates resume in their hiring process.	Places value on the experiences and activities listed on the resume. 1-CT, 1-AP	“I value the activities. (pause) Just again, in the school, in what setting are you going to be a team player? Those types of things.”
	Looks at resume if they had a question about something the student teacher candidate shared from the interview. 1-CT	“If we’re kind of unsure about a candidate or if we had a question about something they said, we might look at the resume to kind of clarify.”
	Doesn’t look at the resume. 1-NCT, 1-P	“I have never seen a resume.”
	Places value on where they got their education from listed on the resume. 1-AP	“I would say it’s probably not uncommon for me to hire an individual and have never looked at their resume.”
	Places value on the Grade Point Average listed on the resume. 1-AP	“The big thing on the resume is where they got their education where they get their degree.”
		“You're going to look at GPA to make sure it's not rock-bottom.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Some of the members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school did not account or even review student teacher candidates' resumes in the hiring process of student teachers.
- Many of the members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school reviewed the student teacher candidates' resumes in the hiring process to identify the student teachers' prior experiences, grade point average, or to clarify something the candidate mentioned during their interview.

Cooperating Teacher's Perspective

One of the things that this elementary PDS school did was account for the student teacher candidate's cooperating teacher's perspective during the hiring process as it pertains to the student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective PDS school (Table 4-17). Although there isn't a lot of professional literature on how to consider the cooperating teacher's perspective in the hiring process involving student teachers, there is information about the impact that the cooperating teacher can have on their student teachers. Ronfeldt, Reininger, and Kwok (2013) studied mentor teacher characteristics and found that student teachers who were allowed more autonomy in instructional decisions possessed stronger efficacy and felt better prepared as they began their career because they reported having better cooperating teachers. McCann and Spangler (2012) dug deeper into the importance of a strong cooperating teacher and found that good mentors negotiate the careful balance between providing critical guidance and allowing autonomy.

One of the classroom teachers in this study shared how they referenced this important resource:

If the cooperating teacher hasn't really come to us but that person's requested an interview, the candidate has requested an interview (pause) that's the first person we go to, is we go ask that cooperating teacher you know, how did this person do during their internship?

The principal spoke about how she valued both the cooperating teacher's perspective as well as the student teacher's university clinical supervisor:

Both the cooperating teacher and the clinical supervisor they have spent the most time with the individual. They, you know, have had the most influence on the individual. And so, I would think the cooperating teacher would bring good information to the table... the best evidence of the individual's ability to be successful or not be successful.

The other classroom teacher in this study summarized the importance of the cooperating teacher's thoughts about the student teacher in the hiring process:

Honestly, they know that candidate more than anyone else and they know their work ethic, their relationships with kids... with parents. They know their lesson planning how that goes and (pause) just so much of what it takes to be a successful teacher that cooperating teacher has witnessed firsthand.

Table 4-17 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B5)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS hiring team accounts for the perspective from the student teacher candidates' cooperating teacher in the hiring process.	First step the hiring team takes to begin collecting information on the student teaching candidate. 2-CT, 1-NCT	"I believe that is kind of the first step of, not necessarily before the interview or anything, but just obtaining whatever information that we have."
	Accounts for cooperating teacher's perspective on	"So... (pause) taking that [cooperating teacher's]

	student teaching candidate's performance. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP	perspective and truly listening.”
	Considers the cooperating teacher's perspective on the student teaching candidate's morals and beliefs. 1-NCT	“We make sure to discuss with the cooperating teacher... (pause) the kind of the morals and beliefs of how they [student teaching candidate] treat kids.”
	Dialogues with the cooperating teacher's perspective on how well the student teaching candidate fits into the building's culture. 1-AP	“If the cooperating teacher is saying ‘no, they're just... they're not a fit for us.’ Then we don't even bother giving that student teacher an interview.”
	Accounts for cooperating teacher's and clinical supervisor's perspective equally on the student teaching candidate. 1-P	“The clinical supervisor (pause) I take a lot of stock in what they say. I try not to place any student teachers with any cooperating teacher that I have any concerns with so based upon that I will take their recommendations and they will weigh very heavily on our decisions.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The classroom teachers and non-classroom teacher shared that they referenced the cooperating teacher's perspective on their student teaching candidate as one of the first steps in this elementary PDS school's hiring process of student teachers.
- Many members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school gathered information from the cooperating teacher about their student teacher's overall performance during their student teaching.

Implementation of a Written Scoring Rubric

Another component of the BBI approach is whether the hiring team utilized a written scoring rubric in the hiring process. This is one aspect of the BBI approach that there was no evidence of in the hiring team’s process (Table 4-18). Clement (2013) summarized how the written scoring rubric fits into the BBI model. The last portion of this method is preparing a list of questions with a rubric or evaluation scale next to it. Each member of the interview team follows the rubric to place a numerical value next to each question based upon their interpretation of the candidates’ response. At the conclusion of the interview, each interview team member tallies up their scores according to the rubric or evaluation scale to provide a data point that can be used objectively (Clement, 2013). The principal shared why she formerly used a written scoring rubric but transitioned to eliminating it:

I got away from using that rubric because I felt like we kept getting the conversation about the decision of who to hire was too focused on the rubric. Whether it was a 3 or a 4, or well you could be influenced by the dialogue well okay then I will move them up to a 4. I only had them at a 3. And that isn’t what I wanted, I just wanted the conversation and I felt like we got too hung up on the rubric. And I just want the dialogue and I’m looking at that during the dialogue about the interns. I am observing my teachers.

Table 4-18 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of BBI Approaches (B)

Sub-Code (B6)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The elementary PDS hiring team implements a written scoring rubric into their hiring process as it pertains to student teacher candidates.	Does not use a written scoring rubric in the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers. 1-AP	“We don't have one [written scoring rubric].”

	Previously used a written scoring rubric but no longer utilizes this in the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers. 1-P	“I got away from it [a written scoring rubric] probably about 4 or 5 years ago.”
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P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The elementary PDS school hiring team no longer uses a written scoring rubric in their hiring process as it pertains to student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this respective school.

The elementary PDS school hiring team members that participated in this study shared their thoughts on all the primary BBI techniques during this study. These findings reflect which BBI approaches are emphasized more than others at this elementary PDS school when it comes to hiring student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this respective school. The following section focuses on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol and how the hiring team at this elementary school emphasized certain teacher characteristics and abilities found on this protocol.

State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol

This section will examine how the hiring team at this elementary PDS school used teacher characteristics and teacher abilities identified on a state department’s educator evaluation protocol in their hiring process of student teacher candidates. The researcher placed data units regarding a state department’s educator evaluation protocol under the level two codes of student teacher characteristics and student teacher skills. Because these level two codes were both so broad, the researcher established level three sub-codes under the level two categories of student teacher characteristics and student teacher abilities. The level two code of student teacher

characteristics included: being a good fit within current culture, collaborating/communicating with colleagues, adapting to change, respecting diversity, exemplifying a commitment to professional development, and being a reflective practitioner. The level two codes of student teacher abilities included: building relationships with students, collaborates/communicates with parents, effectively manages the classroom, differentiates instruction, and student teacher abilities not emphasized. The findings related to teacher characteristics are addressed in the following section.

Student Teacher Characteristics

Fit Within Current Culture

When it comes to the student teacher candidates' ability to fit within this elementary PDS school's culture, all of the participants valued the teacher characteristics outlined on the state department's educator evaluation protocol (Table 4-19). Flanigan (2016) identified how this is vital in the hiring process. Hiring teams still have to determine whether or not the potential candidate is going to be a good fit (Flanigan, 2016). The non-classroom teacher interviewed shared her thoughts on this teacher characteristic:

I think those are the most valued (pause) you know, obviously an intern that communicates and relates to people throughout the building (pause) appears to want to be here and fits in the culture better than somebody that keeps their head down and whether it be because they're shy or they just don't know or you know it's like they have to interject themselves into our environment or they're going to be seen as maybe not being happy. And that is not somebody we would really want to hire.

The principal at this school discussed her perspective on the importance of the student teacher candidate being a good fit: “I am much more interested in the interns that student teach in our building that have stepped into our culture and been very successful.” Ronfeldt, Reininger, and Kwok (2013) support this approach as they found that the student teaching experience is also a realistic job preview that can determine whether the work of the student teacher, district, and school are a good fit. Finally, the classroom teacher added this:

Well I think just looking at the culture of our building you can tell that our staff works really well together you know and having kind of grown our teachers through students teaching and then hiring them, we kind of developed the kind of teachers that we want to see here. And kind of indoctrinate our culture into them as they're teaching here so you know just looking at how little... how little we have to do when they start as far as teaching them about the culture of this place and getting them acclimated to that, they are already aware of how things go and already part of our culture because they've been with us for a while still so.

Table 4-19 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of a State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1a)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s characteristic of being a good fit within the current culture in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher’s characteristic of being a good fit within the current culture. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“Those kind of things, but the student teachers, they’re not coming to the [interview] table if the cooperating teacher is saying ‘no, they’re just... they’re not a fit for us.’ You know, we don’t [grant them an interview].”
		“Just a lot of informal observations of how well they appear to fit into the (K-12)

		educational setting that we have and what contributions they seem to be making right out the gate with the culture you know; do they match up with our culture well.”
		“You know we have talked about how the student teachers are doing in the classroom and everything. So, we are trying to understand why they think their student teacher would be the best fit on our team or at our school.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Each member of the hiring team participating in this study placed significance on the student teacher’s characteristic of fitting into the building’s current culture in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers.

Effectively Collaborates

Each of the participants in this interview accentuated the student teacher candidates’ characteristic of being an effective collaborator as identified on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school pertaining to student teachers (Table 4-20). This is how one of the classroom teachers described the importance of the student teacher candidate being an effective collaborator:

Collaboration skills are what I value the most. Especially with the student teacher coming in as a first-year teacher. No first-year teacher is going to have classroom management skills that are fully there. After six years my classroom management skills still have room to improve but through that collaboration with your team and other members of your staff and your administration.

Although there isn't any prior research on how hiring teams value collaboration skills in their hiring process, Ronfeldt (2015) studied 750 student teachers in over 250 field placement schools identifying how collaboration effects student teacher performance during their student teaching. His findings indicated that some field placement schools, like those with better collaboration, are inherently better contexts for promoting instructional effectiveness regardless of where teachers are previously employed (Ronfeldt, 2015).

The non-classroom teacher in this study specified exactly what she looked for when it comes to collaboration for student teacher candidates: "Finding somebody that fits in with the team that they're interviewing for that they would feel like they would be a good fit to be a collaborative planner that's a big one that we look at." Finally, a second classroom teacher participant in this study identified how essential collaboration is because of the dynamics of their school setting:

You know, with our teams they change all the time and so it is important that with the mobility of our staff it's very important that whoever comes in is going to mesh well. And that's hard, that's... that's probably one of the hardest (pause) things but it's probably one of the most important because we do everything as a team. So, that with... I don't know... flexibility, collaborative skills, those are what make it for me.

Table 4-20 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1b)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher's characteristic of being an effective collaborator in the hiring process as it pertains to	Values the student teacher's characteristic of being an effective collaborator. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	"Are they, you know, a silent observer or are they collaborating with others and are they sharing ideas? I feel like that is a huge piece of our

the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.		culture. Like... just to have a team player and I feel like as an intern you are sometimes a little shy to speak out and things.”
		“But I mean I do look for flexibility and collaboration is a big one.”
		“The collaboration and classroom management is very important, but I think collaboration is probably the biggest one.”
		“Obviously, we want collaboration and we live and breathe off of that out here. You've got to be able to collaborate with others.”
		“I’m looking for someone who wants to participate with the team.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Each member of the hiring team participating in this study stressed the importance of being an effective collaborator for student teachers considered for employment
- The classroom teachers and non-classroom teacher participants in this study expressed they value the student teacher candidate being an effective collaborator more than the assistant principal and principal participants in this study.

Adapts to Change

When it comes to student teacher candidates adapting to change, the two classroom teachers and the assistant principal participants in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school expressed how they underline this characteristic identified on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol (Table 4-21). The assistant principal spoke about flexibility: “[I

look for] Somebody that's got some flexibility because we know how days go in buildings. They're never the same, they are never... you can't always expect anything to ever go same way. So definitely the flexibility.” The principal and non-classroom teacher participating in this study did not elude to specifically looking for this student teacher characteristic during the hiring process.

Table 4-21 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1c)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s characteristic of adapting to change in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher’s characteristic of adapting to change. 2-CT, 1-AP	“[It’s important that the student teacher candidates are] being flexible with changing things if they need to be changed.”
		“So, that with... I don’t know... flexibility, collaborative skills, those are what make it for me.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The two classroom teachers and assistant principal participating in this study accentuated the student teacher’s ability to adapt to change in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school.

Respects Diversity

The principal was the only participant in this study that expressed she spotlighted the student teacher characteristic of respecting diversity in this elementary PDS school’s hiring

process as it pertains to student teachers (Table 4-22). The principal didn't speak about this student teacher characteristic at length and also mentioned that she focused on the diversity of socio-economic status more so than ethnic diversity when it comes to student demographics that the student teacher candidate would potentially be working with.

Table 4-22 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1d)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher's characteristic of respecting diversity in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher's characteristic of respecting diversity. 1-P	"But one thing that I have noticed is a lot of our [student teachers]... from the [metropolitan area]... they've had a lot of experience sometimes with diversity in terms of race but not in terms of social economic and I've noted... that is one thing I look for."

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The principal participating in this study spotlighted the student teacher's characteristic of respecting diversity in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers.

Exemplifies a Commitment to Professional Development

The non-classroom teacher was the only participant in this study that did not communicate the importance of the student teacher candidate exemplifying a commitment to professional development (Table 4-23). Once again, the researcher was unable to identify any prior research that connects this student teacher characteristic to the hiring process or future

effective teacher performance. However, the assistant principal had this to say about how imperative it is that the student teacher candidate demonstrated the ability to grow:

Like I said before somewhere along the beginning you don't have to be the most amazing... (pause) but as long as you're willing to grow and learn and can do that then by all means you know you will be successful in this.

The classroom teacher and principal articulated how vital it is that the student teacher candidate demonstrate the ability to grow as a professional and how the elementary PDS school capitalizes on these student teacher candidates. The classroom teacher said this: “I honestly look more at those personal qualities during an interview because I can teach a teacher how to teach, it might be hard, but I can teach a teacher how to teach.” In addition to this, the principal summarized this student teacher characteristic by stating:

We can teach pedagogy, we can get the instructional practices down, we can intervene with classroom management; all of those things that make a teacher successful in their rooms we can intervene with you and assist you with that. But we can't develop heart, we can't develop passion for kids, we can't develop resiliency. You know... a dedication to getting better are the types of things that I'm trying to identify.

Table 4-23 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1e)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s characteristic of exemplifying a commitment to professional development in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers	Values the student teacher’s characteristic of exemplifying a commitment to professional development. 2-CT, 1-AP, 1-P	“Have they [student teacher] shown any growth over the semester? Our district does a really good job of providing the professional development for us. So we are able to shape them and you get to see

who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.		their growth, just like our students.”
		“The other pieces [that are valued are] being willing to grow and to know that you don't know everything like you've got to be able to want to learn. To have that desire to just keep developing and becoming a better educator.”
		“I think just looking at the culture of our building you can tell that our staff works really well together. You know, and having kind of grown our teachers through students teaching and then hiring them, we kind of developed the kind of teachers that we want to see here.”
		“One of the things that I am paying attention to is when they receive the feedback from their cooperating teacher what do they do with it.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Nearly all of the members of the hiring team participating in this study emphasized the student teacher’s characteristic of exemplifying a commitment to professional development in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

- The principal and assistant principal participants in this study expressed they place more significance on the student teacher candidate exemplifying a commitment to professional development than the classroom teachers and non-classroom teacher participants in this study.

Reflective Practitioner

The principal was the only participant in this study that stressed the importance of significance with the student teacher characteristic of being a reflective practitioner in this elementary PDS schools hiring process as it pertains to student teachers (Table 4-24). The principal didn’t speak about this student teacher characteristic at length but shared that it is important the student teacher candidate can reflect and recognize when something doesn’t go well or as planned.

Table 4-24 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Characteristics (C1)

Sub-Code (C1f)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s characteristic of being a reflective practitioner in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher’s characteristic of being a reflective practitioner. 1-P	“The other thing I am looking for is can they self-reflect when a lesson doesn’t go well.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Only the principal participant in this study expressed the importance of the student teacher characteristic of being a reflective practitioner in the hiring process implemented

at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

Student Teacher Abilities

Building Relationships with Students

All the participants in this study expressed an emphasis on how important it is that student teacher candidates demonstrate the characteristic of building relationships with students outlined on the state department's educator evaluation protocol (Table 4-25). This matched Cannata's (2010) finding that relationships were espoused preferences from teacher applicants.

One classroom teacher summarized her viewpoint:

I would say student teacher characteristics... the biggest ones, and I feel like this is for myself but also for our interview team; we're looking out for people who are kind and who it's easy for them to make relationships. Because our school is... is built around the concept that kids won't learn unless you have a relationship with that kid.

The non-classroom teacher added this about the teacher characteristic of building relationships with kids: "I would probably say relationships. Relationships with the kids, the dialogue and verbiage that's used when speaking to others in the building and just being a team player." The assistant principal shared how this characteristic comes naturally to student teacher candidates:

I can't teach you how to have relationships with kids. I can model it all day, but I can't teach you to do that, so if that's not natural (pause) then you know everything else kind of goes to the wayside.

Finally, the principal offered this specific perspective on how she identified building relationships with students’ characteristic within student teaching candidates:

In terms of kids I am looking for the one that is sitting on the floor. Who is staying after school to work with a kiddo who is struggling? I am looking for the one who is holding the hand, walking down the hall. I am looking for the one whose drying tears and bringing them down to the nurse’s office, not because they are bleeding or have a fever but because they are off today. And they just want a place to have a private conversation to figure out what is going on. So I am looking for all that evidence of heart, I am looking for compassion, I am looking for nurturing.

Table 4-25 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Abilities (C2)

Sub-Code (C2a)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s ability of building relationships with students in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher’s ability of building relationships with the students. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP, 1-P	“One of the things we ask the student teacher’s cooperating teacher is... I would say is just about relationships with kids. Like, have, you know, have they built that good rapport within the classroom?”
		<p>“Part of it is intuition, part of it is just how we view kids and the relationships we have with kids that's a huge part of what we're looking for an interview. How they light up when they talk about children or if they light up about children or about what they're doing.”</p> <p>“Well... (pause) my belief that all comes from kid... kid</p>

		relationships and you know you've got to be caring, you've got to be compassionate, you have to be understanding because it's not about us it's about the kids that are in our building.”
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P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Each member of the hiring team participating in this study accentuated the student teacher’s characteristic of fitting within the building’s current culture in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

Collaborating and Communicating with Parents

Collaborating and communicating with parents was a student teacher ability that most of the participants in this study briefly spoke about as important for student teacher candidates (Table 4-26). Only one of the classroom teachers, the assistant principal, and the principal touched on this student teacher ability and none of them spoke at length about how important this characteristic is. The principal spoke about how she felt she can get more insight into the student teacher’s beliefs on how they talk about their interactions with parents:

That's when you really get an insight into what they thought about their day and what they think about kids and what they think about parents you know I like to listen to how they are talking about parents and that sort of thing.

Table 4-26 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Abilities (C2)

Sub-Code (C2b)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
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<p>The hiring team values the student teacher’s ability of collaborating and communicating with parents in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.</p>	<p>Values the student teacher’s ability of collaborating and communicating relationships with the parents. 1-CT, 1-AP, 1-P</p>	<p>“We go ask that cooperating teacher, you know, how did this person do during their internship? Would you recommend them because honestly, they know that candidate more than anyone else and they know their work ethic, their relationships with kids... with parents.”</p>
<p></p>	<p></p>	<p>“I mean you're looking at their experience and you also want to look for how they interact with parents.”</p>

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- One classroom teacher, the assistant principal, and principal participating in this study highlighted the student teacher’s ability of collaborating and communicating with parents in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

Effectively Manages the Classroom

All the participants in this study, with the exception of the principal, underlined the student teacher candidates’ ability of effectively managing the classroom as identified on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school (Table 4-27). Of the participants that indicated that this student teacher ability is something that they look for within the interviewing process, only the non-classroom teacher specified that it was extremely important. The non-classroom teacher mentioned that she prioritizes this ability right behind being an effective collaborator as the most vital student teacher characteristic or ability.

Table 4-27 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Abilities (C2)

Sub-Code (C2c)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher’s abilities of effectively managing the classroom in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher’s ability of effectively managing the classroom. 2-CT, 1-NCT, 1-AP	“I want to know they have an understanding of classroom management. I also want to know that they, you know I want to see if it is their... if it’s based more on (pause) compassion and integrity than just on discipline.”
		“So more so the collaboration and classroom management is very important, but I think collaboration is probably the biggest one.”
		“Flexibility and the willingness to develop into someone who has good classroom management skills.”

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- Two classroom teachers, the non-classroom teacher, and the assistant principal participating in this study highlighted the student teacher’s ability to effectively manage the classroom in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

Differentiates Instruction

The non-classroom teacher was the only participant in this study that expressed that the student teacher ability of differentiating instruction in this elementary PDS school’s hiring

process was critical (Table 4-28). The non-classroom teacher didn't speak about this student teacher ability at length but shared that it is important the student teacher candidate can identify the unique needs of each learner when creating and delivering instruction to their students.

Table 4-28 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department's Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Abilities (C2)

Sub-Code (C2d)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team values the student teacher's characteristic of differentiating instruction in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	Values the student teacher's ability of differentiating instruction. 1-NCT	"I think a great deal of it is more so being able to differentiate and accommodate. Understanding the need (pause) and that each student is an individual - that's a big one that we look at."

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The non-classroom teacher participating in this study emphasized the student teacher's ability of differentiating their instruction in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.

Student Teacher Abilities Not Communicated by Hiring Team

There were several student teacher abilities that the elementary PDS school hiring team participants made no mention of during the interviews with the researcher (see Table 4-29). Once again, these teacher abilities came from the state department's educator evaluation protocol and are specific to the education field. The state department's educator evaluation protocol is designed for all teachers, and not just student teacher candidates or first year teachers.

Therefore, some of the teacher abilities not mentioned by the elementary PDS school hiring team members may be more of a focus for veteran teachers.

Table 4-29 Sub-Codes, Patterns, and Findings under the Category of State Department’s Educator Evaluation Protocol Teacher Abilities (C2)

Sub-Code (C2)	Patterns (number of participants expressing concept)	Evidence – examples from interview transcripts
The hiring team did not communicate valuing several student teacher abilities outlined on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol in the hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.	The following student teacher abilities on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol were not valued in the hiring process: implementing cross-curricular integration, providing positive feedback to students, fosters independence within students, analyzes data, creates real world learning opportunities, creates effective assessments, provides higher order thinking opportunities, and integrates technology.	N/A

P-Principal, AP-Assistant Principal, NCT-Non-Classroom Teacher, CT-Classroom Teacher

FINDINGS:

- The participants in this study did not mention the following student teacher abilities outlined on the state department’s educator evaluation protocol as important: implementing cross-curricular integration, providing positive feedback to students, fosters independence within students, analyzes data, creates real world learning opportunities, creates effective assessments, provides higher order thinking opportunities, and integrates technology.

There were many interesting findings from the interviews with the elementary PDS school hiring team participants in regard to the organization of the hiring process, the BBI model, and the state department's educator evaluation protocol. The next two sections focus on the findings from the researcher observation field notes and the participant field notes.

Findings from the Researcher Observation Field Notes

Each student teacher candidate interview was approximately 40 minutes. This allowed five to eight minutes of dialogue among the hiring team in between candidates once the student teacher candidate exited the interview. During these dialogue sessions, the hiring team compared the student teacher candidates' performance both during the interview and throughout their semester of student teaching at this elementary PDS school to the other student teacher candidates that were applying for the current open position. The hiring team also discussed different circumstances of the student teacher candidate's field placement for that semester and how that may have affected or related to the vacant teaching position they were working to fill. The primary BBI principle that the hiring team conferred most about was the student teacher candidate's cooperating teacher's perspective and insight.

Findings from Participant Field Notes

After analyzing the pre-determined set of questions, responses, and answers that the elementary PDS school hiring team hand-wrote on the participant field notes, it was apparent that they collectively valued each student teacher candidates' ability to build relationships with students more than any other ability or characteristic. In addition to this, the participant field notes referenced each student teacher candidates' aptitude to manage the classroom and misbehavior. The participant field notes also collectively reflected the hiring team's perspective on how the student teaching candidates' approach worked to build classroom community. The

three skills that were the most prominent and emphasized by the elementary PDS school hiring team based upon the interpretation of the participant field notes by the researcher was interesting because these three skills are closely related. In addition to this, the researcher interpreted that the participant field notes from the elementary PDS school's hiring team prioritized a student teacher candidate's ability to be flexible, have quality instructional techniques, possess collaboration skills, build relationships with parents, and proficiency in technology.

Themes Across All Frameworks

After examining the data through the three different analytical frameworks (organization, behavior-based interviewing approach, and state department's educator evaluation protocol) some key findings emerged. The final step of analysis was to examine the findings across all three frameworks to determine themes that were consistent across all frameworks (Table 4-30). The researcher completed this by looking at each finding from each framework and then identifying which of these findings were also present in not just one or two of the frameworks, but all three of the frameworks.

Theme one consisted of the hiring team's commitment to evaluating the student teacher candidate's performance during their student teaching. The bulk of the findings can be connected to the hiring team members' interactions and observations of the student teacher candidate throughout the semester they spent at this respective elementary PDS school. Theme one is supported by findings 1-6, 11-14, and 18.

Under the first main code of organization of the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers, the responses varied somewhat about who is on the hiring team. Some staff members responded that it was strictly made up of the grade level team leaders and administrators, others shared that it varied depending upon what positions that they had open. There was also some

variance in the participants' responses relating to what all is included in the structure of the hiring process and the hiring team members' role in the hiring process. As far as what information is included to inform the hiring team's employment decision, all of the respondents shared that they account for the student teacher candidates' performance during their student teaching that occurred at this respective elementary PDS school. The respondents were consistent in the sense that they value the student teacher candidates' cooperating teachers' input into their hiring process. Responses varied on whether or not data from the student teacher candidates' resumes, letters of recommendation, and references are accounted for in the employment decision. Finally, the other primary variance related to the first theme and the organization of this hiring process was linked to the role and responsibility of the hiring team members. Responses collected reflected a belief that the hiring team members' role was to represent a group of their colleagues, share their perspective, look at interview documents (resumes, letters of reference, etc.), and communicate with other staff members about the student teacher candidates. Once again referring to theme one, the hiring team members were all consistent in the sense that their role/responsibility was to reflect on the student teacher candidates' performance during their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school.

Theme two focused on how student teachers' impact the culture at this elementary PDS school. Once again, the hiring team referenced their personal interactions and observations of the student teacher candidates to identify the potential impact on both the current and future culture at this respective elementary PDS school. Theme two is supported by findings 1-6, 11-14, and 18.

The second theme from the findings is centered on how the hiring process at this elementary PDS school pertaining to student teachers' effects components within the school's

culture. All respondents were consistent in how they communicated that this was one of the top priorities for their school. Many of the participants referenced the success they have had in the past when it comes to selecting student teachers for employment that have completed their student teaching at this respective PDS school. One thing that was interesting from the respondents was that they determined whether or not the student teacher candidate would be a good fit with the school culture was through observations of the student teacher in professional development meetings, staff/faculty meetings, and grade level team meetings. The other primary way that the participants in this study identified if the student teacher candidate fit into the school culture was through their personal daily interactions with the student teacher candidate. In addition to that, the hiring team members interviewed for this study shared that they observed how the student teacher candidate interacts with classified staff (i.e. paraprofessionals, student support monitors, and secretarial staff).

Theme three centered around the hiring team's collaborative decision-making process in recommending which student teacher candidates will be offered a full-time employment opportunity at this elementary PDS school. This theme was a repetitive theme, but it was also mentioned that in the end, the principals make the final call on which student teachers to employ. This theme is supported by findings 7-10.

The third theme originated once again from the organization main code and how the hiring team works together to make a team decision when it comes to which student teacher candidates, they are going to recommend for full time employment. The first step in this process was the administrative team deciding which staff would be on the hiring team. The participants in this study also shared that if the student teacher candidate's cooperating teacher was not on the hiring team, that someone from the team would reach out to the cooperating teacher to get their

input. This hiring team member then shared this information with the other members of the team. Based upon the interview data and the observation data, the hiring team dialogued at the conclusion of the interviews to make a recommendation on which candidate to recommend for employment. Some of the participants did communicate that if there was a discrepancy of who to select, or if the hiring team was indifferent on which student teacher candidate to hire, the administrative team would make the final decision.

Theme four established that the hiring team at this elementary PDS school puts more of an emphasis on the general personality traits of the student teacher candidate than specific education abilities. This is primarily based upon the members of the hiring team expressing confidence in the systems they have in place to grow and develop the student teacher over time in specific educational related skills and abilities. The fourth theme is supported by findings 1-6, 11-14, and 18.

The fourth theme was based off data related to the state department's educator evaluation protocol. The hiring team members communicated that they value the general personal characteristics of candidates such as building relationships, collaborating, and a commitment to professional development and/or personal improvement more than specific skills in the areas of classroom management, curriculum, or pedagogy. The hiring team felt confident in the systems in place to develop effective teaching practices of student teacher candidates. In addition to this, the team referenced the dynamics of their geographic location on a military base as being a big motive for them to look for effective collaborators in the hiring process. Once again, the members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school shared that they can't "teach" compassion and relationship skills. They shared that they generally look for and valued student teacher candidates that have a passion for working with and building positive relationships with

kids more than skills in classroom management, differentiated instruction, or working with parents.

Theme five focused on how this elementary PDS school hiring team implements BBI approaches. Many of the techniques used in the BBI model are integrated into the hiring process pertaining to student teachers, however, the participants in this study were inconsistent in utilizing these BBI techniques when needing/wanting to gather more information on certain student teacher candidates. The fifth theme is supported by findings 1-6 and 11-19.

The fifth theme was mostly tied to the behavior based interviewing techniques main code. The interview team members shared that the bulk of the BBI approaches (i.e., looking at resumes, letters of recommendation, calling references) are responsibilities of the administrative team. The principal and head principal shared that they may or may not look at the data, and almost always call the references that the student teacher candidates list on their applications. The head principal also spoke about how she values *who* the reference is that she is calling and not just what the reference is saying about the student teacher candidate. The administrators in this study also shared that they review the resume and letters of recommendation when they feel like they need to get additional information about the student teacher candidate after the interview. The one BBI technique that the hiring team agreed on and valued the most was accounting for the student teacher candidates' past performance as a student teacher at this respective elementary PDS school.

Table 4-30 Themes Across All Findings

Theme:	Findings that contribute to theme:
<p>Theme One: Hiring team evaluates candidates' performance during their student teaching.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All the participants stated that observations of the student teacher's characteristics and abilities are accounted for in the elementary PDS school's hiring process regarding student teachers. 2. The principal, assistant principal, and non-classroom teacher accounted for the student teacher candidate's interactions with other staff members and also observed the student teacher candidate's behavior and contributions during meetings as part of the hiring process at this elementary PDS school. 3. The classroom teachers and non-classroom teacher shared that they reference the cooperating teacher's perspective on their student teaching candidate as one of the first steps in this elementary PDS school's hiring process as it pertains to the hiring of student teachers.
<p>Theme Two: Hiring process pertaining to student teachers has an impact on school culture.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Nearly all of the participants identified that the selection of their student teachers has resulted in being a good fit for the positive culture previously established as evidence that this hiring process has been successful. 5. The non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal observed how the student teacher candidate fits into their current culture and their interactions, behavior, and contributions during staff meetings. 6. Each member of the hiring team participating in this study placed a high value on the student teacher's characteristic of fitting within the building's current culture in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.
<p>Theme Three: Hiring team works to make a collaborative hiring decision.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Approximately half of the participants shared that grade level team leaders or teachers are selected to participate in the hiring process this elementary PDS school implements pertaining to student teachers.

	<p>8. All of the participants shared that the hiring team strives to make a team decision on which student teachers to employ, however, ultimately it is the administrative team that makes the final decision on which student teachers to employ.</p> <p>9. One classroom teacher pronounced the challenge of all cooperating teachers advocating for their student teachers to be selected for employment as a challenge this elementary PDS school faces when implementing their hiring process with student teachers.</p> <p>10. Most of the participants in this case study mentioned that it is their responsibility to value each hiring team members' perspective and thoughts in the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers at this elementary PDS school.</p>
<p>Theme Four: Hiring team focuses on personality characteristics more so than educational abilities.</p>	<p>11. Nearly all of the participants on this elementary PDS school's hiring team mentioned that they strive to identify through their prior experiences with the student teacher candidate is their characteristics and abilities.</p> <p>12. Each member of the hiring team participating in this study valued the student teacher's characteristic of being an effective collaborator in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.</p> <p>13. Nearly all of the members of the hiring team participating in this study valued the student teacher's characteristic of exemplifying a commitment to professional development in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.</p> <p>14. The participants in this study did not value the following student teacher abilities outlined on the state department's educator evaluation protocol: implementing cross-</p>

	<p>curricular integration, providing positive feedback to students, fosters independence within students, analyzes data, creates real world learning opportunities, creates effective assessments, provides higher order thinking opportunities, and integrates technology in the hiring process implemented at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school.</p>
<p>Theme Five: The hiring team implements certain aspects of the BBI approach inconsistently.</p>	<p>15. The principal and assistant principal shared that they don't only value the reference checks, but that they also value who the student teacher candidates list as their references in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school.</p> <p>16. The hiring team at this elementary PDS school accounted for the student teacher candidates' letters of recommendation, however, the team placed more value on other information collected throughout the hiring process (i.e. reference checks).</p> <p>17. Some of the members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school did not value or even review student teacher candidates' resumes.</p> <p>18. Many members of the hiring team at this elementary PDS school gathered information from the cooperating teacher about their student teacher's overall performance during their student teaching within the hiring process as it pertains to student teachers.</p> <p>19. The elementary PDS school hiring team no longer uses a written scoring rubric in their hiring process as it pertains to student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this respective school.</p>

In summary, these themes represent the aspects of the hiring process implemented as it pertains to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this elementary PDS school. The next and final chapter presents a discussion of the implications of these themes pertaining to the organization of hiring practices, use of BBI strategies, and consideration of state evaluator

protocol models. In addition, conclusions drawn from the themes and recommendations for those implementing a student teacher hiring process at a PDS elementary school will be shared. Lastly, recommendations for future research will be presented.

Chapter 5 - Discussion and Recommendations

Research on the hiring process in K-12 educational settings has focused primarily on principal preferences and different techniques used in the hiring process. Research also exists on teacher attrition/retention rates and factors. In addition to this, there have been research studies conducted in the area of student teachers. However, scholarly literature that includes and discussed both student teachers and the hiring process are lacking. This qualitative single case study focused on a holistic understanding of the hiring process implemented at one rural, Midwestern school district as it pertains strictly to student teachers who completed their student teaching at an elementary PDS school.

Three main frameworks (organization, behavior-based interviewing model, and state department's educator evaluation protocol) were used to analyze the data collected in this qualitative single case study. The overarching research question and sub-questions were created around the conceptual framework of the behavior-based interviewing model and the state department's educator evaluation protocol framework. These research questions created the outline for the interviews. The organization of the hiring process, BBI conceptual framework, and the state department's educator evaluator protocol framework provided a context in which to examine the interview transcripts.

Once the findings were analyzed using the organization of the hiring process, BBI model, and a state department's educator evaluator protocol; a total of 19 key findings were identified. These 19 key findings were then studied to pinpoint themes that appeared within all aforementioned analytic frameworks. The first theme pronounced how the members of the hiring team continually evaluated the student teacher candidate during their student teaching experience at this respective elementary PDS school. This theme underlined the idea that the

hiring team members not only evaluated the student teacher candidate's pedagogy skills, but also how they interacted with other staff members and their contributions and attentiveness during meetings. The perspective of the student teacher's cooperating teacher was also deemed important. The second theme highlighted the hiring team's focus on looking for student teacher candidates that were a good fit in the elementary PDS school's current culture. This teacher characteristic was referenced repeatedly by nearly all the participants and was emphasized as a critical contribution for any candidate to be considered. The third theme showcased that the hiring team strives to work together to make a team decision when identifying which student teacher will receive a full-time employment opportunity. This theme originated within the organization analytical framework. Several of the participants in this study shared that when there is disagreement among the hiring team members on which student teacher candidate to select, the administrative team would be charged with making the final decision on which student teacher candidate to hire. The fourth theme affirmed the disposition of the hiring team placing more of an emphasis on general personality characteristics more so than on educational abilities. The hiring team members emphasized that they look at the student teacher's ability to build relationships, collaborate, and grow professionally more than educational skills such as classroom management and pedagogy techniques. The fifth and final theme described how the hiring team implemented some of the techniques within the BBI model into their hiring process, but not all BBI approaches consistently. This theme highlighted how the hiring team utilized data and information regarding the student teacher's past behaviors and performance.

Findings and Interpretations

Theme One: Hiring team evaluates candidates' performance during their student teaching.

This study focused on the intersection of student teachers completing their student teaching and the hiring process at an elementary PDS school. There were many positive aspects of how this hiring team included the student teacher's fieldwork experience at this respective elementary PDS school. There is strong evidence that the hiring team evaluated the student teacher throughout these experiences.

Professional literature is plentiful regarding the importance, benefits, and predictive aspects of the student teaching experience (Greenberg, et. al, 2011; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Ronfeldt, 2012). In addition, the literature also describes the goals of the student teaching experience as advancing the overall performance of beginning teachers and obtaining a proper knowledge base through this learning opportunity (Clark, et. al, 2015; Greenberg, et. al, 2011). Ronfeldt (2015) identified that the field placement of student teachers can affect student teacher performance. Finally, a significant aspect of student teaching performance as noted by Ronfeldt, Reinenger, and Kwok (2013) studied how the student teacher's cooperating teacher can be one of the most impactful factors during this experience.

The BBI model applied to the hiring process is based on a technique of creating a structured pattern of questions designed to probe the applicant's past behavior for relevance to critical job events (Janz, Hellervik, and Gilmore, 1986). Mary Clement transformed this model from the private business sector into public education and shared that it could serve as a beneficial outline and philosophy pertaining to the hiring of student teachers (Clement, 2017). More specifically to the BBI model, Beebe (2015) also identified that increasing value should be placed on recent behavior as it can be a better predictor of future behavior.

In this study, all the participants shared that they informally evaluated the student teacher's performance during the student teaching experience at this elementary PDS school and this data and perspective served to inform their hiring decision. The participants expressed that they observed different characteristics and abilities that the student teacher possessed while they were completing their student teaching in the school. Some examples that the participants mentioned during their interviews ranged from general pedagogy and classroom management skills to how well they demonstrated a passion for working with kids and their ability to fit in with the school's culture or respective grade level teams.

Most of the responses from the school personnel participating in this study regarding how they evaluate the student teacher candidate's experience at this respective elementary PDS school aligned exactly with previous authors. These authors include Janz, Hellervik, Gilmore, Beebe (1986), and Clement (2013). They describe these tenets as the primary philosophy behind the BBI model. One specific example of this was a quote from the assistant principal:

We are in and out of classrooms, so you see their interactions you know on a daily basis. We do a lot of observing during meetings. You know you can tell a lot by a person when they're sitting in a meeting and them... it's just one of those things you just do whether you really mean to or not. But where I kind of sit, and when we are in meetings, if I'm not presenting, you're definitely looking at the staff and you can tell the ones that are engaged and that are there that want to be there.

And then you can also see the other side where they're ready to be done. You know they don't... they don't have that full buy-in to what's going on in the meeting.

This provided a concrete example of how the hiring team utilized BBI approaches in the hiring process. Clement (2013) recognized the advantages to the BBI model. The BBI approach was used to examine this elementary PDS school's philosophy on hiring by analyzing acquired data on key interview topics (i.e. classroom management, assessment/grading, content knowledge, etc.). In addition to this, the BBI model created a platform to analyze the interview team's process with their end goals in mind.

Theme Two: Hiring process pertaining to student teachers has an impact on school culture.

One of the most critical components of any school is the culture that has been established. How a teacher contributes to a school's culture and expectations is identified on the state department's educator evaluation protocol framework used in this study. The evaluation instrument mandates evidence-based performance decisions described in judgment rubrics. With that in mind, this evaluation protocol provides a structured framework to use when evaluating a student teacher candidate's ability to fit successfully in a school's culture.

The hiring process at this PDS school has ensured high quality selection of student teachers to employ upon graduation along with critical attention to their continued professional development and indoctrination into the culture of the school. Because of their commitment to this process, this elementary PDS school has continued to build and reinforce professional expectations of staff and maintain a strong school culture. Nearly all the candidates in this study, despite their different roles and experiences, communicated that the hiring of student teachers upon graduation has a tremendous impact on their school culture.

Ingle, Rutledge, and Bishop (2011) found that principals also considered the characteristics and abilities of the teachers already working on staff when making their hiring decisions. All the participants in this study discussed how they believed they have been effective in hiring student teachers upon graduation in the past evidenced by the new hires' contributions

to maintaining a strong, positive culture in the school. Once again, through their observations of the student teacher candidate's student teaching experience, the non-classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal identified the importance of how the student teacher candidate interacted and fit in with their grade level colleagues and co-workers as a vital consideration. This reinforced the research from Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) when they found that principals look for both professional and personal characteristics that match those of teachers currently on staff when considering how potential teacher candidates would fit in existing grade level teams or departments. The principal at this school identified the relationship between school culture and student achievement: "But (pause) the success of the building occurs at the interview table... one hundred percent of how successful our school is with student achievement, with culture, with climate, with collaboration all of that happens at the interview table."

Theme Three: Hiring team works to make a collaborative hiring decision

Engel and Finch (2015) interviewed several principals from the CPS system and found that the hiring process can be organized in several different ways across a single school system. One of the areas that these authors looked deeper into was how principals collaborated with the staff members on their hiring teams. Principals in this study shared that they both value the discussions and trusted the opinions from their fellow hiring team members. However, Engel and Finch (2015) found that how much these principals collaborated with their hiring team members vastly differed when it came to the actual hiring decision. Some of the principals in Engel and Finch's (2015) study reported that they relied almost completely on the hiring team when making the hiring decisions while other principals in this study only used the staff members input on the team in a limited fashion or not at all.

This elementary PDS school's hiring process structure along with the roles of the hiring team members was a good example of how collaboration and input can fluctuate. This was very

similar to findings in this research study. Most of the participants in this study shared that they do their best to collaborate and make a team decision on which student teacher candidate to hire. Other participants in this study communicated that ultimately, the administrative team would make the final decision when it came to employment of student teachers. It was clear that the hiring team followed a consistent protocol and collaborative approach during the hiring process. The team did recognize that at times, a unified decision may not be possible when discrepancy exists among the team members on which student teacher should be hired. In this situation, the participants talked about how the administrative team (principals and two assistant principals) worked together to make the final decision on which student teacher to hire.

The structure of the hiring process and the roles of the hiring team members fell within the organization analytical framework. The first step in making a team decision in the hiring process was deciding which staff members would be involved. Clement (2013) stated that by including teachers, the hiring process and outcomes can be systematically improved. The participants in this study shared that administrators typically selected staff members with experience at grade levels with vacant positions and knowledge of the school's culture and expectations. These teachers may also be designated team leaders.

Goldhaber, Kreig, and Theobald (2014) shared that there is little evidence that the characteristics of a student teacher's cooperating teacher has a predictive impact into the public-school workforce. However, in this study, team decisions were enhanced by involving the student teacher candidate's cooperating teacher in the process. The participants in this study shared that the hiring team relies heavily on the perspective of the cooperating teacher. One classroom teacher shared that if the student teacher's cooperating teacher is not part of the actual interviewing team, their viewpoint is always sought out and represented in the discussion. The

principal in this study had this comment about including the student teacher's cooperating teacher into the team decision:

Both the cooperating teacher and the clinical supervisor they have spent the most time with the individual. They, you know, have had the most influence on the individual. And so, I would think the cooperating teacher would bring good information to the table... the best evidence of the individual's ability to be successful or not be successful.

Engel and Curran (2016) looked at the data from the Engel and Finch's 2015 study of CPS principals and coded certain hiring process practices as strategic. One of these deliberate practices was including a content area or grade-level specialist on the hiring team. In addition to including teachers and making a collaborative hiring decision as an effective hiring process technique, it can benefit the school setting in different ways. Bush (2013) shared that leadership is not confined to formal leaders and is visible in other areas of the school organization. Bush (2013) identified that there is benefit to wider leadership distribution and developing leadership within schools.

Theme Four: Hiring team focuses on personality characteristics more so than educational abilities.

Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) identified that principals look for both professional and personal characteristics that match those of teachers currently on staff. These authors found that administrators can also focus too much on personality and too little on professional skills and abilities. Nevertheless, the principals in their study stated they strive to find a good balance between the two. This echoed the exact approach that this elementary PDS school uses when executing their hiring process. The participants in this study placed more of an emphasis on personal characteristics that they shared they "can't teach". The members

interviewed at this elementary PDS school expressed repeatedly that they were very confident in the support systems they had in place to grow, mold, and develop new teachers' skills that would make them more effective and better teachers.

Other teacher characteristics the hiring team shared that they valued in the interviewing process were collaboration skills, work ethic, and the ability to build relationships with students and colleagues. Because of the high turnover among staff members with the geographic location of this school located on a military base, the participants in this case study expressed that effective collaboration is a key contributor to student achievement at this school. Like previously stated, the student teacher candidate's ability to build relationships both with students and staff members correlated closely with the elementary PDS school's commitment to building and maintaining a positive school culture.

One of the more interesting parts of the study highlighted student teacher characteristics and abilities valued by each of the participants in this study. One could make an argument that each of the sub-groups (principal, assistant principal, classroom teacher, non-classroom teacher) held most closely teacher characteristics and abilities that affected them in their role. For instance, the non-classroom teacher emphasized that student teachers should exhibit strong pedagogy skills, classroom management, and ability to differentiate instruction. The two teachers interviewed in this study accentuated how important it was that student teacher candidates demonstrate being an effective collaborator. The assistant principal and principal emphasized that student teacher candidates must fit into the current school culture and possess a desire to grow professionally.

Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) found that interpretations of the prior research on teacher success often confused the effects of specific teacher characteristics with the overall contribution

of teachers. This statement makes it a tremendous challenge to identify which teacher characteristics and abilities achieve the greatest impact and are valued most in the hiring process. The overarching theme of the elementary PDS school hiring team focused on teacher characteristics more than teacher abilities and demonstrated this consistent philosophy and approach during the hiring process.

Theme Five: The hiring team implements certain aspects of the BBI approach inconsistently.

The conceptual framework in this study was the BBI model and its relative approach to hiring. This originated in the private sector and has since been applied to the hiring process in public education. There are several different components within the BBI model. Fitzwater (2000) outlined four phases of the BBI process. This qualitative single case study focused on components in the first three phases of the BBI model. Tasks included in the first phase of the BBI model include reviewing the position description, consulting with those who have knowledge of the vacant position, developing job-related success criteria, and reviewing/comparing the applicant's background and other credentials versus job-related criteria. During the second phase of the BBI process, the hiring team works together to develop interview questions, set the interviewing parameters with the candidate, ask open-ended questions, probe for detail and clarification, gather job-related information from the interview, and observe and document job-related behavior data. The third phase of the BBI process is interpreting the behavior by reviewing interview notes, evaluating behaviors against criteria, evaluating behaviors against a norm, assigning a rating, and then making an employment decision (Fitzwater, 2000).

Many of the BBI approaches described in the first phase were completed by the elementary PDS school's district human resource department. Specifically, these included a

review of the position description and consultation about when the process to fill vacant positions could begin. The principal and assistant principal shared they reviewed and compared the student teacher candidates' background and other credentials. The other participants shared that they may or may not review this information stating time constraints as a factor. There was no mention of creating job-related success criteria in their process.

The participants in this single qualitative case study emphasized many of the methods in their hiring process associated with the second phase of the BBI model. One aspect that the principal described was how much thought and time she places on the interview questions. She described how much she values the way she asked questions by saying this:

Probably the questions that we ask that are not related to necessarily to the educational process. Probably give me... because again, I'm not looking for the pedagogy, the instructional practices... I don't care whether you know the definition of formative assessment you know all those things we ask because that's you know what you are supposed to ask. But the questions that we ask, like 'what is the last costume you wore?' 'What was... what was the last courageous conversation you had with an individual about anything?' Those are the questions that really interest us.

There was minimal communication or observation of the hiring team using the third phase of the BBI process. One of the components of this phase is utilizing a written scoring rubric to create a numerical value associated with the candidate's performance during the interview. The principal in this study communicated that several years prior the hiring team did execute this strategy as a part of their hiring process, but currently, they no longer do. The principal stated that she wanted the interview team to engage in more dialogue about the student

teacher candidates' interview performance rather than incidentally placing too much emphasis on the written scoring rubric data. During the observations of the interview process at this elementary PDS school, the researcher did hear the hiring team reference their interview notes when they were dialoguing at the conclusion of the interviews.

After the researcher continued to review the interview transcripts and reflected on the researcher observation notes and participant field notes, it was apparent that strategies related to the BBI model were not completely discounted by the hiring team at this elementary PDS school. When hiring team members shared some discrepancy on which student teacher candidate they were interested in most or when they were unsure of which student teacher candidate to select; the hiring team implemented some of the BBI tactics. Therefore, the data suggested that the hiring team at this elementary PDS school implemented certain aspects of the BBI model inconsistently.

Although the initial goal of the researcher was not to build theory, the researcher is confident that this study substantially informs theory after culminating the study. This study provides an opportunity to add to the professional literature regarding how critical the hiring is for public school leaders in the United States. The researcher created a figure to visualize how the three main frameworks interact with the five main themes that emerged from the data. Each of the five main themes emerged within one of the frameworks, but with each respective main theme, there were also overlaps and connections to the other two frameworks. This figure captures how each of the three main frameworks and five main themes interact and connect with one another.

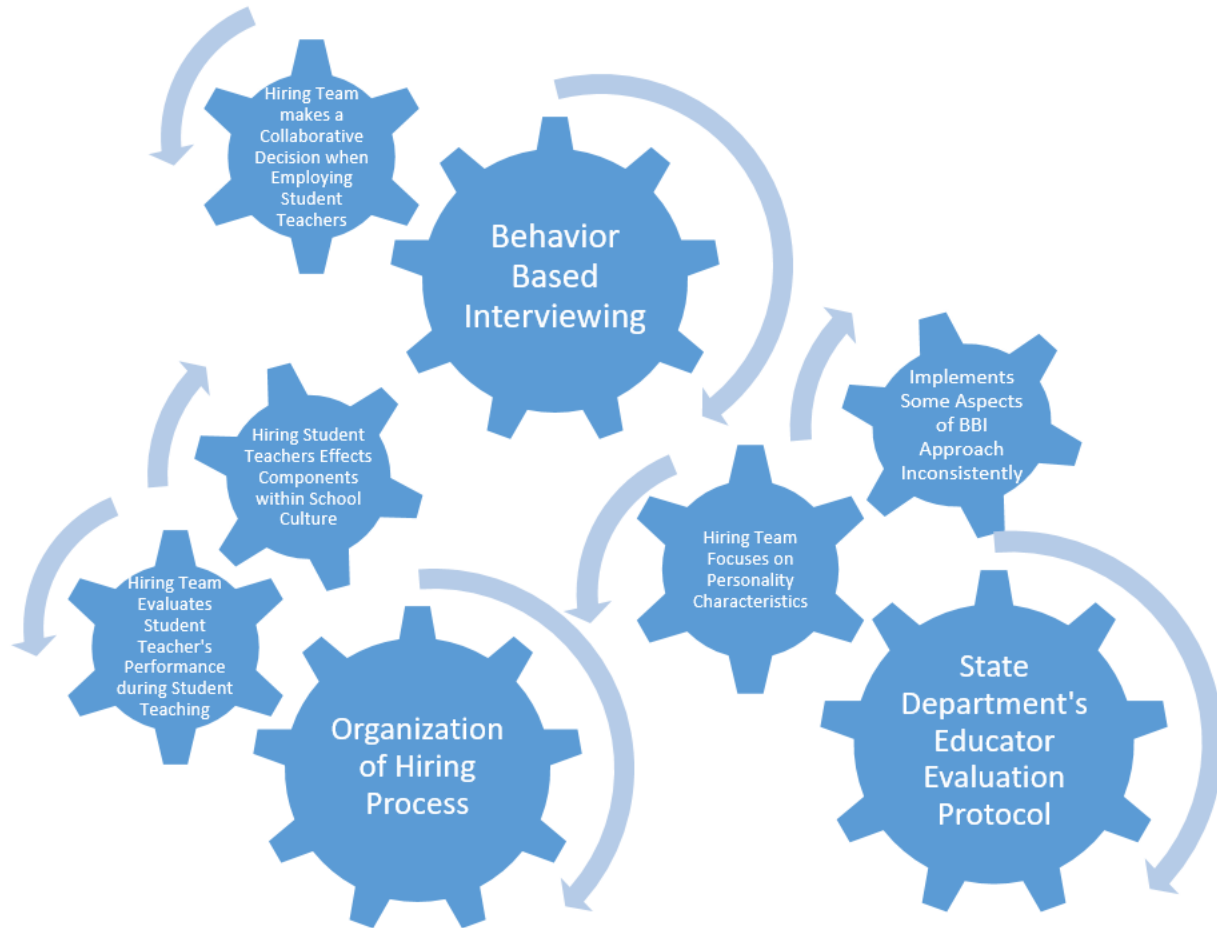


Figure 5-1 Frameworks and Themes Interaction

Results

Overarching question: How does the hiring team identify effective student teachers to be employed at their PDS elementary school?

In studying the implementation of how this hiring team identified effective student teachers to be employed at their PDS elementary school, there were many different techniques and strategies that emerged from the collected data. The techniques most consistently shared by the participants was including current staff members familiar with the culture and dynamics of the school on the hiring team. These staff members understood that their role was to represent their grade level teams and/or contribute to the hiring team’s dialogue with an informed perspective on which student teacher candidates they felt should be hired. All the participants in

this study expressed that they worked together to make a group decision when determining which student teacher candidate to select for full time employment.

Other strategies that this elementary PDS school hiring team utilized was looking at the student teacher's performance during their student teaching experience. The participants in this study communicated that they didn't necessarily look too deeply into the student teacher's professional skills such as pedagogy, classroom management, or curriculum knowledge. The hiring team members interviewed in this study expressed that they considered the student teacher candidates' general personality characteristics such as how well they collaborated, worked to build relationships, and possessed a desire to develop professionally. The participants continued to express that they look for a good fit with the school's culture and whether the student teacher candidate can adapt to the system currently in place at this respective school.

Other methods employed by the team identified effective student teacher characteristics including understanding the student teacher candidates' background, the student teacher candidates' actions and contributions during meetings, reviewing the student teacher candidates' social media practices and use, communicating with the student teacher candidates' cooperating teacher, and possibly reviewing the student teacher candidates' resume, letters of recommendation, and references. Engel (2013) shared that many principals prefer to hire inexperienced teachers because of their "moldability" (Engel, 2013). This hiring preference was reinforced by not only the principal in this study, but also by many of the other participants.

Sub-question #1: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify effective student teachers to be employed using Behavior-Based Interviewing (BBI) techniques?

The data collected from this elementary PDS school's hiring team referenced many of the BBI techniques outlined previously in this study. However, none of the participants were familiar with this model and they inconsistently executed the BBI techniques during their hiring

process as it pertained to student teachers. One BBI technique that the hiring team did communicate a consistent commitment to is observing and evaluating the student teacher candidates' past performance. Clement (2013) identified that the BBI model's primary principle is that past behavior is the best indicator of future performance. When looking at the student teacher candidates' past performance, the participants consistently shared that they felt it important to identify how the candidate would fit into the school's culture or respective grade level teams.

Participants in this study exhibited several other BBI techniques during their elementary PDS school hiring team's process. Included in these techniques were the administrative team calling the student teacher candidates' references, reading the student teacher candidates' letters of recommendation, reviewing information found on the student teacher candidates' resume, and dialoguing with the student teacher candidates' cooperating teacher. Of these techniques, the participants expressed that they consistently called the student teacher's references, but also evaluated who the reference was as important. The participants reported that they inconsistently reviewed the letters of recommendation and the resumes provided by the student teacher candidates in their hiring process. They reported time as a constraint in reviewing student teacher candidates' letters of recommendation and resumes. Finally, regarding the student teacher candidates' resume, the participants in this study shared that they focused most on grade point average or prior experiences listed.

The hiring team at this elementary PDS school did not use any type of written scoring rubric as a part of their process. The principal participant in this study shared that at one point they had utilized this BBI technique, but she felt that it took away from the hiring team's dialogue about the student teacher candidates. In addition, the team most readily implemented

BBI techniques when a discrepancy between hiring team members on which student teacher candidate to hire occurred or when there was a general feeling of uncertainty about a specific candidate. When the participants communicated that there was some disparity among the hiring team members about which candidate to hire, the hiring team would begin to implement more BBI techniques regarding the candidates they were considering hiring. They described that they would account for information included on the candidates' resumes, references, and letters of recommendation. When the hiring team was confident and came to a consensus about which candidate they wanted to hire; the participants described that they did not focus on the candidates' resume, references, and letters of recommendation. During the researcher's observations, the hiring team talked briefly about some of this information on one of the three student teacher candidates.

Sub-question #2: How does a hiring team at a PDS school identify effective student teachers to be employed using teacher characteristics and skills outlined in a state department's educator evaluator protocol?

There were many different teacher personality characteristics and education specific skills from the state department's educator evaluation protocol that the participants in this study communicated were important when hiring a student teacher candidate. All the participants shared that they place more emphasis on general personality characteristics than performance skills. They voiced that they felt comfortable with the support system in place at the school to "grow" their student teachers once they are hired. Because of this philosophy, the participants noted it was particularly important that the student teacher candidates demonstrate a desire to grow professionally. Other critical characteristics identified by the hiring team included selected candidates being a good fit in the school's culture and a strong desire to build positive relationships with colleagues and staff. In addition to these general personality characteristics,

the team valued high collaboration, ability to adapt to change, a respect for diversity, and reflective practices as important to the success of a student teacher selected for hire.

There were also many professional teacher skills found on the state department's educator evaluation protocol that the participants in this study mentioned as important to identify in student teacher candidates. These teacher skills comprised demonstrating a passion for students by building positive relationships with them, collaboration and communication with parents, effective classroom management, and differentiated instruction. The following student teacher abilities on the state department's educator evaluation protocol were not communicated during the observed hiring process: implementing cross-curricular integration, providing positive feedback to students, fostering independence within students, analyzing data, creating real world learning opportunities, creating effective assessments, providing higher order thinking opportunities, and integrating technology.

Having a focus on the general personality characteristics when hiring student teachers upon their graduation has proven to be effective at this elementary PDS school. However, Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, and Thompson (2010) noted that it can be counter effective to emphasize teacher candidates' personality with too little attention on professional skills and abilities. The principal in this study also preferred candidates that were enthusiastic and strong communicators with organizational skills among a variety of other characteristics. In addition to this, administrators did communicate that strong teaching skills, subject knowledge, and experience were also important skills that they look for in applicants. This elementary PDS school's success in effectively identifying student teachers for employment may result from the hiring team's ability to find the right balance to look for when it comes to general personality characteristics

and education specific skills. All the participants in this study made mention of characteristics and skills that they look for within potential student teacher candidates.

Recommendations

In general, elementary school hiring teams need to identify their hiring philosophy, structure, and values associated with hiring student teacher candidates. An examination of the systematic initiatives involved with the hiring process pertaining to student teachers may benefit similar PDS as well as non-PDS schools. When elementary schools provide the best student teaching experience for their student teaching candidates, they create a positive culture and beneficial learning environment for future professional teachers. Collaborative and distributed leadership can serve as a powerful mechanism during times of decision making that enhance the possibility of selecting the best qualified candidate as well as fostering ownership for the success of new hires. It is equally important that elementary school hiring teams reflect on the outcomes of their hiring process as it pertains to student teaching in order to continually improve and adapt to the ever-changing dynamics of this process. The following recommendations for school hiring teams provide valuable outcomes for the focus of this study.

1) Identify the value of having a shared vision, structure, and philosophy pertaining to the student teachers' fieldwork experience. Clarity on the primary behaviors, characteristics, and skills the student teacher candidates' fieldwork experience within a respective elementary PDS school should be clearly articulated by the hiring team members and the university supervisors/coordinators. A widely shared vision about how the student teaching experience can prepare student teacher candidates for the hiring process would benefit the school and student teacher. The utilization of a clinical university supervisor can further benefit and support this vision. The clinical supervisor can directly impact the student teachers' fieldwork experience and

convey important perspectives to student teachers regarding anticipated hiring procedures and expectations. By working with both elementary PDS school hiring team members and the university administrative team, the clinical university supervisor's creation of a vision, philosophy, and structure to embed the goals of the university, school, and student teacher in the fieldwork experience may be pivotal.

Cannata (2010) found that new teacher trainings, school familiarity, personal relationships, and perceived comfort are preferences shared by teacher applicants. By creating a widely shared philosophy on how the student teaching experience not only prepares the candidate for their professional experience, but also provides guidance in preparing for interviewing for prospective positions supports these findings. By establishing common language, targeted trainings, and real-life experiences for the student teacher, a shared vision for success can be integrated into the student teacher candidates' fieldwork experience and supported by everyone involved in the process.

2) Identify the specific advantages and systems of PDS elementary schools and adapt these to non-PDS elementary schools. Despite not having a clearly defined vision that prepares student teacher candidates specifically for the hiring process, it was clear that the elementary PDS school in this study does effectively prepare student teachers for their first professional experience. Because of the PDS environment, the researcher identified certain procedures and guidelines that were in place at this elementary school. It appeared that some of these procedures and guidelines created an opportunity for a high-quality student teaching experience than what other non-PDS elementary schools can offer. Two of the supports identified in this study were having a university clinical supervisor on site and strict guidelines regarding which elementary staff members were qualified to be a cooperating teacher.

After obtaining and reviewing a copy of the agreement between the nearby university and the elementary PDS school in this study, the researcher identified elements in the agreement that provided clear expectations for the university and the school. These guidelines outlined the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the university, duties and responsibilities of the elementary PDS school, and mutual terms and conditions of the relationship. This document provided a road map of exactly when and how long the student teacher was expected to be teaching parts of the curriculum, and at other times, the entire curriculum. This agreement also included the process for removal of non-compliant student teachers, how the student teacher would be evaluated, terms for the creation of a student teacher work sample/portfolio, and the reporting of student teacher progress. Having these details identified in writing made it very clear what this one school district was responsible for when making the commitment to having designated district elementary PDS schools and agreed upon placement of student teachers. Non-PDS elementary schools could clearly benefit by having a well-developed agreement with partnering university(s) in their communities outlining expectations for the student teaching experience.

Additionally, this elementary PDS school put certain protocols in place that other PDS schools do not. These protocols included placement guidelines, expectations for cooperating teachers, a timeline and procedures for student teachers to begin and increase teaching responsibilities and communicated student teacher observation and evaluation rubrics. By clarifying procedures and expectations surrounding the student teaching experience, other PDS and non-PDS schools may be able to put in place similar procedures to better prepare student teachers placed in their schools for their first professional teaching experience.

3) Consider placement of student teachers in schools with a positive culture that supports beneficial learning and quality preparation opportunities. When asking the participants in this

study what some of the identifiers were that this elementary PDS school is doing to effectively prepare and support student teacher candidates, they all referred to the positive school culture that has been established and maintained over time. Based upon the number of candidates applying for the teacher vacancies at this elementary PDS school during this study, it is an indication that this elementary PDS school is a preferred place to teach as a result of its positive culture for all staff. Ronfeldt's (2012) study of New York City PDS schools found many advantages for prospective teaching candidates that completed their student teaching from easier-to-staff schools which included being more effective at raising test scores and more likely to stay in New York City schools during their first five years in the profession. Even when student teachers did their fieldwork in easier-to-staff PDS schools and began their professional careers in more difficult-to-staff PDS schools, they were associated with better retention and achievement gains (Ronfeldt, 2012).

The principal in this study also referred to the results of their school's climate surveys, staff perceptual surveys, and stakeholder perceptual surveys as evidence that this elementary PDS school has had success in developing a positive school culture as well as in effectively hiring student teacher candidates. The principal and assistant principal also referenced the student achievement data at this elementary PDS school as another indicator of successful experiences in identifying and hiring student teachers upon their graduation. The principal shared that they use the student teaching experience to indoctrinate their student teacher candidates into the elementary PDS school's culture and once some of these student teacher candidates are hired full time the following semester or year; it has helped them become successful early on in their career, thus, having a positive impact on student learning as evidenced by their student achievement data.

The principal in this study acknowledged that they seem to do a better job of preparing student teachers when they have a large group completing their student teaching during one semester rather than a small group of student teachers. The principal shared that they have put several support processes in place like meeting regularly with student teachers and when there is a large group, there is more fidelity and diligence in meeting and responding to their needs.

4) Incorporate shared decision-making or distributed leadership principles to incorporate important hiring team members' perspectives into the hiring process. One of the primary findings from this study was that each hiring team member had a significant voice in the process for recommending student teacher candidates for employment at this elementary PDS school. In considering aspects of the distributed leadership model, some of the theories can easily be adapted to the decision-making aspect of the hiring process pertaining to student teacher candidates. Bush (2013) identified that the focus should value the interactions between people more than defined roles in the school. Gronn's (2002) defined distributed leadership "as a mode of action in which multiple individuals pool their expertise together to solve a problem" (p. 430). Both descriptions can be applied to how elementary school hiring teams work together to account for each members' thoughts and opinions on which student teacher candidate they recommend for employment.

5) Identify ways to assess the outcomes of the hiring process as it pertains to student teacher candidates. An improvement area for this elementary PDS school could be to more clearly define and determine the success and retention of student teacher candidates that have been hired as teachers. The study participants did refer to survey data and student achievement data as indicators of success, however, there were no specific data collection methods to track individual teacher longevity and other variables leading to a successful teaching experience for

staff. Looking at available teacher data, teacher evaluations, and teacher retention rates are some additional ways that this elementary PDS school can better assess the outcomes of their hiring process as it pertains to student teacher candidates and to serve as a model of effective practices in supporting student teachers for other schools and universities to learn from. Furthermore, well-documented processes and outcome data could provide the field with valuable insight into addressing current needs to retain quality teachers and address crises in teacher shortages.

Implications for Future Research

This qualitative single case study attempted to communicate the experiences of the hiring process a rural, Midwestern elementary PDS school uses pertaining to student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school. There is a general lack of educational literature regarding this topic that may be obscuring educational leaders' practices and the potential to effectively implement effective hiring processes as it pertains to student teacher candidates within their student teaching school settings. Although this study provides a basis for developing a larger body of analysis on this topic, further research is necessary.

1) Identify similarities and differences of elementary PDS schools and non-PDS elementary schools applied to the hiring process of student teachers and how their unique characteristics can be applied more broadly to other settings and school levels. Because of unique differences between elementary PDS schools and elementary non-PDS schools, it may be helpful to study these entities separately. A closer examination of the partnership agreement between the university and PDS schools could prove informative to capture the level of fidelity of implementation in expectations, resources, and the outlined parameters of the student teaching

experience. Studying the differences in the hiring process pertaining to student teachers at the elementary level versus the secondary level could also be beneficial.

2) *Study the different contexts of rural vs. urban settings in the hiring of student teacher candidates.* Completing a case study that can capture the context and dynamics of rural settings and urban settings and how the local context can affect the hiring process and outcomes of hiring student teacher candidates upon graduation could also be useful. The size of this study was small but showed that there are discrete factors that can be learned from the hiring process for student teachers at this elementary PDS school. A study that identifies the differences, if any, between rural and urban settings could be very constructive in supporting student teachers placed in these respective contexts.

3) *Expand research related to school culture and the opportunity for student teacher candidates to learn in these easier-to-staff schools.* This study identified that the student teacher candidates hired for full time employment at this elementary PDS school experienced success early on in their careers. The principal alluded to the fact that they were indoctrinated into the school culture. Was there a specific procedure put into place on how these student teachers became familiar with the school's culture and expectations and subsequently, understood how they fit or did not fit in the established culture? Did it occur through immersion in the environment? Identifying what actions and mechanisms student teachers are learning at easier-to-staff schools could be critical when considering placement at this novice stage and serve as important considerations across other settings.

4) *Conduct research to further develop an understanding of the role, value, and structure of the university clinical supervisor.* A major contribution in this study was learning more about the university clinical supervisor in place at this elementary PDS school. Future research should

be conducted on what support student teachers receive from a dedicated position and how student teachers view this position as an asset. Recognizing what specific aspects of the student teaching experience that student teachers relied on for support from the university clinical supervisor could create value in understanding and structuring the role of the university clinical supervisor in other schools.

5) *Identify ways to improve the hiring process of student teachers based on feedback and ideas from student teacher candidates themselves.* This study focused on this elementary PDS school's hiring process from the lens of an educational leadership standpoint. Acquiring an understanding of what student teacher candidates believe are strong points in this process can also provide valuable insight into how elementary PDS schools can improve. Future research in this area could be extended to include how PDS schools can also prepare student teacher candidates for the interview and hiring process. Student teacher candidates can provide valuable feedback on aspects they feel confident and comfortable with, and what areas they identify for additional support.

With the teacher shortage, teacher attrition, and teacher retention creating staffing challenges for educational leaders; understanding ways to improve the hiring process from the student teaching candidate's perspective may provide keen advice for school leaders on how best to "sell their school" and highlight strengths in order to invite these valuable candidates to commit to their school.

6) *Establish data collection processes and study the performance strengths and weaknesses and retention of student teacher candidates hired in elementary PDS schools.* This elementary PDS school considered several school-wide data as evidence of the success they had experienced when hiring student teacher candidates upon graduation at this school. Studying

how specific student teacher candidates perform on different areas of their evaluation rubric and subsequent retention rates could provide more significant data on how elementary PDS schools successfully support and identify student teacher candidates to employ upon graduation.

Conclusions

The participants in this study provided a glimpse into their experiences related to the hiring process pertaining to student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective elementary PDS school. There were two primary objectives of the researcher in this study. The first objective was to understand the context of this elementary PDS school. The second objective was to examine the experiences from the hiring team at this elementary PDS school and how they use the hiring process to effectively identify student teachers to offer full time employment positions. These two objectives were met.

Based upon the data collected, the researcher found that the hiring process pertaining to student teachers at this elementary school had changed over the course of time and was still evolving at the time of this study. Despite the evolutionary process, the participants in this study reflected a consistent philosophy when it came to hiring student teacher candidates that completed their student teaching at this school. The facets of this philosophy included striving to make a team decision on which student teacher candidates to hire, focusing on student teacher candidates that have strong personality characteristics that would fit within the current school culture, and identifying student teacher candidates that demonstrate a desire to develop into an effective teacher at this elementary PDS school. The principal in this study captured the evolution of her philosophy and the hiring team's approach:

How I've evolved over the years is I really don't have a lot of interest in people with experience now, I am much more interested in the interns that student teach

in our building that have stepped into our culture and been very successful and the reason for that is I have such strong belief in my staff's capacity to build a teacher, to create a teacher.

This statement exemplifies the foundation of the hiring team's approach in considering student teachers during the hiring process at this elementary PDS school. Not only the principal, but all the participants in this study, expressed a confidence in the support systems currently in place to develop new teachers. This confidence manifested in their beliefs and the processes put in place to accomplish agreed-upon goals.

The recommendations and findings from this study can be used by PDS and non-PDS schools to more clearly define a consistent set of beliefs, values, and goals on the hiring process pertaining to student teachers. In this study, the researcher found it compelling to hear a consistent and well-articulated philosophy from individual hiring team members, despite their varied professional roles, on how they approached the hiring process and follow-up support important to hiring student teachers at their school.

Present literature established substantial discrepancy in the way elementary schools hire teachers. With current teacher attrition rates, teacher shortages, and the teacher pipeline shrinking; there is a need for educational leaders to refine and articulate their hiring procedures pertaining to student teacher candidates that have completed their fieldwork within their respective schools. The dynamics and interaction between the support offered to student teachers, indoctrination into the school culture, and aligned hiring practices that continue to develop new teachers after employment may create routes to advantage educational leaders seeking to hire the best qualified teachers for their classrooms during times of alarming teacher shortages.

The researcher also studied the presence of two frameworks in the hiring process at this elementary PDS school as it pertains to student teachers. Certain aspects of the BBI model were inconsistently or not at all observed in this hiring process. The principal also referred to how some BBI techniques were previously used, but over the course of time, had been eliminated from the hiring process pertaining to student teachers at this elementary PDS school. The state department's educator evaluation protocol served as a framework for the student teacher personality characteristics and the education skills that the interview team deemed important to consider during their hiring process. The participants were very consistent in that they look for student teachers that are passionate about working with kids, a good fit within their current school culture, and exemplify a commitment to growing as a professional or being adaptable to the system that is presently in place at their school. The education specific abilities determined as most valuable by the hiring team included building relationships with students, pedagogy skills, and being able to effectively manage the classroom. The participants in this study collectively shared that they place a greater emphasis on the student teacher personality characteristics than the education specific abilities.

In this study, the experiences of the hiring team members at this elementary PDS school with student teachers who completed their student teaching at this respective school were highlighted. Many of these findings were not surprising, but it was apparent that the leadership at this elementary PDS school had effectively defined the hiring philosophies regarding student teachers and successfully communicated and modeled these approaches to the hiring team members during the process. From defining the structure and roles of hiring team members to reshaping the hiring process over time, a strong sense of leadership was evident at this elementary PDS school. This leadership was modeled and communicated, creating a high level

of consistency and commitment among the hiring team members. This process enabled the team to collectively and effectively identify which student teacher candidates to hire and to also anticipate continued development of these first-year teachers as they began their teaching journey in a supportive and positive school culture. This study offered impactful and vital insight for educational leaders in creating an effective hiring process to identify quality student teacher candidates to hire upon graduation.

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Appendix A - Participant Interview #1 Questions

Interview #1 Questions for Head Principal

Structure/Roles:

1. What formal methods are followed when identifying student teachers to hire?
2. What informal methods are followed when identifying student teachers to hire?
3. How have these methods changed or evolved over time?
4. How do you believe the hiring team makes decisions pertaining to the employment of student teachers?
5. How do you believe the hiring team involves the cooperating teacher's perspective during the hiring process regarding student teachers?
6. How are the student teachers selected/placed into your PDS school at the beginning of each semester?
7. How do you select which student teachers get selected for an interview?

Behavior Based Interviewing:

8. Is there any type of written scoring rubric used in the hiring process? If so, how was this created?
9. How do you believe the hiring team accounts for the student teacher's fieldwork experience that took place at your school in the hiring process?
10. How much value is placed on the student teacher's letters of recommendation?
11. How much value is placed on the information located on the student teacher's resume?
12. How much value is placed on the information obtained during the student teacher's reference checks?

State Department Educator Evaluation Characteristics/Traits:

13. What student teacher characteristics are valued the most? (i.e. compassionate, intelligent, hard-working)
14. What student teacher abilities are valued the most? (i.e. classroom management skills, curriculum knowledge, collaborative skills)
15. What are other factors that are taken into account in regard to student teachers in the hiring process?

Interview #1 Questions for Assistant Principal

Structure/Roles:

1. What formal methods are followed when identifying student teachers to hire?
2. What informal methods are followed when identifying student teachers to hire?
3. How have these methods changed or evolved over time?
4. How do you believe the hiring team makes decisions pertaining to the employment of student teachers?
5. How do you believe the hiring team involves the cooperating teacher's perspective during the hiring process regarding student teachers?
6. How are the student teachers selected/placed into your PDS school at the beginning of each semester?
7. How do you select which student teachers get selected for an interview?

Behavior Based Interviewing:

8. Is there any type of written scoring rubric used in the hiring process? If so, how was this created?
9. How do you believe the hiring team accounts for the student teacher's fieldwork experience that took place at your school in the hiring process?
10. How much value is placed on the student teacher's letters of recommendation?
11. How much value is placed on the information located on the student teacher's resume?
12. How much value is placed on the information obtained during the student teacher's reference checks?

State Department Educator Evaluation Characteristics/Traits:

13. What student teacher characteristics are valued the most? (i.e. compassionate, intelligent, hard-working)
14. What student teacher abilities are valued the most? (i.e. classroom management skills, curriculum knowledge, collaborative skills)
15. What are other factors that are taken into account in regard to student teachers in the hiring process?

Interview #1 Questions for Classroom Teacher

Structure/Roles:

1. How do you believe the hiring team makes decisions pertaining to the employment of student teachers?
2. How do you believe the hiring team involves the cooperating teacher's perspective during the hiring process regarding student teachers?

Behavior Based Interviewing:

3. How do you believe the hiring team accounts for the student teacher's fieldwork experience that took place at your school in the hiring process?
4. How much value is placed on the student teacher's letters of recommendation?
5. How much value is placed on the information located on the student teacher's resume?
6. How much value is placed on the information obtained during the student teacher's reference checks?

State Department Educator Evaluation Characteristics/Traits:

7. What student teacher characteristics are valued the most? (i.e. compassionate, intelligent, hard-working)
8. What student teacher abilities are valued the most? (i.e. classroom management skills, curriculum knowledge, collaborative skills)
9. What are other factors that are taken into account in regard to student teachers in the hiring process?

Interview #1 Questions for Non-Classroom Teacher

Structure/Roles:

1. How do you believe the hiring team makes decisions pertaining to the employment of student teachers?
2. How do you believe the hiring team involves the cooperating teacher's perspective during the hiring process regarding student teachers?

Behavior Based Interviewing:

3. How do you believe the hiring team accounts for the student teacher's fieldwork experience that took place at your school in the hiring process?
4. How much value is placed on the student teacher's letters of recommendation?
5. How much value is placed on the information located on the student teacher's resume?
6. How much value is placed on the information obtained during the student teacher's reference checks?

State Department Educator Evaluation Characteristics/Traits:

7. What student teacher characteristics are valued the most? (i.e. compassionate, intelligent, hard-working)
8. What student teacher abilities are valued the most? (i.e. classroom management skills, curriculum knowledge, collaborative skills)
9. What are other factors that are taken into account in regard to student teachers in the hiring process?

Appendix B - Participant Interview #2 Questions

Interview #2 Questions for Head Principal

Results:

1. What happens after the hiring team selects a student teacher for employment? Are there any specific procedural mechanisms put in place for their first year on contract after they are hired?
2. What evidence do you have that this hiring process used with student teachers has impacted your school?
3. Is there any specific professional development or literature you have referenced to create and implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
4. What do you think is the most important outcome of the hiring process used with student teachers? Why?
5. What types of variables/circumstances present the largest challenges for you in the hiring process used with student teachers?
6. Have you felt supported by district leadership as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
7. Have you felt supported by your staff members as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?

Interview #2 Questions for Assistant Principal

Results:

1. What happens after the hiring team selects a student teacher for employment? Are there any specific procedural mechanisms put in place for their first year on contract after they hired?
2. What evidence do you have that this hiring process used with student teachers has impacted your school?
3. Is there any specific professional development or literature you have referenced to create and implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
4. What do you think is the most important outcome of the hiring process used with student teachers? Why?
5. What types of variables/circumstances present the largest challenges for you in the hiring process used with student teachers?
6. Have you felt supported by district leadership as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
7. Have you felt supported by your staff members as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?

Interview #2 Questions for Classroom Teacher

Results:

1. What happens after the hiring team selects a student teacher for employment? Are there any specific procedural mechanisms put in place for their first year on contract after they hired?
2. What evidence do you have that this hiring process used with student teachers has impacted your school?
3. Is there any specific professional development or literature you have referenced to create and implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
4. What do you think is the most important outcome of the hiring process used with student teachers? Why?
5. What types of variables/circumstances present the largest challenges for you in the hiring process used with student teachers?
6. Have you felt supported by building leaders as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
7. Have you felt supported by your colleagues as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?

Interview #2 Questions for Non-Classroom Teacher

Results:

1. What happens after the hiring team selects a student teacher for employment? Are there any specific procedural mechanisms put in place for their first year on contract after they hired?
2. What evidence do you have that this hiring process used with student teachers has impacted your school?
3. Is there any specific professional development or literature you have referenced to create and implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
4. What do you think is the most important outcome of the hiring process used with student teachers? Why?
5. What types of variables/circumstances present the largest challenges for you in the hiring process used with student teachers?
6. Have you felt supported by building leaders as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?
7. Have you felt supported by your colleagues as you implement this hiring process used with student teachers?

Appendix C - Letter of Invitation to Participate

Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

November 25, 2017

Title of Study: A CASE STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCES IN HIRING STUDENT TEACHERS

Principal Investigators: Donna Augustine-Shaw, Ed.D., Assistant Professor, College of Education Department of Education Leadership

Student Principal Investigator: Nicholas Morgan, Doctoral Student, College of Education, Kansas State University

To _____:

I, Nicholas Morgan, from the Department of the College of Education, Kansas State University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled, "A CASE STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCES IN HIRING STUDENT TEACHERS".

The purpose of this study is to describe an elementary professional development school's hiring processes, techniques, and preferences when selecting student teachers within a rural district. This qualitative case study investigation will help to understand how these experiences help the hiring team identify the best student teachers that completed this portion of their undergraduate program within their school.

The expected duration: one 45-60 minute face-to-face interview with selected personnel, observation(s) of the hiring process for student teachers, one 30 minute face-to-face follow up interview with selected personnel, one 15 minute debriefing session with head principal, and debriefing with selected personnel through written communication.

The location of these interviews will be in the natural setting: the head principals' building. The times and dates of the interviews and observation(s) will be determined by the head principal. The location, time, and date of the debriefing session with the head principal will also be determined by the head principal.

This research should benefit the district leadership to possibly restructure, improve, or adjust typical employment procedures in regards to the hiring of student teachers.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Kansas State University of Research Compliance Office at 203 Fairchild Hall Manhattan KS, 66502; at 785-532-3224; 785-532-3278 fax; or comply@k-state.edu.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (see below for contact information).

Thank you,

Nicholas Morgan

Doctoral Student, College of Education, Kansas State University

785-466-6034, njmorgan@ksu.edu

Appendix D - Informed Consent

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT

PROJECT TITLE: A CASE STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCES IN HIRING STUDENT TEACHERS

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: _____
PROJECT: _____

EXPIRATION DATE OF

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CO-
INVESTIGATOR(S):**

Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw

**CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY
PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:**

Nicholas Morgan 785-466-6034
Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw 785-
532-2597

**IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE
INFORMATION:**

Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw, donna5@ksu.edu

**SPONSOR OF
PROJECT:**

Nicholas Morgan

**PURPOSE OF THE
RESEARCH:**

The purpose of this study is to describe an elementary professional development school's prior hiring processes, techniques, and preferences when selecting student teachers within a rural district. This qualitative single case study investigation will help to understand how these experiences help the hiring team identify the best student teachers that completed this portion of their undergraduate program within their school.

**PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO
BE USED:**

A case study research design will be used in this study. The first step will be defining exactly what the "case" is for my study. It will also be important to "redefine" the case. At this point, this study will be a holistic single case study. According to Yin (2014), the rationale for this single case would be through a "common case" perspective with the object being to capture the circumstances and conditions of the common practice of hiring student teachers. By doing this, the context of the study might provide insight to the hiring processes of this

elementary school in relation to their employment of the student teachers who completed their fieldwork at this elementary school. A combination of Yin and Stake's (1995) perspective and models will be used to create the design and methodology used for this case study. The behavior based interviewing model created by Mary Clement (2013) will serve as the conceptual framework to inform and guide the investigation process.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:
N/A

LENGTH OF STUDY: One Year

RISKS ANTICIPATED: N/A

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: Conclusions and findings will be shared orally with district leadership to possibly restructure, improve, or adjust typical employment procedures in regard to the hiring of student teachers.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Data collected will be aggregated for publication and presentations. Individual names will not be attached to any data. All data will be stored in a secure filing cabinet at the researcher's office. All physical copied data will be scanned and transferred into electronic files. All physical copied data will be shredded once it has been transferred into electronic data. Electronic data will be stored on a secure server so that the researcher may review it at a later time.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS: N/A

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS: N/A

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness to Signature: (project staff) _____

Date: _____

Appendix E - Debriefing Form

Debriefing Form: A CASE STUDY OF AN ELEMENTARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL'S EXPERIENCES IN HIRING STUDENT TEACHERS

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study! The general purpose of this study is to describe an elementary professional development school's hiring processes, techniques, and preferences when selecting student teachers within a rural district. This qualitative case study investigation helped us understand how the hiring team identifies the best student teachers that completed this portion of their undergraduate program within their school.

We invited this professional development school that has experience with the hiring process of student teachers that have completed their fieldwork within your school setting. In this study, you were asked to describe those experiences through the scope of the interviewing questions and allowing the researcher to observe the actual hiring process utilized to identify which (if any) student teachers to be hired for employment at this elementary school. The results from this study will provide some conclusions and findings to more effectively and consistently implement strategies to improve the hiring process to better identify student teachers for future employment.

If you feel concerned about confidentiality and anonymity during this study please feel free to phone Nicholas Morgan about options for counseling at 785-466-6034.

Thank you for your participation in this study. If you have further questions about the study, please contact Nicholas Morgan at 785-466-6034. In addition, if you have any concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact Dr. Donna Augustine-Shaw, principal investigator, at the KSU College of Education via e-mail at donna5@ksu.edu. The Kansas State University of Research Compliance can be reached at 203 Fairchild Hall Manhattan KS, 66502; 785-532-3224; 785-532-3278 fax; or comply@k-state.edu.

Appendix F - Identification and Background Form

Identification and Background Information

The following questions ask general background information that may or may not be used as part of this study. Please complete the following questions and return back to the researcher prior to (date).

1) Name: _____

2) Position Title: _____

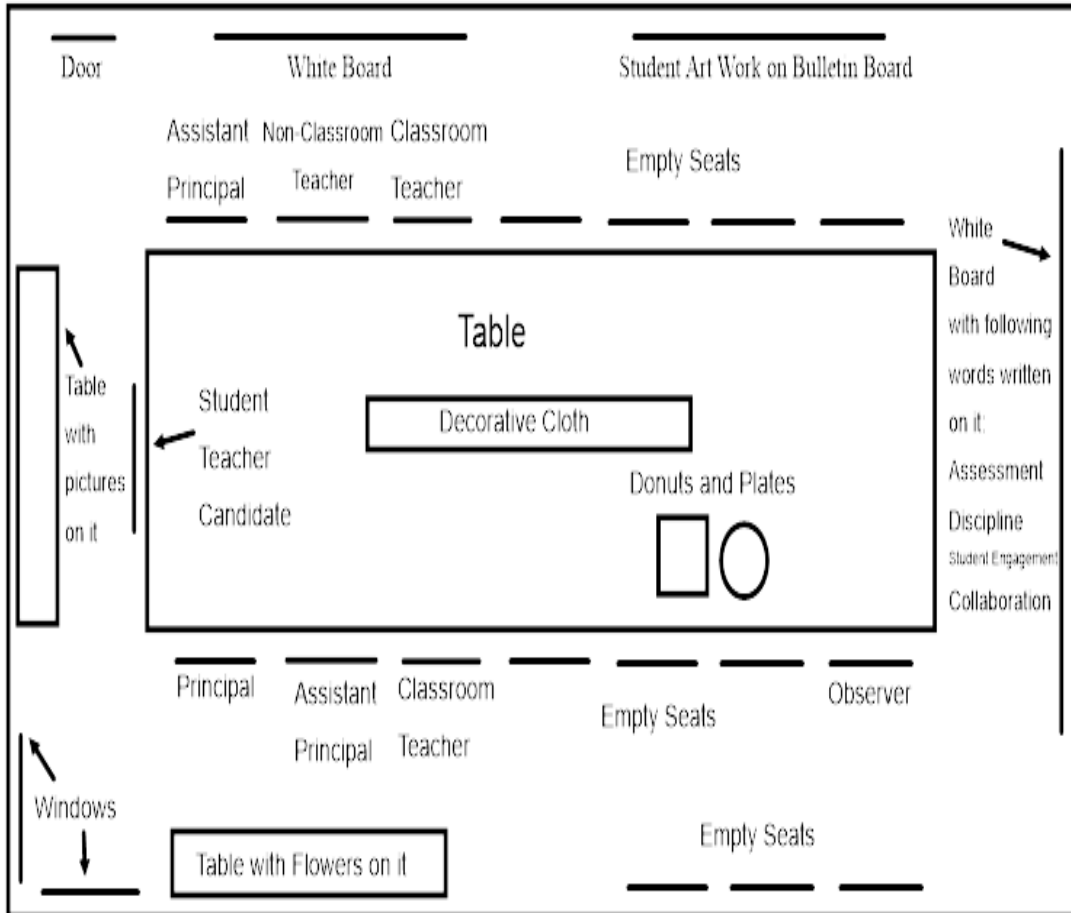
3) Years of experience at current elementary school: _____

4) Years of experience at current elementary school in current position: _____

5) Have you been a cooperating teacher for a student teacher in the past?

Appendix G - Diagram of Conference Room

Aerial Diagram of Conference Room



Appendix H - BBI Protocol

30 10 Steps for Hiring Effective Teachers

The BBI Approach

The BBI approach begins by determining the past experiences, skills, and training needed for a candidate to be successful in a job. Then, the interviewers should create questions that ascertain success in past experience.

In teaching, successful teachers need to have the following skills:

1. Knowledge of how students learn,
2. Knowledge of the national and state curriculum standards,
3. Subject matter content knowledge,
4. Ability to plan lessons and to do long-term planning,
5. Classroom management skills,
6. Differentiation of instruction,
7. Assessment and grading,
8. Ability to communicate with students, administrators, and parents,
9. Ability to meet the needs of all students,
10. Impact student learning, and raise student achievement.

Appendix I - Memo File

Researcher: Nicholas Morgan

Participant Memo File

Participant

Notable Quotes:

“I can tell who's a [school mascot name]. There's just a certain personality, and not that you are trying to collect people that all think alike and act alike, you don't want that at all because it's that differentiation that makes you a strong unit.”

“As I share over and over with my staff. (pause) We can teach pedagogy, we can get the instructional practices down, we can intervene with classroom management all of those things that make a teacher successful in their rooms we can intervene with you and assist you with that. But we can't develop heart, we can't develop passion for kids, we can't develop resiliency, you know... dedication.”

“I'm looking for just what were those life experiences that developed your work ethic.”

“How I've evolved over the years is I really don't have a lot of interest in people with experience now, I am much more interested in the interns that student teach in our building that have stepped into our culture and been very successful and the reason for that is I have such strong belief in my staff's capacity to build a teacher, to create a teacher.”

“I will sometimes really buffer or measure how much I'm going to share. So, if I just have some things that I just kind of want them to consider but I'm worried that will really heavily influence their decision one way or the other and I still believe that this person can be successful here then sometimes I just got to keep those things to myself.”

“But (pause) the success of the building occurs at the interview table... hundred percent how successful our school is with student achievement, with culture, with climate, with collaboration all of that happens at the interview table.”

“Well you know, I look at the interns as our teachers. That's the lens at which I look at them during the semester they are with us.”

“I got away from it [written scoring rubric] (pause) probably about 4 or 5 years ago. I got away from using that rubric because I felt like we kept getting the conversation about the decision of who to hire was to focus on the rubric. Whether it was a 3 or a 4, or well you could be influenced by the dialogue well okay then I will move them up to a 4. I only had them at a 3. And that isn't what I wanted, I just wanted the conversation and I felt like we got too hung up on the rubric.”

“Interns put so much emphasis into their resumes you know and their applications and all of that and (pause) we pay very little attention to that. You know the only things I am really looking on a resume for are did you hold employment, have you previously held employment you know.”

“How much emphasis I place on the letter of recommendation will often be (pause) the value that I place on that individual's ability to effectively (pause) evaluate an individual.”

“I would say it’s probably not uncommon for me to hire an individual and have never looked at their resume.”

“In terms of abilities I am spending so much time looking for characteristics, I don’t know how much time I am spending looking for abilities.”

“I’m sure there is over the years [a reference to professional literature when framing their hiring process] but you know now I’ve just done it for so long that now you know, I just kind of created my own style of how to develop it.”

“I’m looking for the question that they did not expect you to ask you, and then I want to see how well they think on your feet. You know, honest reflections and then you’re looking for all the body language when they answer those questions.”

Organization/Structure:

- Begin by selecting which student teachers to interview
- Look for personalities that mesh well with certain teams
- Hiring process has changed over time
- Look for student teachers that can be developed, created, or built
- Allow hiring/interviewing team as much input as myself (head principal)
- Very rarely overrule a decision that the hiring team would make
- Point out personal observations and opinions that usually influence hiring team’s decisions
- Identify, buffer, or measure how much I’m going to share
- Share strong reasons why I think this isn’t going to be a good match
- Share with other principal colleagues recommendations of student teachers to hire
- Select teachers to be on hiring team that are going to represent their colleagues
- Puts more value on who is writing the letters of recommendation rather than what is in the letter of recommendation
- Look for candidates exposed to diversity (more SES focus than ethnicity)
- After hired – invite to spring professional development meetings
- After hired – invite to summer meeting with all new teachers/admin
- After hired – grade level/department “survival guide” distributed
- After hired – monthly new teacher meetings
- After hired – assigned a mentor
- Have not used any formal literature/PD, maybe evolved from previous experiences with Ruby Payne’s work on poverty, Haberman surveys, or star teacher reports
- Place more emphasis on questions that the student teacher candidates did not expect you to ask
- Clinical supervisor prepares student teachers for hiring process

BBI Approach:

- Observe strengths/weaknesses in focus meetings

- Observe body language
- Observe interactions with cooperating teacher
- Observe in dialogue they take part in during meetings
- Observe interactions with other teachers on their team
- Collect feedback from student teachers' clinical supervisor
- Observe student teachers teaching in a classroom setting
- Reflect on personal interactions with the student teacher
- Observe interactions with colleagues
- Observe interactions with secretarial staff
- Observe interactions with administrative team
- Look to see if they have ever held a full-time job
- Identify life experiences that developed student teacher's character
- Look for ability to understand school's philosophy about kids and education
- Collect feedback from student teachers' cooperating teacher
- Analyze soft skills through observations
- Formerly used a 3 section 1-5 rubric, stopped about 5 years ago
- Does not put a lot of emphasis on letters of recommendation or resume
- Puts a lot of value on the reference checks

State Department's Educator Evaluator Protocol Characteristics/Traits:

- Relationships with the students
- Communication skills
- Fit into culture
- Compassionate
- Resiliency
- Committed/Dedicated
- Perseverance
- Multi-tasking ability
- Work ethic
- Sense of humor
- Collaboration skills
- High expectations/accountability
- Acceptance of feedback/demonstrate growth
- Self-reflective
- Gauge student engagement

Challenges:

- Being stymied by colleagues for hiring all of the good student teachers from the pipeline
- Hours and hours of commitment to the student teachers in the building

- What timeframe the hiring process actually occurs – investing a lot of time and energy to student teachers just to see them get hired by another district because we haven't been able to get permission from district to begin hiring

Appendix J - Elementary PDS School Hiring Questions

ELEMENTARY TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please tell us about yourself and experiences you have had working with children. To date, what has been your most challenging experience in teaching?
2. Explain what type of classroom management plan you would implement in your classroom and why you would choose that system.
3. If a student does not respond to your classroom management plan in your classroom or other areas and his/her behavior is interfering with learning, what additional steps will you take?
4. How will you motivate the reluctant learner?
5. Discuss how you will develop positive relationships with your students in the first thirty days of school.
6. You find out that at 8:00 in the morning the para support for your identified special needs students will not be available to you, what do you do?
7. What will you do if a student in your room has not taken their medication for ADHD?

8. Rank these in order of your priority and tell us ^{why; discipline} ~~why; discipline~~, student engagement, assessment and collaboration.
9. If a student in your classroom does not pass their formative assessment, what will you do?
10. What do you know about STEM education and how would you implement this in your classroom? Given an example of a STEM lesson.
11. What are the benefits and barriers of using technology in the classroom and how can you use it to create deeper thinking and engagement for students?
12. If you knew a parent was upset with you over a classroom management procedure, what steps will you take?
13. How will you make students who enroll throughout the school year feel accepted and comfortable in your classroom?
14. What is the single most important contribution you believe you could make to ~~the~~ Elementary?
15. Is there anything you want us to know that we haven't already asked and do you have any questions?