

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF INTRINSIC, EXTRINSIC, AND ALTRUISTIC  
MOTIVATION ON PRINCIPAL PERSISTENCE IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT:  
A CASE STUDY

By

Kimberly Elizabeth Washington

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirement for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools (APS, pseudonym). Principal persistence is generally defined as a principal staying in each school for a longer period or the lack of change of a principal within a school. The theories guiding this study are Frederick Herzberg's theory of work and motivation, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Self-determination theory. The study focused on the following central research question: What are principal descriptions of their efforts to persist in their administrative positions in Aberdeen Public Schools? To address the central research and sub-questions, a case study approach was used to understand and describe the experiences of 12 principals who have remained in the principalship for at least 5 years in APS. Data was collected by means of documentation, interviews, and questionnaires and analyzed to determine meaningful patterns. An analytic path for pattern-matching was utilized to include compiling, disassembling, reassembling, and interpreting data; the process ended by drawing conclusions. The three themes that emerged from the data were (a) all means all, (b) commitment to serve others, and (c) continuous improvement. This study revealed the significance of self-actualization on principal persistence. Altruism is paramount; urban school principals lead with a personal commitment of service to improve and empower. School districts can help combat principal turnover by being international about language and actions around principal persistence. Principal supervisors should create an ongoing cadence for supporting principals that is specific to individual principal needs and their school context. Principals build self-efficacy by fully understanding the motivating factors that influence their commitment to service.

*Keywords:* motivation, persistence, principals, school, urban

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to my supportive and uniquely amazing family. Thank you for the encouragement and genuine excitement towards my educational goals. I am blessed to have a family committed to education, goal attainment, and prosperity; together, we have reached another milestone.

To my chief role model, Katie Hasty, you are a magnificent light that shines bright in all my endeavors. Thank you for believing in me and pushing me to live in God's promise. I am here today because of you! I will continue to make you proud and give to others as you have given so much to me.

Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to Jerry, Jeremy, and Jazmine who have served as my "why". I love and believe in each of you. God has a remarkable plan for your lives! I am honored to be your mother and pray that each of you continue to strive for excellence.

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## Table of Contents

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| ABSTRACT.....                   | 3  |
| Dedication.....                 | 4  |
| Acknowledgements.....           | 5  |
| List of Figures.....            | 11 |
| List of Abbreviations .....     | 12 |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....  | 13 |
| Overview.....                   | 13 |
| Background.....                 | 14 |
| Historical Context.....         | 15 |
| Social Context.....             | 17 |
| Theoretical Context.....        | 18 |
| Situation to Self .....         | 19 |
| Problem Statement.....          | 21 |
| Purpose Statement.....          | 22 |
| Significance of the Study ..... | 23 |
| Research Questions.....         | 24 |
| Central Question .....          | 25 |
| Sub-question One.....           | 25 |
| Sub-question Two.....           | 25 |
| Sub-question Three .....        | 26 |
| Definitions .....               | 26 |
| Summary.....                    | 27 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....                    | 29 |
| Overview .....  | 29 |
| Theoretical Framework .....                             | 30 |
| Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory .....                | 31 |
| Herzberg’s theory of work and motivation .....          | 34 |
| Self-determination theory .....                         | 37 |
| Related Literature .....                                | 41 |
| Principal Responsibilities .....                        | 43 |
| Principal Self-efficacy and Collective Efficacy .....   | 45 |
| Principal Satisfaction .....                            | 46 |
| Principal Influence on Student Achievement .....        | 47 |
| Principal Burnout .....                                 | 49 |
| Principal Turnover .....                                | 50 |
| Impact of Principal Turnover .....                      | 52 |
| Federal Policy .....                                    | 54 |
| School Turnaround .....                                 | 55 |
| Principal Persistence .....                             | 56 |
| School Districts’ Influence on Principal Turnover ..... | 57 |
| Altruistic Motivation .....                             | 59 |
| Intrinsic Motivation .....                              | 60 |
| Extrinsic Motivation .....                              | 61 |
| Summary .....   | 62 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER THREE: METHODS .....           | 63 |
| Overview .....                         | 63 |
| Design .....                           | 63 |
| Research Questions .....               | 65 |
| Setting .....                          | 66 |
| Participants .....                     | 67 |
| Procedures .....                       | 68 |
| Role of Researcher .....               | 69 |
| Data Collection .....                  | 70 |
| Documents .....                        | 71 |
| Individual Interviews .....            | 71 |
| Questionnaires .....                   | 74 |
| Data Analysis .....                    | 74 |
| Trustworthiness .....                  | 76 |
| Credibility .....                      | 76 |
| Dependability and Confirmability ..... | 77 |
| Transferability .....                  | 78 |
| Ethical Considerations .....           | 78 |
| Summary .....                          | 78 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS .....           | 80 |
| Overview .....                         | 80 |
| Participants .....                     | 80 |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Alicia.....                            | 81  |
| Angela.....                            | 82  |
| Deshawna.....                          | 82  |
| Elizabeth .....                        | 83  |
| Evelyn .....                           | 83  |
| Felicia.....                           | 83  |
| Jalisa.....                            | 84  |
| Jazmine .....                          | 84  |
| Katie.....                             | 85  |
| Sadie.....                             | 85  |
| Tanisha.....                           | 85  |
| Xavier.....                            | 86  |
| Results.....                           | 86  |
| Theme Development.....                 | 86  |
| Research Questions Responses .....     | 93  |
| Summary.....                           | 97  |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION .....         | 99  |
| Overview.....                          | 99  |
| Summary of Findings.....               | 99  |
| Discussion.....                        | 101 |
| Empirical Literature Discussion .....  | 102 |
| Theoretical Literature Discussion..... | 105 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Implications .....                             | 108 |
| Theoretical Implications .....                 | 108 |
| Empirical and Practical Implications .....     | 110 |
| Delimitations and Limitations .....            | 114 |
| Recommendations for Future Research .....      | 115 |
| Summary .....                                  | 116 |
| REFERENCES .....                               | 117 |
| APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTER .....           | 149 |
| APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM .....                 | 150 |
| APPENDIX C: ELECTRONIC SCREENING SURVEY .....  | 152 |
| APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE.....     | 153 |
| APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE.....                 | 154 |
| APPENDIX F: DOCUMENTATION REVIEW TEMPLATE..... | 155 |

## List of Figures

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs .....              | 31 |
| Figure 2.2 Herzberg's theory of work and motivation.. ..  | 36 |
| Figure 2.3 Self-determination continuum .....             | 38 |
| Figure 2.4 Leadership influence on student learning ..... | 48 |

### **List of Abbreviations**

Aberdeen Public Schools (APS)

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

School Leaders Network (SLN)

United States Department of Education (USDE)

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### Overview

The importance of sustaining a quality workforce of principals is no longer a contested notion (Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015). Principals are an indispensable ingredient for school success; as such, principals are extremely important in assuring student achievement (Liua & Bellibasb, 2018). Given the significance of principals in leading school improvement work and the 5-7 years sustained improvement may take (Fullan, 2001), it is critical to understand the experiences of urban school principals who have chosen to remain in the principalship (Clifford & Chiang, 2016), especially in urban school districts that serve high poverty communities. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), less than 30% of public-school principals had 3 years or more experience during the 2011-2012 school year. Principal turnover is alarming because of the pivotal role principals play in improving the quality of education and the expectation that principals can improve under performing schools (Rangel, 2017).

Understanding the influences that lead to principal persistence in an urban school district is the emphasis of this case study. Yin (2018) highlights the importance of case studies in understanding complex social phenomena. The fundamental core of a case study allows a researcher to “focus in-depth on a case and retain a holistic and real work perspective” (Yin, 2018, p. 5) which makes this an appropriate approach to studying principal persistence. This qualitative method allows for exploring, documenting, and interpreting the meaning-making process through the lived experiences of others (Patton, 2015). Additionally, case studies are beneficial to deeply understanding groups of people, situations or problems (Patton, 2015).

Chapter One provides a historical, social, and theoretical context for understanding the dynamics of principal persistence. Supporting a deep understanding of the context are the

problem statement, purpose statement, and research significance. To anchor the study, a central question, three sub-questions, essential definitions, and a summary are included. Ultimately, this chapter provides a framework for the research.

### **Background**

Principal leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that influence what students learn at school (NAESP, 2013). According to Sun and Ni (2016), one standard deviation increase in the estimated principal effects would lead to a 2.6 percentage point increase in graduation rate and 2.5 percentage point increase in English exam scores. The impact of principals' influence on increasing student achievement outcomes is well documented in educational leadership literature (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2014). Conversely, there is minimal research that examines influences that lead to principal persistence in urban school districts.

This background section provides a theoretical understanding of motivation as well as a historical and social perspective which examines the ways intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence. Current research, while helpful to defining and describing motivational influences, highlights the literature gap for understanding reasons that contribute specifically to urban school principals' decisions to remain in the principalship for 5 or more years. The theories framing this inquiry are Herzberg's theory of work and motivation, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory. Herzberg's theory of work and motivation focuses on motivation or intrinsic stimuli, such as achievement and recognition which produces job satisfaction. While hygiene or extrinsic incentives, such as pay and job security, produces job dissatisfaction (Shirol, 2014). Maslow's hierarchy of needs, first introduced by American psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943), is a motivational theory in

psychology with a five-tier model of human needs. Self-determination theory, introduced by Edward L. Deci and Richard Ryan, focuses on human motivation, development, and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). These theories guided this study and allowed the findings to be situated within a greater context of work motivation and persistence.

### **Historical Context**

Analyzing the history of the principalship uncovered several title predecessors from the colonial period through the Civil War. These earlier titles included preceptor, head teacher, principal teacher, and schoolmaster (Cubberley, 1934; Rousmaniere, 2008). “The term ‘Principal Teacher’ was a common designation for the controlling head of the school in the early reports of school boards, indicating that teaching was the chief duty” (Pierce, 1935, p. 23). The title shift from principal teacher to principal was first documented in 1838 then again in 1841 (Pierce, 1935). Although sparse, literature on the origins of the principal role helps to describe early American schools and reveals that the principal role has always been multifaceted and demanding (Kafka, 2009).

Prior to the formation of schools, the Massachusetts Law of 1642 held parents responsible for the basic education and literacy of their children (Cubberley, 1934). The Law, however, did not mandate the establishment of schools, nor did it mention the employment of teachers or principals (Cubberley, 1934). Although remarkable, the Massachusetts Law of 1642 failed to ensure all parents were delivering on the intent of the law (Altenbaugh, 1999). Consequently, the Law of 1647 was enacted. This Law required (a) every town having at least 50 householders appoint a teacher of reading and writing and provide for his wages; and (b) every town having at least 100 householders provide a Latin grammar school to prepare children for university level learning (Lutz, 1998). “In contrast to the 1642 law and probably

consequence of its apparent neglect, this act stipulated the creation of schools under the jurisdiction of towns, establishing a precedent for the governmental control of education” (Altenbaugh, 1999, p. 225).

Differing in title and scope of work, the function of today’s principal is vastly different from the country’s earliest preceptors. The impact the evolving role of the principal has on student achievement has sparked interest from researchers (Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Hitt & Tucker, 2015; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) due to the necessary transition from manager to instructional leader (Goodwin, Cunningham, & Eager, 2005; Hallinger, 1992). The shifting role of the principalship may be a top factor in the lack of principal persistence (Hitt & Tucker, 2015). Overtime, the problem of principal turnover and a lack of understanding of the influences that impact principal persistence have also evolved. The roots of the principalship trace back to the Progressive Era (Cubberley, 1934) where principals were most always men and their duties included scheduling class, disciplining students, building maintenance, and record keeping (Kafka, 2009). As the role of the principalship evolved from school manager to instructional leader, the phenomenon of principal persistence surfaced. The principalship is more difficult, time-consuming, and pivotal than ever before (Cooley & Shen, 2000; Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998). With the increased level of accountability, job demands, challenges and stress, principals are choosing to leave the job within 1-4 years (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002; Shoho & Barnett, 2010). In recent years, researchers have studied the aspects of the principalship that lead to principal turnover and the impact principal turnover has on student achievement and school culture; however, there is limited research on the aspects that support principal persistence.



## **Social Context**

The earliest principals often performed middle-managerial-type duties in their work with the school community and local external partners (Cubberley, 1934). Additionally, principals were primarily responsible for bookkeeping, clerical duties, and teaching (Goldman, 1966). The principalship has evolved through the phases of preceptor, head teacher, principal teacher, school master, building principal, supervising principal to instructional leader (Cubberley, 1934; Rousmaniere, 2008). Subsequently, the responsibilities of principals have become more varied and complicated.

Educational leaders in the United States continually embark on educational reform (Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015). We began the 21st century with efforts from the federal government to address educational inequities. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) was the first of two attempts. The intention of the NCLB Act was to ensure that all students received a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on rigorous academic standards and state assessments (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). NCLB has been criticized for falling short of its goal to narrow achievement gaps for minority students (Lee, 2006). Although NCLB shined a light on where students were making progress and where they needed additional support, regardless of race, disability, home language, or family income; NCLB did not reference the professional development of principals who directly set the vision for instructional programming (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The second attempt, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was signed into law in December of 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). ESSA dramatically shifted authority of public education systems back to state and local control (NAESP, 2019). ESSA includes accountability systems for test scores, tailored support and intervention for underperforming schools, and

assistance for districts in developing high quality professional development programs for principals.

The scarcity of understanding of the issues that lead to principal persistence in urban school districts affects several groups in society. Boyce and Bowers (2016) discussed the need for strengthening understanding of principal persistence due to the resulting principal turnover. Principal turnover is particularly damaging in high-poverty communities and low-performing schools (Béteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012) and is likely to have negative effects on student achievement (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984; Baker, Punswick, & Belt, 2010; Fullan, 1991). Principal turnover decreases teachers' sense of respect, morale, and engagement within schools (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Macmillan, Meyer & Northfield, 2005).

Additionally, principal turnover also adversely impacts teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2011; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2010) which leads to a decline in school improvement, student achievement and school culture (Fuller et al., 2010). Most importantly, the school community is negatively impacted as fear for declining student success and detachment surfaces (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). While principal turnover is inevitable (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010), the negative impact rapid turnover has on urban school communities is especially critical to student achievement (Gates, Ringel, Santibanez, Guarino, Ghosh-Dastidar, & Brown, 2006; Rangel, 2017). Woefully, the educational experiences of urban school students living in poverty is distinctively uneven to the educational experiences in more advantaged, middle- and upper-income schools (Graham, Taylor, Hudley, 1998).

### **Theoretical Context**

As one of the most important aspects in the research process, the theoretical framework identifies and connects relevant theories, models, concepts, and approaches to guide the

conception and implementation of any research study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Hermon, 2007). The theoretical framework provides an anchor for the literature review (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). To conduct meaningful inquiry, sound theoretical knowledge about the topic of study is required no matter the research focus (Busha & Harter, 1980). Theories of motivation are used to explain what invigorates and channels the behavior of people while at work. Motivation theories also provide insight into which elements sustain or terminate certain behaviors. Grounded in motivational theory, the theoretical frameworks, Herzberg's theory of work and motivation, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, and Self-determination theory, are used for this study to provide a foundation to better understand principals' persistence to remain in urban public-school leadership.

Recruitment and retention of highly effective principals is a challenge for urban school districts across the country (Rangel, 2017). According to Fuller & Young (2009), principals leading schools with a large majority of students receiving free or reduced meals demonstrate low persistence resulting in constant turnover approximately every three to four years. Nationwide, public-school districts struggle to retain principals at the elementary, middle, and secondary levels (Myung, Loeb, & Horng, 2011). According to Branch, Hanushek and Rivkin (2013), patterns of principal transitions in high-poverty schools show the least and most effective principals choose to leave the principalship. Principal turnover in lower-achieving and high-poverty schools leads to teacher turnover and negatively impacts student achievement (Fuller & Young, 2011; Béteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb, 2012).

### **Situation to Self**

The motivation to study principal persistence in urban schools is directly linked to my commitment to improving urban communities. I strongly believe improving the safety, health,

and vitality of urban communities begins with improving the quality of urban education. Education is a dynamic lever which impacts prosperity, self-sufficiency, and overall progress within a community. In my current role as a school leadership coach and professional development facilitator, I am reminded daily of the impact principal leadership has on the sustainability of success in schools. Understanding the factors that lead to principal persistence in urban schools has an impact on student achievement and leads to greater access and opportunity for students.

I approached this qualitative study using an axiological philosophical assumption. Creswell and Poth (2018) described the characteristics of axiological philosophical assumption as, “The researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and that biases are present in relation to their role in the study context” (p. 20). I actively reported my values and biases as well as the values revealed from research participants. My values related to school leadership include data driven and equity-based decisions, transformative actions, collaboration, reflection, and transparency. I approached this study and interaction with research participants transparently by introducing myself as a former APS principal. My epistemological assumptions were the feelings toward leading a school in an urban district. Due to my experience leading three middle schools in urban communities, I know first-hand the challenges within urban communities and the impact those challenges have on students’ ability to fully engage while in school. Also, I have experience as a principal mentor for urban school leaders with less than three years of principal experience.

I accept the professional norm of speaking my truth, knowing that it is only part of the truth. A characteristic of ontological assumption is “reality is multiple as seen through many views” (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My ontological assumption was principals would share

reflections based on their individual experiences and not feel driven to provide reflections based on a colleague's experience. My values and lived experiences as an urban school student, teacher, principal, and principal coach were not divorced from the research process. I acknowledged, described, and bracketed my values, but did not eliminate them. A constructivist paradigm guided this study allowing research participants' knowledge and experiences to be collected as data. Maxwell (2012) described constructivism as one's knowledge of the world being one's own construction. Honebein (1996) explained the constructivism paradigm as an approach that emphasizes the idea that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through individual experiences and reflection of those experiences. Adom, Yeboah, and Ankrah (2016) offered, "The constructivism philosophical paradigm is an efficient tool that can yield many benefits when implemented in the carrying out of research in diverse field of study as well as in undertaking teaching and learning activities at any educational level" (p. 1). Lastly, my biblical worldview helped to shape this study. As a Christian scholar, I am in constant pursuit of living in God's word and honoring His gifts through biblical ideals of honesty, fairness, civic mindedness, and ethical actions. I trust that the collective wisdom of the research participants surfaced knowledge and understanding of principal persistence.

### **Problem Statement**

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2014), 6% of principals transitioned to a new school and 12% left the principalship. In a school district like APS, this statistic would mean approximately 34 schools, which may serve 34 different communities, experienced principal turnover. Dynamics that contribute to a lack of principal persistence leads to principal turnover. Principal turnover is concerning because of its impact on student learning, teacher effectiveness, and school culture (Day, Gu, & Simmons, 2016; Hitt & Tucker, 2015). To

expand the body of research that mainly focuses on principal turnover (Baker et al., 2010; Fuller & Young, 2009; Papa, 2007; Loeb, Kalogrides, & Horg, 2010), principal persistence was studied. A lack of principal persistence leads to constant influx of inexpert school leaders, a decline in student achievement, low teacher efficacy, and community mistrust.

The problem of this case study is the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in APS. The evidence that principal turnover has significant negative consequences on students, teachers, and schools, highlights a need to understand the reasons for principals' decisions to persist. Baker et al. (2010) previously studied individual and school level factors associated with school leadership stability; however, there is a gap in the literature due to no research specifically addressing principal persistence in urban schools.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in APS. Principal persistence is generally defined as a principal staying in each school for a longer period (Boyce & Bowers, 2016) or the lack of change of a principal (Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Partlow, 2007) within a school. At this stage of the research, principal persistence is generally defined as the lack of change of a principal within a school or principal longevity (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Partlow, 2007). The theories guiding this study are Frederick Herzberg's theory of work and motivation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954/1970), and Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989).

### **Significance of the Study**

This study provides district leaders, principal supervisors, and principals a thorough examination of principal persistence in one urban school district through the lens of practitioners. Understanding the influences that led to principal persistence allows districts to have informed conversations about principal persistence, nurture principal efficacy, and create targeted initiatives to support prolonged principal leadership. The recommendations provided because of this study help to increase principal persistence which leads to sustained school leadership, continued student achievement, and lasting community support.

This case study contributes to the larger body of literature which examines principal persistence to include: (a) role overload, social support, and isolation as predictors of principal persistence in novice principals (Bauer, Silver, & Schwartz, 2017; Bauer & Brazer, 2013), (b) strategies for self-renewal and the importance of engaging in ongoing reflective practice with colleagues to support development, sustainability, and renewal of principals (Drago-Severson, 2012), (c) the relationship between principal self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and burnout (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012), (d) an examination of reasonably valid and reliable measures to capture principals' sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004), and (e) principal turnover (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Partlow, 2007). This study allowed research participants to share their lived experience of principal persistence and how those experiences impact their ability to persist. The research builds on previous research which explored factors that led to principal turnover and school level factors that led to leadership stability.

Understanding the factors that lead to principal persistence is important in designing principal support systems, identifying and implementing supports during the first 5 years of a

principal's tenure, mentoring and coaching efforts, and principal wellness initiatives. Findings from this study are also expected to help urban school superintendents develop strategies to hire, support, and retain high-quality principals. In addition, this study leads to future research on interventions that might influence sustained principal leadership (Rangel, 2017).

The practical significance of this study is clearly linked back to research on the impact principal leadership has on student achievement (Fullan, 2001; MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Miller 2013; Quinn, 2002). A case study using APS's principals is equally significant because APS is an urban school district of more than 86,500 students, of which 89.8% of students are African American or Hispanic, and the entire student population has access to free or reduced meals. APS is in the most dangerous city in the United States according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI; 2018) crime report. The outcome of this study has significant implications to improving principal persistence and, in turn, improve outcomes for the entire APS community through stronger school/community relationships, improved teacher stability, and improved student achievement. Ultimately this leads to greater access to college and careers for APS's students.

### **Research Questions**

According to Herzberg, et al. (1959), motivations or intrinsic influences, such as achievement and recognition, produce job satisfaction; whereas, hygiene or extrinsic influences, such as pay and job security, produce job dissatisfaction. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which encompasses physiological needs like water, food, air, shelter, sleep, and clothing, relates to motivation (Maslow, 1943). To determine how each of these theories link to principal persistence, the following research questions guided this study.



**Central Question**

What are principal descriptions of their efforts to persist in their administrative positions in Aberdeen Public Schools? There are several studies that identify specific reasons that lead to job satisfaction and persistence, especially for service-oriented careers. Some of the reasons discussed include but are not limited to: (a) isolation, (b) reflective practices, (c) self-efficacy, (d) motivation, (e) school placement, and (d) support (Bauer, Silver, & Schwartz, 2017; Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Drago-Severson, 2012; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Partlow, 2007). Other studies concluded there is a substantial need for researchers to explore the role of interventions and potential moderators to principal turnover (Rangel, 2017; Baker et al., 2010).

**Sub-question One**

How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?

Several studies explore the impact of intrinsic contributions to persistence and job satisfaction (Ali & Ahmad, 2017; Danish & Usman, 2010; Ismail & Nakkache, 2014; Wernimont, 1966) of teachers and administrators. It is beneficial to add to the existing body of research on intrinsic motivation, specifically intrinsic influences that lead to urban school principal persistence. Understanding intrinsic motivation of principals helps school district leaders identify avenues to foster and encourage intrinsic motivation.

**Sub-question Two**

How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?

Herzberg et al. (1959) referred to issues that cause dissatisfaction in the workplace as extrinsic or hygiene influences. These influences are independent of the work itself and may be linked to compensation, job security, organizational politics, working conditions, quality of leadership, or relationships (Goetz et al., 2012; Zheng, Talley, Faubion, & Lankford, 2017). Herzberg et al. (1959) generalized that these effects in isolation do not motivate employees. In contrast to Herzberg's theory, some researchers found that extrinsic elements play an overwhelming role in employee job satisfaction (Abdullah, Shuib, Muhammad, Khalid, Nor, & Jauhar, 2007; Wong & Heng, 2009; Yusoff, Kian, & Idris, 2013).

### **Sub-question Three**

How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence?

Altruistic behaviors are selfless acts that put the wellbeing of others before your own and not expecting anything in return (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998). Altruistic behaviors may include volunteering or giving without the need of recognition. In general, altruistic behaviors improve the well-being of the recipient at the cost of the doer's resources and energy (Hu, Li, Jia, Vie, 2016). Through this research question, I gained insight into the selfless acts and civic mindedness of urban school principals.

### **Definitions**

1. *Altruistic motivation* - A motivational state with the goal of increasing another's welfare (Batson, 2010).
2. *Employee motivation* – Employee motivation reflects the level of energy, commitment, and creativity that a company's workers bring to their jobs (Shahzadi, Javed, Pirzada, Nasreen, & Khanam, 2014).

3. *Extrinsic motivation* - The desire to complete an activity with the intention to achieve positive consequences such as an incentive or to avoid negative consequences such as a punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).
4. *Intrinsic motivation* - An individual's desire to perform a task for its own sake (Bénabou & Tirole, 2003) or the state of being motivated to perform behaviors solely by the enjoyment experienced (Gagné & Deci, 2005).
5. *Principal Persistence* - Principal persistence is generally defined as a principal staying in each school for a longer period (Boyce & Bowers, 2016) or the lack of change of a principal (Hart, 1993; Miskel & Cosgrove, 1985; Partlow, 2007) within a school.
6. *Principal Turnover* - Principal turnover is defined as one principal exiting a school and being replaced by a new principal (Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Rangel, 2017).
7. *Self-efficacy* – Self-efficacy is a perceived judgment of one's ability to effect change (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

### **Summary**

Chapter One provided a framework for this research study and communicates the necessity for a study on principal persistence. Within this chapter is an overview of the research on principal persistence, relevant literature, and a discussion on why this research is significant to APS's mission of improving outcomes for students. The literature has revealed a gap in that no research was located that specifically addressed principal persistence in urban schools. The problem of this case study is the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in APS. The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in APS. The framework provided in this first chapter includes background information regarding the importance of

principal persistence to students, staff and communities. Research questions were provided which served as a guide for this study.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

Attracting and retaining highly qualified school leaders is becoming increasingly significant to the health of schools (Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Simon & Newman, 2004). Leadership is one of the most significant factors affecting innovation and a school's overall success (Sagnak, 2016). Among the many challenges facing public schools are low levels of principal persistence (Rangel, 2017). Low principal persistence, which leads to principal turnover, is defined in the literature as a principal change from one school to another school, a change of position within a district, or when a principal chooses to leave the field of education (Cullen & Mazzeo, 2008). Low principal persistence is troubling because of the central role principals have in managing school improvement efforts (Fullan, 200; Rangel 2017). School communities and student achievement are impacted (Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013) due to the national trend of one in five principals exiting the principalship each year (Goldring & Taie, 2014). The perpetual churn of principals in urban schools makes school improvement difficult especially when hiring new staff, implementing new initiatives, and improving community perception is involved (Miller, 2013). Researchers and practitioners acknowledge the importance of sustaining principal leadership and its impact on student learning (Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2014).

Principal leadership extends along a continuum from teacher selection to stakeholder satisfaction (Rangel, 2017). Principals often manage the recruiting and hiring process of teachers (Baker & Cooper, Brewer, 1993). Principals are also responsible for setting a vision inclusive of all learners (Brewer, 1993; Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Eberts & Stone, 1988; Hitt & Tucker, 2015; Robinson et al., 2008) and are expected to nurture and sustain a school culture

hospitable to learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Furthermore, principals have the responsibility of ensuring teachers are continuously developed (Printy, 2008) so that effective instructional strategies are utilized daily (Day et al., 2016; Eberts & Stone, 1988; Hitt & Tucker, 2015; Robinson et al., 2008). Lastly, principals are expected to be effective in managerial and operational leadership (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

This chapter begins with an introduction to the theoretical framework supporting this study including, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's (1959) theory of work and motivation, and self-determination theory (2000). The focus of the review is to examine existing literature that gives insight into motivation elements that lead to job satisfaction and persistence. Previous studies have explored the phenomenon of principal turnover, principal satisfaction, and the impact of principal leadership on student achievement. Researchers have also examined principal responsibilities, principal self-efficacy, and principal burnout. This study examines the known influences that lead to sustained principal leadership. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic considerations and their relationship to principal persistence.

### **Theoretical Framework**

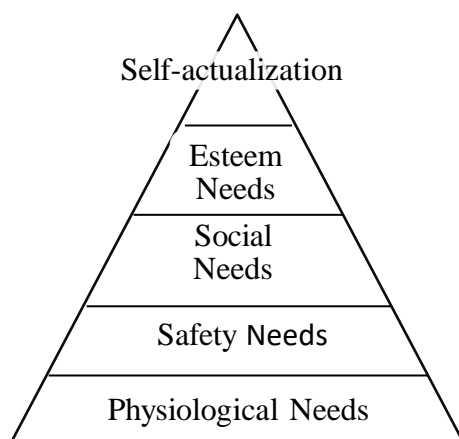
As one of the most important aspects in the research process, the theoretical framework identifies and connects relevant theories, models, concepts, and approaches to guide the conception and implementation of any research study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Hermon, 2007). The theoretical framework provides an anchor for the literature review (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). To conduct meaningful inquiry, sound theoretical knowledge about the topic of study is required no matter the research focus (Busha & Harter, 1980). Theories of motivation are used to explain what invigorates and channels the behavior of people while at work. Motivation theories also

provide insight into the circumstances that may sustain or terminate certain behaviors. Grounded in motivational theory, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's (1959) theory of work and motivation, and self-determination theory (2000) provide a foundation to better understand principals' decisions to remain in urban public-school leadership.

### **Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory**

A pioneer in the field of psychology, Abraham Maslow (1954) played a key early role in the humanistic psychology movement which centered on the whole person and the uniqueness of everyone (O'Connor & Yballe, 2007; Soni & Soni, 2016). Maslow is well known for his work on motivation and his hierarchical levels often depicted within a pyramid (Guest, 2014).

A standard feature in the practical application of motivation theory in business and management, Maslow's 1943 research is a staple in psychology (Guest, 2014). In *A Theory of Human Motivation*, Maslow (1943) used the following terms to describe the hierarchical pattern (see figure 2.1) through which human motivation commonly moves: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. Consequently, for motivation to occur at a subsequent level, each previous level must be satisfied within an individual (Maslow, 1943).



*Figure 2. 1* Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow (1954) used the principle of relative potency to arrange the basic needs in a definite hierarchy. When lower needs are met, other higher needs emerge and these, rather than physiological hungers are dominant; once those needs are satisfied, again new and even higher needs emerge (Maslow, 1954). This process of emergent needs describes the principle of relative potency. Maslow's (1954) hierarchy described physiological needs as the strongest followed by safety needs, love needs, esteem needs, and idiosyncratic needs.

The base of Maslow's hierarchy encompasses physiological needs which relate to the need for air, water, food, shelter, sleep, and clothing to survive. A lack of satisfaction at the physiological level leads to an emphasis on meeting these basic needs before any other needs are met (Gorman, 2010). These basic physiological needs must be met for the body to survive; an absence of physiological needs for a prolonged period can initiate stress (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Safety needs, the second need group, involves the need for physical safety including stability, security, protection, and freedom from threats (Guest, 2014). Maslow (1943) identifies safety as an overall sense of comfort and familiarity. In the absence of safety needs being met, a person may feel uncertain and apprehensive (Maslow, 1943).

The third need is love (Maslow, 1954). This involves the need of belonging and feeling loved by a group of people (Harper, Harper, & Stills, 2003). The group may include one's family, religious or professional group, social club or fraternity, or even one's youth gang (Harper, Harper, & Stills, 2003). Self-esteem, the next hierarchical level, is described by Maslow (1954) as a person's need for achievement, recognition, and prestige. This need for accomplishment extends not only to desiring respect from others but also from oneself in the form of self-respect (Harper et al., 2003). Gorman (2010) exclaimed, the self-esteem need is met "based on the values and beliefs determined by culture" (p. 27), which is unique to everyone.



“The highest Maslowian need is self-actualization, which is the need to develop one’s common potential and unique talent at the highest possible level of growth and achievement” (Harper et al., 2003).

Jerome (2013) asserts Maslow’s theory remains relevant for any business organization that seeks to obtain success and excellence. “Any attempt to shy away from practical application of the hierarchy of needs theory, will affect negatively the organizational culture, human resource management and the employee’s performance, to achieve organizational excellence...” (Jerome, 2013, p. 44). At any time, the most important needs of a person take precedence and compel a person to exert energy and effort towards satisfying that need, while less important needs are buried (Taormina & Gao, 2013; Gorman, 2010). Once the persisting need is met, a person will focus on the next need in the hierarchy (Gorman, 2010). As with personal needs, professional needs also carry a similar weight (Udechukwu, 2009).

Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs theory provides a theoretical framework for research related to various fields of study, including organizational culture, human resource, and employee’s performance (Upadhyaya, 2014). An organization’s cultural framework should take into consideration employees' physiological and security needs; therefore, intentionally including those needs when creating a strategic plan for sustaining a healthy professional culture that supports employee performance (Maslow, 1954). Human resource management is a multi-disciplinary organizational priority that pulls theories of motivation from fields such as psychology and sociology (Upadhyaya, 2014). According to Robbins and Judge (2009), human resource management includes five key concepts: motivating, disciplining, managing conflict, staffing, and training.

Providing feedback on employee performance is associated with Maslow's (1954) hierarchy as a function of the esteem need. The esteem need includes self-esteem for one's accomplishments or achievements and deserved esteem from others, based on one's accomplishments, status, or appearance (Harper et al., 2003). Performance reviews may help to keep employees motivated (Wong & Heng, 2009; Yusoff, Kian, & Idris, 2013). When organizations fail to provide honest, clear, and actionable feedback or to recognize performance that meets expectations, employees can become disgruntled and lack motivation (Upadhyaya, 2014).

### **Herzberg's theory of work and motivation**

Frederick Herzberg began his journey to motivation after conducting a study on peoples' attitudes towards their jobs entitled *Jobs Attitudes: Research and Opinions* (Herzberg et al., 1959). To better understand employee attitudes and motivation, Herzberg focused on whether different circumstances were responsible for bringing about job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). As a result of this study, Herzberg began to suspect the premise that feelings of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction could be validly measured (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg uncovered key aspects for managers to consider when acting to motivate employees (Herzberg et al., 1959).

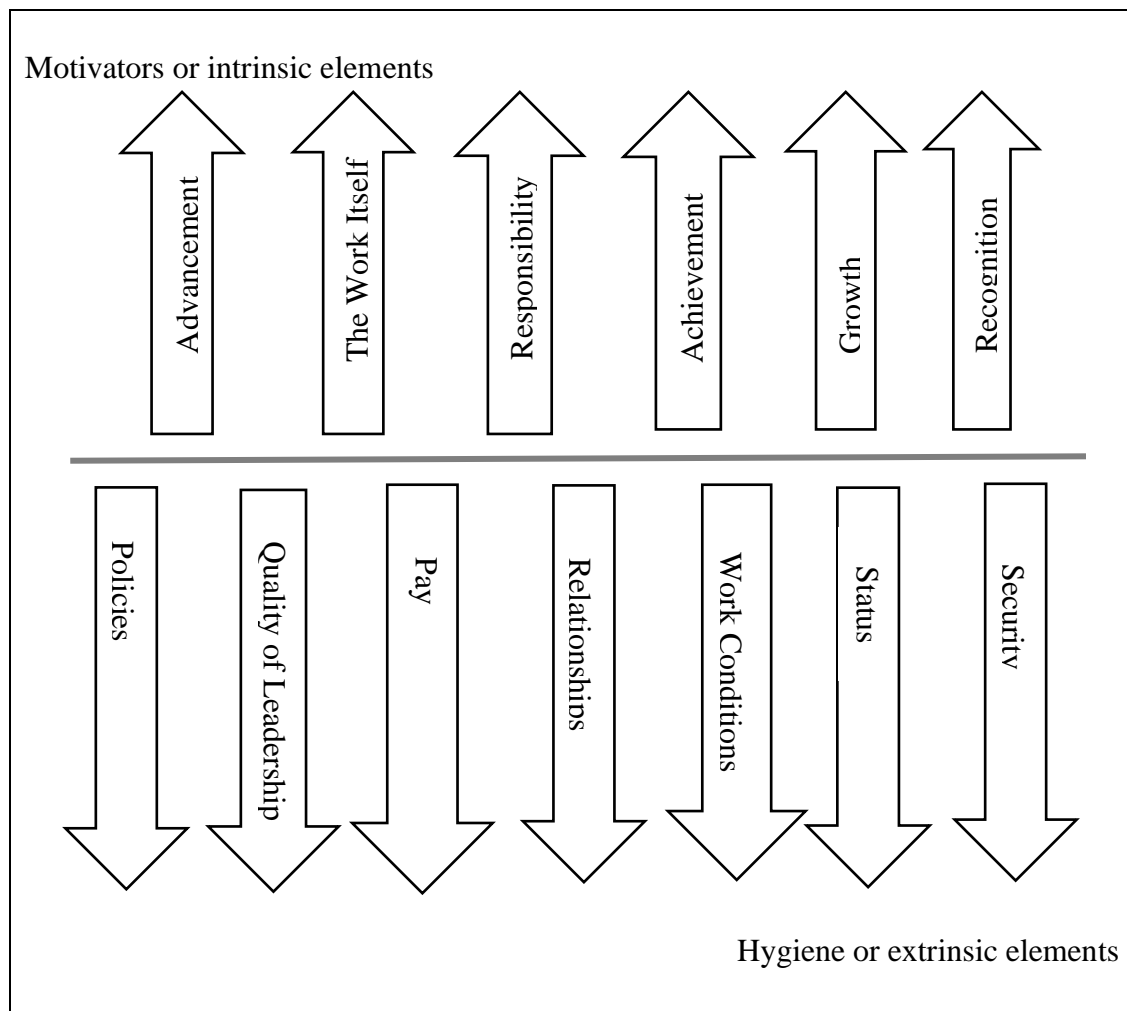
Herzberg et al. (1959) examination of the data collected started with four groups for high job-attitudes: (a) achievement and recognition, (b) work itself, responsibility, and advancement, (c) salary, and (d) infrequent elements. Infrequent elements included: possibility of growth, interpersonal relations, supervision, company policy, working condition, personal life, and job security. These groupings were significant in understanding what makes employees happy. From this list, Herzberg et al. (1959) determined the following five elements played an important

role in increasing job satisfaction: (a) achievement, (b) recognition, (c) work itself, (d) responsibility, and (e) advancement. Herzberg's model of work motivation is based on the philosophy that the presence of one set of job characteristics or incentives leads to satisfaction at work, while a different set of job characteristics leads to dissatisfaction at work (Herzberg et al., 1959). As a result, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are viewed as independent phenomena which are not on a continuum of equal increases and decreases (Herzberg et al., 1959).

According to Singh and Rani (2017), Herzberg's theory of work and motivation "suggests that to improve job attitudes and productivity, administrators must recognize and attend to both sets of characteristics and not assume that an increase in satisfaction leads to a decrease in unpleasable dissatisfaction" (p. 198). Shirol (2014) defined motivation as, "an internal state or condition that activates behavior and gives it direction; a desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behavior; influence of needs and desires on the intensity and director of behavior" (p. 1). Herzberg's lens on motivation defines the motivation as an inner force which drives people to achieve personal and organizational objectives and goals (Khanna, 2015). Herzberg asked research participants to provide a description of a time or incident when the participant felt good and a time or incident when the participant felt bad. This allowed Herzberg to conclude people are made dissatisfied by bad environments, the extrinsic factors of a job (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Motivators or intrinsic elements including achievement, recognition meaningfulness of work, responsibility, advancement, and growth potential, produce job satisfaction; whereas, hygiene or extrinsic elements (see figure 2.2), including pay, job security, policy, supervision, work conditions, produce job dissatisfaction (Shirol, 2014). Motivation features are mainly a result of job content while hygiene features are mainly related to job context (Sachau, 2007).

Additionally, motivations and hygiene influences are not co-dependent; dissolving dissatisfaction does not lead to satisfaction (Petersen, Wascher, Kier, 2017). A thorough analysis of the data collected when Herzberg interviewed 203 engineers and accountants in Pittsburgh concluded with Herzberg's two-factor theory of work and motivation. This study continues to be one of the most influential and insightful theories on motivation with an emphasis on the motivation and other properties that impact overall job satisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959).



*Figure 2.2* Herzberg's theory of work and motivation identifies characteristics of a job that consistently relate to job dissatisfaction, and other that which relate to job satisfaction.

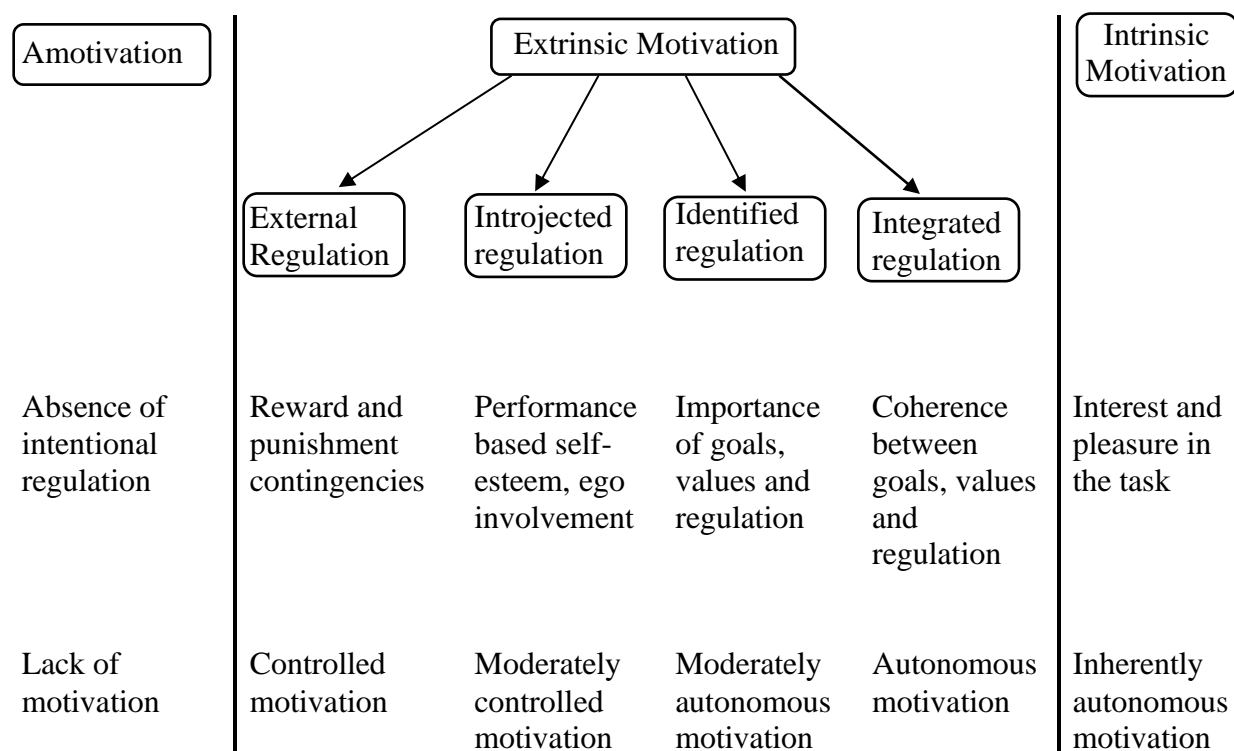
Herzberg's theory identifies a need for organizations to focus on improving both motivation and hygiene influences to retain happy and productive workers. As in most

organizations, leaders are essential. Herzberg's theory was employed in this current study to examine features that influence job satisfaction and principal persistence. Herzberg's theory is applicable to understanding employee satisfaction and employee dissatisfaction which frequently leads to employee turnover. Features such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, salary increases, professional growth, interpersonal relationships, freedoms or liberties, organizational management structures, physical work conditions, and job security are connected to employee satisfaction and employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). Furthermore, Herzberg (1974) introduced eight ingredients for enriching jobs. These elements include direct performance feedback for employees, forming client relationships where employees have the opportunity to assist internal or external clients, creating constant opportunities of learn and grow professionally, giving employees autonomy over their schedules, giving employees access to organizational resources, allowing employees the space to communicate directly with people in the organization, and implementing structures for personal accountability for work performance (Herzberg, 1974).

### **Self-determination theory**

An empirical theory of motivation by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on the degree in which behavior is self-motivated and self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory explores human behavior and personality development with an emphasis on differentiating types of motivation along a continuum (see figure 3) from controlled to self-directed (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Figure 2.3 categories amotivation, which is entirely lacking in self-determination; the types of extrinsic motivation, which differ in their degree of self-determination; and intrinsic motivation, which is constantly self-determined. (Gagne & Deci, 2005). The self-determination theory principles are driven by

five types of motivation—external regulation, introjection, identification, integration and intrinsic motivations (see Figure 2.3).



*Figure 2.3* Self-determination continuum identifies intrinsic motivation as important for completing a task, whereas extrinsic motivation reflects acceptance of the value or utility of a task

Gagné & Deci (2005) described amotivation as the state of lacking motivations which leads to having no intentions for performing behaviors. Some people feel motivated and develop behavioral intentions when external regulations such as rewards and punishments (Ryan & Deci, 2017) are present. Other people may feel motivated by introjected regulations to perform a task due to their self-esteem and ego being impacted (Ryan & Deci, 2017). People motivated by introjected regulation may performing a behavior because that behavior makes the person feel worthy (Gagné & Deci 2005). People motivated by identified regulation have greater freedom as they are enthused to perform behaviors which match their goals and identities (Gagné & Deci

2005). Whereas, people motivated by integrated regulation recognize that their behaviors are important parts of their personal identities (Gagné & Deci 2005).

Contrasting amotivation is intrinsic motivation, the state of being motivated to perform behaviors solely by the enjoyment (Gagné & Deci, 2005). The enjoyment in performing behaviors differentiates intrinsic motivation from integrated motivation (Gagné & Deci 2005). Intrinsic motivation includes commitment and competence, while extrinsic motivation includes deterrence and rewards. Additionally, amotivation involves apathy, resistance, low self-control and incompetence which may lead to undesirable behaviors (Gagné & Deci 2005).

SDT examines how social, biological, and cultural conditions either support or hinder human capacities for satisfaction of basic psychological growth, engagement, and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Ryan and Deci (2017), there are three basic psychological needs supported by SDT: (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness. Well known as a general theory of human motivation, SDT stands out as the primary theory of motivation that clearly identifies autonomy as a human need. Ryan and Deci (2000) describe autonomy as one's ability to self-regulate one's own actions in accomplishing specific goals. Widely seen as a main element in motivated actions (Harter, 1981), competence refers to a person's basic need to feel effective (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The feeling of competence is undermined when a person faces seemingly irresolvable challenges, receives constant negative feedback, or when feelings of effectiveness are eliminated due to criticism or social comparisons (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) is the feeling of being socially connected. This feeling of connectedness generally presents when a person feels cared for by others or when one feels a sense of belonging and significance among others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ryan and Deci (2017) describe six mini-theories of SDT including: (a) cognitive evaluation theory, (b) organismic

orientation theory, (c) causality orientations theory, (d) basic psychological needs theory, (e) goal contents theory, and (f) relationships motivation theory.

**Cognitive evaluation theory.** Cognitive evaluation theory (CET) focuses singularly on intrinsic motivation and considers the impact intrinsic motivation has while in social environments (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The first of SDT's mini-theories, CET was developed to organize and integrate results from studies on rewards, punishments, evaluations, and other extrinsic events that impact intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). CET suggests that occurrences like rewards, evaluations, or feedback have a specific meaning or significance that predicts the impact of these occurrences on intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to Ryan and Deci (2017), "The phenomenon of intrinsic motivation reflects the primary and spontaneous propensity of some organisms, especially mammals, to develop through activity – to play, explore, and manipulate things and, in doing so, to expand their competencies and capacities" (p. 124).

**Organismic integration theory.** Organismic integration theory (OIT) focuses on different forms of extrinsic motivation. OIT encompasses four major types of motivation: (a) external, (b) introjected, (c) identified, and (d) integrated (Ryan & Deci, 2017). OIT is used to describe one's inherent tendencies towards assimilating and integrating within social environments (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, OIT explores how people internalize the practices and values that are culturally normal in family, groups, and cultural environments (Knafo & Assor, 2007).

**Causality orientations theory.** Ryan and Deci (2017) discuss several propositions of Causality Orientation Theory (COT). The first proposition is associated with situation-specific motivation along with general need-satisfaction, behavior, and experiences (Ryan & Deci, 2017).



The second proposition discusses the effect of social environments controlling or motivating one's will and attitude (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The third proposition proclaims greater integration of personality which strengthens and promotes effective performance and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The final proposition declares all individuals have three causality orientations, or attitudes, which include controlled, autonomous, and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Amotivation describes one's lack of intentionality and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

**Basic psychological needs theory.** Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT) concerns the relations of basic psychological need satisfaction and frustrations to well-being and ill-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The basic premise of this theory is that the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness are innate, essential and universal to human beings (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

**Goal contents theory.** Goals Contents Theory (GCT) examines the content of one's goals (Ryan & Deci, 2017). GCT is viewed as a theory that considers the goals and aspirations that shape people's lives and how those goals and aspirations relate to one's basic need for satisfaction, motivation, and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

**Relationships motivation theory.** Relatedness is a basic psychological need when discussing SDT. Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT) suggests that the relatedness need is intrinsic and encourages people to be involved in close relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, RMT suggests that need satisfaction compared to frustration mostly facilitates the link between social supports and psychological wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

### **Related Literature**

Principals are an indispensable ingredient for school success; as such principals are extremely important in assuring school achievement (Liua & Bellibasb, 2018). This related

literature section synthesizes current research on intrinsic influences such as principal self-efficacy, principal satisfaction, principal burnout, principal turnover, and principal persistence. Next, the section provides a synthesis of studies on extrinsic influences such as principal responsibilities, principal salary, job stress, lack of support, and federal policy. Lastly, the section includes an overview of altruistic aspects such as principals' influence on student achievement, principal leadership impact within the school community, and the social and emotional health of students.

The role of the school principal has changed over time from manager to instructional leader (Lemoine, McCormack, & Richardson, 2014). Principals are expected to lead with knowledge of curriculum, instructional best practices, and assessments (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Principals should also be effective professional development facilitators (Backor & Gordon, 2015; Hoerr, 1996). Hoerr (1996) discussed the multi-faceted role of the principal with duties ranging from instructional leader to community liaison. Previous studies have focused on varying aspects of the principalship including: (a) factors that relate to turnover (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012), (b) factors related to principal retention (Baker et al., 2010), (c) mobility within the principalship (Tran, 2017), and (d) comparisons of turnover trends between charter school and traditional public-school principals (Sun & Ni, 2016).

In this case study, the central research question, "What influences lead to principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools (APS)," explains why APS principals choose to stay in urban school principalship. The second component, study propositions, focuses attention on related literature that should be examined within the scope of the study (Yin, 2018). The study propositions connected to principal persistence are principal responsibilities, principal self-efficacy, principal satisfaction, the significance of principal leadership on student achievement,

principal burnout, principal turnover, and federal policy. “The more a case study contains specific questions and propositions, the more it will stay within feasible limits” (Yin, 2019, p. 29). The third component, defining and bounding the case, involves clarifying the target group to be researched. The fourth component, linking data to propositions, includes pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross case synthesis (Yin, 2018). The final component, criteria for interpreting findings, includes addressing rival explanations and findings. The first three components led to defining research questions and propositions, while the last two components led to data analysis and conclusions (Yin, 2018).

There currently exist gaps in the literature for empirical data defining the influences that lead to principal persistence in urban public schools. This case study addressed the gap in the literature by using the lived experiences of principals in one urban school district to determine components that lead to principal persistence.

### **Principal Responsibilities**

Principals’ responsibilities range from building manager and politician to change agent and instructional leader (Wood et al., 2013). Principals are responsible for and accountable to meeting targets set in strategic plans to include formative student achievement benchmarks and summative state assessment goals (Dhuey & Smith, 2014), teacher development, and engaging parents and the school community as active stakeholders (Chan, Jiang, Rebisz, 2018). Additionally, principals are responsible for evaluating school personnel, creating a safe school climate, addressing attendance concerns, making sound ethical decisions for the good of all students, and sustaining a supportive learning environment (Cisler & Bruce, 2013).

The Wallace Foundation (2013) identified five key responsibilities of effective principals. The first, shaping a vision of academic success for all students, is based on high standards for

adults and students. Second, creating a climate hospitable to education, allows all members of the school to feel safe so that foundations of fruitful interaction exist (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Next, cultivating leadership in others, allows teachers and other adults to own their role in realizing the school's vision (Murphy & Torre, 2014). Following cultivating leaders is improving instruction. This enables teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Finally, managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement ensues alignment of process and structures to achieve common school-wide goals (Spiro, 2011).

Principals are responsible for creating and implementing clear plans of action, targeting instructional improvement, providing meaningful professional development, and distributing leadership with a strong vision toward improvement (Dolph, 2017). Principal leadership has the greatest association with the overall quality of instruction and student achievement (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). The principal, as the chief educator in a school, has the most authority and influence on teachers, students, and parents as stakeholders working together in service of the school's mission (Chan et al., 2018). This authority is normed across the country by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). According to NPBEA (2015), principals are held accountable to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders which encompass the following areas: (a) mission, vision, and core values, (b) ethics and professional norms, (c) equity and cultural responsiveness, (d) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, (e) community of care and support for students, (f) professional capacity of school personnel (g) professional community for teachers and staff, (h) meaningful engagement of families and community (i) operations and management, and (j) school improvement.

## **Principal Self-efficacy and Collective Efficacy**

Self-efficacy has been shown to predict thoughts as well as emotions and behavior (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011). Leaders' goals are shaped by their self-appraisal of capabilities; stronger perceived self-efficacy leads to more challenging and ambitious goals (Bandura, 1993). Principal self-efficacy exemplifies a set of beliefs that allow a principal to enact policies and procedures that promote the effectiveness of a school (Versland & Erickson, 2017) which in turn impacts the collective efficacy of a school community. Researchers have identified collective efficacy as a predictor of student achievement (Bandura, 1993; Goddard, 2001; Goddard, Goddard, Sook Kim, & Miller, 2015). Collective efficacy is a factor among schools' performance and teachers' agency and decisions (Goddard, 2011).

Principal self-efficacy beliefs are significant because they direct the principal's actions and behaviors that affect expectations for students, teachers, and collective efficacy (Versland & Erickson, 2017). Collective efficacy beliefs are influenced by the principal's beliefs and cultivated through fidelity to instructional initiatives, relationship building among staff, the principals' instructional leadership, and the degree to which the principal and teachers work together to improve instruction (Goddard et al., 2015; Versland & Erickson, 2017). Federici and Skaalvik (2011) identified the following eight separate but correlated dimensions of principal self-efficacy: (a) instructional leadership, (b) economic management, (c) administrative management, (d) teacher support, (e) parental relations, (f) school environment, (g) relation to municipal authority, and (h) relation to local community. Self-efficacy predicts thoughts as well as emotions and behavior, including principals prioritizing choices and effort (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011). It is vital that principals have strong efficacy beliefs and a growth mindset while leading. According to Barth and Dwyer (as cited in Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, &

Hashemi, 2017) instructional leadership practices are a means of communicating and demonstrating the principals' self-efficacy beliefs to teachers and students daily.

### **Principal Satisfaction**

According to Darmody and Smyth (2016), school principals manage multiple responsibilities and work under increasingly stressful conditions which may result in lower levels of job satisfaction, increased occupational stress levels, or burnout. Nevertheless, resilience does occur with some principals who tackle added job responsibilities and increased accountability while working in a turbulent environment (Goetz et al., 2012). In developing strategies to support school principals, it is crucial to recognize the range of variables that impact principals' perception of the job.

Principal transformational leadership may have a direct impact on school staff turnover, school performance, and staff job satisfaction. Griffith (2004) showed the theory of transformational leadership successfully described effective leadership in a variety of settings, including public educational settings. Staff reported principal behaviors in three components of transformational leadership: inspiration or charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Griffith, 2004). Principal transformational leadership was not associated directly with school staff turnover or student achievement; nonetheless, principal transformational leadership did show an indirect effect on staff job satisfaction and school performance (Goetz et al., 2012).

Job satisfaction may be negatively related to school leaders' motivation to leave the principalship. Other aspects may also lead to principals deciding to leave the profession. Forces that influence principals to leave the principalship include: (a) characteristics of the principal, (b) principal behaviors, (c) environmental conditions, and (d) emotional and physical concerns

(Farley-Ripple, Raffel, & Welch, 2012). Conversely, forces that led to principals' persistence included a sense of self-efficacy or desire to persevere through challenges. These findings are reinforced by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) who found that self-efficacy predicts principals' persistence. Additionally, relationships have an influence on principals' intention to leave or persist (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012).

### **Principal Influence on Student Achievement**

According to Heck and Hallinger (2014), instructionally focused leadership is indirectly related to increasing math achievement through its positive effect on the instructional environment. Leadership enhanced the direct effect of teachers on student math achievement (Liua & Bellibasb, 2018). Additionally, school leadership plays an essential role in shaping the instructional environment and coordinating the instructional practices of teachers (Fullan, 2001; Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015). Ultimately, principals have a direct effect on teachers and the school environment and an indirect effect on student achievement (Hitt & Tucker, 2015). Effective principals are well planned and targeted; additionally, they implement normed strategies that enhance two important school-based qualities, teaching and learning.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012), in a study of the influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning, determined (a) variation in instruction is associated with principal leadership through multiple pathways, (b) the strongest pathway of variation is the quality of professional development and coherence of programs, and (c) differences in instruction and student achievement are associated with the cultural leadership of the principal. Pina, Cabral, and Alves (2015) asserted school leadership directly influences school conditions, classroom conditions, and teachers, which in turn influences students' learning (see figure 2.4).

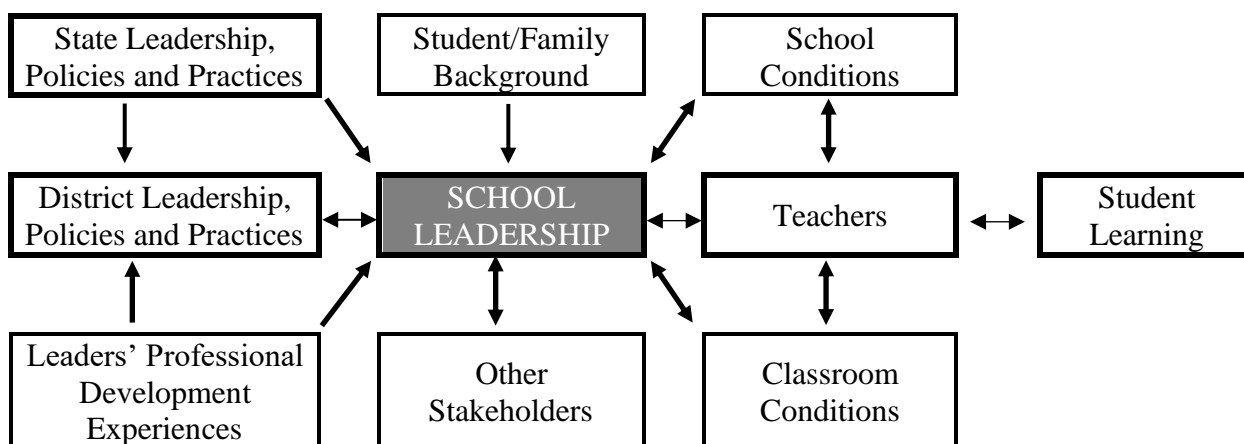


Figure 2.4 Leadership influence on student learning

Principals are responsible for shaping the districts context and conditions in a seamless manner for teachers and other stakeholders (Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015). Principals enter the job with a knowledge base of effective instructional practices; however, more is needed (Hitt & Tucker, 2015). Expertise in multiple domains, including curriculum, instruction, and organizational management are essential to a principal's overall effectiveness. There is reason to remove barriers and create support structures to refine conditions that influence school culture (Day, Gu, & Simmons, 2016). According to Hitt & Tucker (2015), maintaining positive staff interactions, collaboration, school safety and developing strong human capital are important factors for retaining principals.

Principals directly contribute to student achievement by building the school's academic climate (Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015). Policymakers are urged to keep in the forefront the importance of promoting positive perceptions of a school's academic environment; in turn, principals and students will feel empowered to build a safe community (Urlick & Bowers, 2014). District leaders should use principal and student perceptions of the school environment to help build and monitor a positive academic climate to increase student achievement.



## **Principal Burnout**

Freudenberger (1974) introduced the term burnout to describe the emotional fatigue and absence of motivation and commitment in a person. Pierucci (1985) described burnout as a state of disappointment or weariness from lifestyle or relationship choices not yielding the expected results. Maslach and Jackson (1986) described the impact of burnout as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Schaufeli & Buunk (2003) described burnout as a metaphor to describe a state or process of mental exhaustion, like that of smothering a fire or extinguishing a candle. Leiter and Maslach (2005) defined burnout as a chronic state of being out of sync and presents as a loss of energy, enthusiasm, and confidence.

Principals, as helping professionals, are exposed to several expectations that may lead to stress, loss of purpose and hope, and eventually burnout (Conrad & Kellar-Guenther, 2006; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Sprang, Craig, & Clark, 2011). Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012) are dimensions of burnout principals are vulnerable to experiencing. Emotional exhaustion involves a lack in energy, depersonalization signifies a detached attitude towards the job or one's colleagues, and reduced personal accomplishment signifies a decrease in feelings of achievement and competence (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Several research studies have concluded that burnout is related to both job satisfaction and self-efficacy (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; LeCompte & Dworkin 1991; Sari 2005; Skaalvik and Skaalvik 2007, 2009, 2010).

Burnout in principals is a familiar problem in public education, sometimes with severe consequences (Ozer, 2013). A decline in student achievement, unsuccessful implementation of initiatives or instructional programming, and low teacher morale are negative outcomes associated with principal burnout (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012). Principals experience pressure

from stakeholders with unreasonable demands, unrelenting job expectations, multiple meetings, ineffective or underperforming staff, and uncooperative or low-skilled support personnel (Tikkanen, Ito, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2017). Principals are also left to address community issues and outside-of-school dynamics that significantly impact students' wellbeing and achievement (DeMatthews, 2018; Berliner, 2013; Knight, 2017).

### **Principal Turnover**

Bauer and Silver (2018) studied the relationship between principal self-efficacy, isolation, and principal turnover. Their empirical findings suggested that self-efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout, and intention to leave were all related when examining principal turnover and planning for principal persistence (Bauer & Silver, 2018). Isolation is an especially large and direct contributor to new principals' sense of efficacy, a variable that has been shown to have great importance to the overall effectiveness of principals in general (Liua & Bellibasb, 2018). The impact of isolation on new principals, a principal's sense of self-efficacy, satisfaction, and burnout serve as predictors of persistence (Bauer & Siler, 2018). Principals who demonstrate persistence are more likely to remain at the same school for an extended amount of time or in the position within the same district longer than principals who lack persistence. Adding to isolation as a factor leading to turnover, Rangel (2017) generated considerations for how principal turnover is measured by conducting a review of existing literature on principal turnover. In the review, studies were disaggregated into two general categories: (a) turnover as mobility and (b) turnover as stability.

Principals who serve in highly socioeconomically disadvantaged communities face numerous challenges in terms of staff commitment, staff persistence, student behavior, motivation of staff, and academic achievement compared to principals in more advantaged

communities (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Additionally, principals were more likely to leave the principalship if dissatisfied with their pay (Abdullah et al., 2007; Tran, 2016; Wong & Heng, 2009; Yusoff, Kian, & Idris, 2013). Tran and Buckman (2017) found that principals who moved to principal positions in other school districts were able to advocate for higher salaries, but the same was not true for those who moved to other schools within their same district. Frequent principal turnover creates instability in the school environment, interruptions in curriculum implementation, low morale with faculty and staff, and the lack of necessary time for school reform initiatives to take root (Abdullah et al., 2007).

Taking into consideration the importance of an effective principal to student success, high principal turnover has the potential to exacerbate inequities in schools and prevent success of positive change (Matlach, 2015). Researchers examined the likely determinants of principal turnover which include principal characteristics, school and student characteristics, the nature of the position, and policy (Rangel, 2017). Principal characteristics included race, gender, age, level of experience, level of satisfaction, and education (Fuller & Young, 2009; Fuller et al., 2017; Gates et al., 2006; Ni et al., 2015; Sun & Ni, 2016; Terkleselassie & Villarreal, 2010). School and student characteristics included student achievement level, facility conditions, student demographics, family socioeconomic status, and the percentage of student receiving special education services (Baker et al, 2010; Baker & Cooper, 2005; Béteille, 2012; Burkhauser et al., 2012; Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2006; Fuller & Young, 2009; Gates et al., 2006; Loeb et al., 2010; Ni et al., 2015; Partlow, 2007; Terkleselassie & Villarreal, 2010; Tran & Buckman, 2017).

Included in the nature of the position category were (a) the degree of autonomy, (b) relationships, and (c) the changing nature of the position (Farley-Ripple et al., 2012;

Terkleslassie & Villarreal, 2010). Lastly, researchers found that principal salary (Baker et al., 2010; Ni et al, 2015; Papa, 2007; Terkleslassie & Villarreal, 2010; Tran & Buckman, 2017), accountability (Rangel, 2017), staffing challenges (Sun & Ni, 2016), school type (Ni et al., 2015; Sun & Ni, 2015), and professional development (Jacob et al., 2015) were determinants of principal turnover in the policy category.

### **Impact of Principal Turnover**

Principals are essential for ensuring student success. Principals are responsible for setting the school's vision, monitoring curriculum implementation, creating a positive school climate hospitable to learning, motivating staff, enhancing teachers' practice, and various structures to ensure a safe and conducive environment for staff and students (Coelli & Green, 2012). These responsibilities of the principalship are aligned to (a) purpose and goals, (b) structure and social networks, (c) people, and (d) organizational culture (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). Additionally, principals play a major role in retaining effective teachers and ensuring their success in the classroom (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Ultimately, principal leadership has significant implications for students' experiences and accomplishments (Coelli & Green, 2012; Pina, Cabral, & Alves, 2015; Willis, 2016).

A wide range of research on teacher turnover in public school districts may be useful for policy makers, practitioners, and researchers interested in the outcomes that lead some teachers to remain in their positions or organizations while others leave (Grissom, Viano, & Selin, 2015). Similarly, research on principal turnover would be equally useful, especially due to principal turnover rates surpassing even the rates of teacher (Goldring & Taie, 2018). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates, principal turnover rates are nearly 18% nationally (Goldring & Taie, 2018). According to Bartanen, Grissom, & Rogers (2019), schools that

experience principal turnover have lower achievement in math and reading and higher rates of teacher turnover than schools where principals are persistent in the job. In Wills (2016) an examination of consequences resulting from principal leadership changes surfaced the following outcomes: (a) principal leadership changes had destabilizing effects on learning, (b) educationally significant negative effects were more pronounced in poorer schools, (c) negative effects are related to principal attrition instead of principal mobility, (d) lower grade promotion rates are weakly linked to principal turnaround, and (e) higher teacher turnover in primary schools is associated with principal turnover.

The significance of principal leadership on school culture, student achievement, and teacher retention (Coelli & Green, 2012; Grissom, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2019) is critical to the overall impact a school has within an urban community. This significance raises sizable concern about the regularity of principal turnover and its negative impact on a district's ability to deliver on the promise of preparing students for college and careers (Bartanen et al., 2019). Schools are doubly impacted when principal turnover results in the assignment of a new novice principal (Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009). On average, novice principals have fewer years of leadership experience (Grissom, Bartanen, & Mitani, 2018), which, given research that principals become more effective with experience, results in an implementation dip that negatively impacts student achievement (Abdullah et al., 2007). Principals champion school improvement by effectively leading instructional and cultural initiatives, developing and supporting teachers to be highly effective instructional leaders, and creating and supporting equitable learning experiences for all students (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Robinson et al., 2008). Exemplifying the dispositions of an effective principal takes experience with essential relational components, which a novice principal may lack (Tikkanen, Ito, Pietarinen, & Soini, 2017). Often

concentrated among low performing schools (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019), principal turnover along with teacher turnover (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013) will likely result a ripple effect of decreased student achievement. Researchers concluded principal turnover may influence a staff's ability to align around a common vision and mission, set high expectations for students and stakeholders, and focus on professional growth and development (Robinson et al., 2008).

### **Federal Policy**

Congress generated new opportunities to improve school leadership, particularly in our highest-need schools, with the reauthorization of the federal K-12 education law in 2015 (NAESP, 2018). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which revised and replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB), acknowledges investing in evidence-based leadership development programs for principals will improve outcomes for students (New Leaders, 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2019), ESSA includes provisions that will help to ensure success for students and schools. These provisions include: (a) the advancement of equity and excellence in all schools, (b) standards that prepare students for college and careers, (c) annual statewide assessment results accessible to all members of the school community, (d) innovations to meet community needs, (e) access to high-quality preschool, and (f) accountability and action to effect positive change in the country's lowest-performing schools.

Schools performing consistently low are a central part of the federal government's recent efforts to improve education (Dunn & Ambroso, 2019). ESSA marked a major shift in the responsibilities of states and districts in supporting school improvement (Dunn & Ambroso, 2019). States are tasked with identifying and intervening to support the bottom 5 percent of schools, high schools with graduation rates less than 67 percent, and schools with chronically struggling subgroups of students (USDE, 2019). Prior to ESSA, NCLB "put in place measures

that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved students and their peers and spurred an important national dialogue on education improvement” (USDE, 2019). NCLB was predated by The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a civil rights law, in 1965. ESEA included targeted grants for schools serving low-income students (USDE, 2019).

Each of these federal laws, ESEA, NCLB, and ESSA, impacts the way principals lead and are accountable for student success. Although twenty-five percent of a school’s influence on student learning is directly attributed to the principal, more than two-thirds of public-school districts spend zero Title II funds on professional development for principals (New Leaders, 2017). Principals have knowledge about curriculum, instruction, and assessment along with the ability to provide professional development to teachers (Backor & Gordon, 2015; Hoerr, 1996; Lemoine et al., 2014); nonetheless, principals need to be afforded professional development opportunities to hone and refine their instructional leadership skills (Wood et al., 2013).

### **School Turnaround**

The Wallace Foundation described turnaround as intensive short-term interventions started by a state or district with the goal of dramatically improving the way a school operates (Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, & Tallant). School turnaround can also be defined as quick and sustained change (Kowal, Hassel, Hassel, 2009). Copeland and Neely (2013) depicted school turnaround as significantly improving student achievement in mathematics and reading over time. Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, and Lash (2007) described turnaround as dramatic and transformative change in consistently underperforming schools. Murphy (2009) concluded the following in his review of school turnaround literature: (a) there is not much empirical evidence to guide policymakers and educators, (b) there is a good deal of conceptual misunderstanding

and confusion about the meaning of nearly all components of school turnaround, and (c) there is no shortage of ideas being circulated to turn around failing schools.

With the goal of implementing systems to yield significant achievements (Liu, 2017), principals set ambitious goals to turnaround low performing schools into high performing organizations (Calkins et al., 2007; Fullan, 2011; Hassel & Hassel, 2009). Some researchers believe school improvement encompasses gradual and incremental change over time (Calkins et al., 2007; Salmonowicz, 2009). Turnaround principals diagnose ineffective systems that are not responsive to student needs. Turnaround schools typically serve minority students from low-income communities (Calkins et al., 2007; Heissel & Ladd, 2018). Principals who lead in turnaround schools play a large role in improving teacher effectiveness and student achievement (Fullan, 2001; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Hitt & Tucker, 2015; Liua & Bellibasb, 2018). Turnaround schools face problems ranging from low test scores, student behavior problems, and poor attendance to high principal and staff turnover rates (Heissel & Ladd, 2018). The persistence of these challenges in schools serving students from low-income communities makes turnaround work challenging and demanding (Heissel & Ladd, 2018).

### **Principal Persistence**

Principal persistence is a focus of school districts across the country, specifically urban school districts. With increased responsibility for creating and sustaining a safe school environment and greater accountability for increasing student achievement, principals are at greater risk of leaving the profession in the absence of intentional and strategic efforts from school district leaders. School leadership is credited with being the second most important factor, other than teacher effectiveness, on student achievement. Schools that undergo frequent principal turnover are more disadvantaged in terms of student achievement, student



socioeconomic status, and teacher persistence. Despite the attention on principal effectiveness, urban schools' districts continue to struggle to retain principals. This study aims to ascertain valuable information to assist urban school districts retain principals. With no identified research focused on principal persistence in urban school districts, this study is a much-needed addition to the empirical research currently available.

The consequences of low principal persistence adversely impact student achievement, teacher retention, and schools' overall culture and climate (Rangel, 2017). Students' math achievement gains in schools with new principals were lower than their counterparts in schools without a new principal (Béteille et al., 2012). Low principal persistence was negatively related to student achievement in schools where the school culture was adversely impacted by the transition to a new principal (Mascall & Leithwood, 2010). Kearney, Valdez, and Garcia (2012) found for each year a principal served at the same school, students experienced gains in achievement scores. Moreover, 50% of schools with a new principal experienced a decrease of achievement within the first year of the principals' tenure (Burkhauser et al., 2012). The literature also revealed low principal persistence is related to high teacher turnover (Béteille et al., 2012; Miller, 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Lastly, a lack of principal persistence leads to a decline in school culture (Burkhauser et al., 2012; Mascall & Leithwood, 2010).

### **School Districts' Influence on Principal Turnover**

According to Mascall and Leithwood (2010), "Principal turnover is a problem districts help to create, and so must help to resolve" (p. 367). One such problem is mandatory principal rotation. Aquila (1988) associated the following problems with rotating principals at predetermined intervals: (a) unsuccessfully matching principals to schools based on strengths, (b) disruptions to the instructional program (c) moving principals who are within 3 years of

retirement (d) misunderstanding of school policies (e) over-centralization of policies and procedures, (f) unbalanced approach to moving high school principals compared to elementary school principals, and (g) the possibility of principals being untrained for a different school level.

A district's organizational rules of control (Clegg, 1981) may include complex and interdependent structures that systemically impact outcomes of various efforts being made towards improvement. Studying the beliefs of decisions makers in nine school districts, Reynolds, White, Bryman, and Moore (2008) found senior administrators' beliefs concerning gender, ethnicity, and race affected rotation decisions in a bias manner. As a factor of positive school change, principal rotation, as the single source of change, is insufficient to alter the operations and overall success within a school (Reynolds et al., 2008). Whether it is because of principal rotation, mobility, or the political strains of the job (Fink & Brayman, 2006), frequent principal succession occurring in urban school districts must be deliberately improved. Mascall and Leithwood (2010), researched the impact of principal turnover on schools, and the ability of schools to mitigate the negative effects of frequent turnover by distributing leadership in the schools. Hargreaves (2005) exclaimed, "One of the most significant events in the life of a school is a change in its leadership" (p. 163). Districts must internationally and strategically work to reduce the churn of principals, especially in schools where principal turnover disproportionately impacts low-income students of color (Gates et al., 2006; Rangel, 2017).

In a review of the research on principal turnover, Levin and Bradley (2019) substantiated the long-standing notion of the disruptive nature of principal turnover and its relationship to declining student achievement in high-poverty, low-achieving schools. The following strategies emerged as considerations for district leaders working to reduce rapid principal turnover: (a) provide high-quality professional learning opportunities to give principals the necessary skills

and competencies for school leadership, (b) improve working conditions to foster principals' satisfaction with their role, and (c) ensure adequate and stable compensation for principals.

(Levin & Bradley, 2019). Additional strategies include supporting decision-making authority in school leadership and reforming accountability systems.

### **Altruistic Motivation**

Augusta Comte, French philosopher and founder of Positivism, coined the term altruism in 1875 writing, “[altruism] the essential principle being, the reaction of collective over individual life” (pg. 122). Comte (1875) described a grand transformation of humanity occurring when people stopped directing their actions to the satisfaction of personal wants, rather to creating wealth to transmit it to others. Comte (1875) believed it was necessary for humanity to ascend from egoism to altruism asserting, “...the ascendancy of Altruism over Egoism, is capable of a true solution, towards which all our aims are tending, whilst the realization of it, though never destined to be complete, forms the best measure of our constant progress” (pg. 146). Altruism describes behaviors out of concern for other's welfare while overcoming self-interest (Comte, 1875). Bar-Tal (1986) suggested two conditions to determine altruistic behaviors: (a) altruism must reflect the high moral quality of helping behavior, and (b) altruism must be identifiable. The motivation behind the behavior provides the moral nature to the helping act (Bar-Tal, 1986). Batson, (2010) defined altruistic motivation as the motivational state with the goal of increasing another's welfare.

Research on altruism has evolved to include a range of academic fields, including biology, psychology, and economics (Kurzban, Burton-Chellew, & West, 2015). Byrne (2008) concluded altruism as a common factor motivating people to work in helping professions such as speech pathology, education, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and social work. Research on

the influence of altruism in education has also emerged. Chiong, Menzies, & Parameshwaran (2017), in a study to understand why long-service teachers remained in the teaching profession, found altruistic motivation was common among teachers with 10 years or more experience.

Hancock, Black, and Bird (2006) identified altruism as a leading factor for novice administrators seeking school leadership roles. Aspiring principals want to lead schools to impact the lives of students, to make a difference in educational settings, or to initiate sustainable change (Ellis & Brown, 2015). Moreover, aspiring principals are motivated by the ability to initiate effective change in their organizations to have a positive impact on others (Hancock et al., 2006).

### **Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation is defined as an individual's desire to perform a task for its own sake (Bénabou & Tirole, 2003), the state of being motivated to perform behaviors solely by the enjoyment experienced (Gagné & Deci, 2005), and performing an act inherently because it is enjoyable and interesting, not because of external restraints and rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation originates from an innate psychological need of competence and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Hummel (2014) operationalized the definition of intrinsic motivation as an activity that students engage in without continuous or frequent extrinsic reinforcement. Relative to school leadership, Sagnak (2016) examined the relationship between intrinsic motivation, participative school leadership, and organizational citizenship. Sagnak (2016) along with other researchers found participative management increased intrinsic motivation of employees (Bogler & Somech, 2005; Huang, Iun, Liu & Gong, 2010; Somech, 2005).

Vallerand, Pelletier, Blais, Briere, Senecal, and Vallieres (1992) highlighted the three types of intrinsic motivation: (a) intrinsic motivation to know, (b) intrinsic motivation towards

accomplishments, and (c) intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation. Intrinsic motivation to know is defined as “the fact of performing an activity for the pleasure and the satisfaction that one experiences while learning” (Vallerand et al., 1992). The second type, intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment, relates to a person’s interactions with the environment to feel competent and to create unique accomplishments (Deci & Ryan 1985). Intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation occurs through engagement in an activity that yields sensations such as fun, excitement, or artistic experiences (Vallerand et al., 1992).

### **Extrinsic Motivation**

Extrinsic motivation is defined as the desire to complete an activity with the intention to achieve positive consequences such as an incentive or to avoid negative consequences such as a punishment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Extrinsic motivation focuses on factors that are goal driven, such as the rewards and benefits of performing a certain task (Lin, 2007). Ryan and Deci (2000) noted different forms of extrinsic motivation including active motivation and impoverished forms of motivation. For example, someone may complete an activity because of fear of being punished or fired, whereas someone else may perform an activity because the activity may lead to a bonus, promotion, or raise (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ultimately, people may be extrinsically motivated by organizational rewards or benefits from an achievement of a goal or task (Lin, 2007). Unlike participative school leadership previously discussed as a contributing factor to intrinsic motivation, transactional leadership is based on rewards for compliance (Eyal & Roth, 2010). Such rewards support extrinsic motivation and are intended to increase employees’ compliance to the leader and the organizational rules (Yukl, 2006). Thus, employees of transactional leaders are not necessarily expected to think innovatively (Eyal & Kark, 2004) as with intrinsic motivation.

## Summary

Principals cope with multiple conflicting accountabilities (Firestone & Riehl, 2005). Expectations for the role of principal are steadily increasing; however, barriers to principal persistence continue to exist. Questions have surfaced concerning the capacity of principals to meet all expectations of the job including balancing a learning environment of high academic achievement, supporting and nurturing school cultures, along with maintaining a highly effective workforce. In recent years, school districts have engaged in numerous instructional improvement initiatives and accountability shifts, including revisions to the way in which principals are held accountable for all areas of the school from instruction to community partnerships. The broad conclusion from the literature review suggests a gap in the literature for understanding ways intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations impact principal persistence. Researchers have determined that low principal persistence or principal turnover has a negative impact on student achievement, teacher retention, and school culture.

Chapter Two provided a thorough examination of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg's theory of work and motivation, and the self-determination theory of work and motivation. These theories can be applied to understand the lack of principal persistence which leads to constant influx of inexpert school leaders, a decline in student achievement, low teacher efficacy, and community mistrust. While Maslow suggested that basic needs drive behaviors associated with work attitudes, Herzberg distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic influences. The self-determination theory of work and motivation focuses on the comparative strength of autonomous versus controlled motivation, rather than on the total amount of motivation. Applying these theories as a foundation for this study provides a holistic perspective on job satisfaction and motivation.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in APS. Chapter Three includes details of what occurred during the execution of this research project. Thus, this chapter discusses the methods of the research study, including the design, research questions, and setting. Further, the participants, procedures, and role of researcher are described. Finally, this chapter provides a summary of the data collection methods, data analysis procedures, methods for establishing trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

### **Design**

Qualitative research practices have a strong orientation toward impact that could ultimately change the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Principals have a similar impact on the communities they serve. As such, a qualitative approach to understanding the motivating factors that lead to sustained principal leadership necessitates an inquiry deep dive that honors each principal's natural setting and experiences. A single-case study was selected for this research study. A single-case study is an appropriate design for researching principal persistence in urban schools because it represents the "common case" of low principal retention in urban districts (Yin, 2018). The objective of a single case study, specifically a common case, is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday situation (Yin, 2018) because of the significant practical and theoretical implications the study may provide. Studying principal persistence in APS confirmed, challenged, and extended the theories (Yin, 2018) outlined in the theoretical framework and may help to focus future investigations on principal persistence in urban school districts.

This qualitative research study utilized a case study design. In case studies, “how” or “why” questions are most common because these types of questions contend with processes over time, rather than simple frequencies or incidence (Yin, 2018). Qualitative research explores, documents, and interprets the meaning-making process through the lived experiences of others (Patton, 2015). Yin (2018) described the research design as the logical sequence that links empirical data to a study’s research questions and conclusions. In this case study, the central research question, “What are principal perceptions of the ways in which intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools,” explains why APS principals choose to stay in urban school principalship. It is important to understand the experiences of urban school principals due to high principal turnover leading to a constant influx of new principals with fewer years of leadership experience (Bartanen et al., 2019). Largely, principals become more effective with experience (Clark et al., 2009; Grissom et al., 2018). There is a substantial need for researchers to understand the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation that impacts principal persistence. This case study captured the lived experiences of principals who persist in urban school leadership. Having access into in-depth issues, a case study design offers an understanding of research participants’ experiences in a narrative form (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

According to Yin (2018), the five components of a research design are essential in a case study. The first component, designing a research question, is perhaps the most important component of the research design (Yin, 2018). In examining principal persistence, the literature review revealed a gap associated with understanding contributing factors leading to principal persistence in urban school districts. The second component, study propositions, focuses attention on related literature that should be examined within the scope of the study (Yin, 2018).



The study propositions related to principal persistence are principal satisfaction, principal influence on student achievement, and principal turnover. “The more a case study contains specific questions and propositions, the more it will stay within feasible limits” (Yin, 2019, p. 29). The third component, defining and bounding the case, involves clarifying the target group to be researched. This included identifying research participants who became the immediate topic of the study compared to other participants who provided context for the study. The fourth component, linking data to propositions, includes pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross case synthesis (Yin, 2018). The final component, criteria for interpreting findings, includes addressing rival explanations and findings. The first three components led to defining research questions and propositions, while the last two components led to data analysis and conclusions (Yin, 2018).

## **Research Questions**

### **Central Research Question**

What are principal descriptions of their efforts to persist in their administrative positions in Aberdeen Public Schools?

### **Research Sub-questions**

**RQ1:** How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?

**RQ2:** How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?

**RQ3:** How do principals in Aberdeen Public Schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence?

## Setting

The setting for this case study is an urban school district in Maryland. For the purposes of this research study, the pseudonym Aberdeen Public Schools (APS) was used. I selected APS because it represents a common case for urban school districts including high poverty rates (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2018), an increase in unemployment rates (U.S. Department of Labor, 2018), high crime rates (Maryland's Statistical Analysis Center, 2018), and underperforming schools (MSDE, 2018).

APS's nine-member school board and Chief Executive Officer are responsible for the strategic direction of 186 schools and centers. Approximately 80,500 students, who represent a decrease of more than 3,000 students from 2016 to 2018, attend Aberdeen schools. APS has a teacher-student ratio of 16:1. The total number of teachers is 4,847 (MSDE, 2018). Teacher tenure includes 29.8% with more than ten years of service, 25.5% between 6 to 10 years, 17.4% between 3 to 5 years, and 27.3% with two years or less. APS's demographics include 79.4% Black, 10.4% Hispanic, 8% White, and 2.3% Asian or Multiracial (MSDE, 2018). Subgroup data included 55% of students living in poverty, 14.7% of students receiving special education services, and 6.6% of students identified as English Language Learners (MSDE, 2018).

For school year 2016-2017, APS's student daily attendance rate was 87.6%, chronic absence rate was 30.1%, and suspension incidents was 6,778 (MSDE, 2018). District scores for the state assessment are 14% proficient in reading and 16% proficient in math (MSDE, 2018). APS has been engaged in a long battle with low student performance on their state performance, having several schools being labeled as low-performing schools in reading and math (MSDE, 2018). Research participants were selected from elementary, middle, K-8, high, and charter

schools within APS. A detailed description of each school was provided once the participant selection process was completed.

### **Participants**

Participants were recruited purposefully, through maximum variation and criterion-based sampling. Maximum variation sampling was accomplished by determining criteria that differentiates participants, then selecting participants that have varying profiles based on the criteria (Yin, 2018). Differences included principal preparation pathway, teaching experience in urban schools, and whether the research participant lived within APS boundaries. Maximum variation sampling was selected to maximize differences to increase the likelihood that research findings reflected differences and varying perspectives.

The participants in this case study consisted of current principals in APS. Each of the participants have at least five years of service as an APS principal. Twelve participants were selected. Criterion sampling which focused on a predetermined criterion (Yin, 2018) allowed me to identify all suitable potential research participants. For the criterion sample, all participants had at least five years of uninterrupted service within APS as a current principal. This criterion assisted in creating the pool of research candidates. All potential research candidates were made aware of the research study and the opportunity to participate via an email. Potential candidates included 117 traditional school principals. Based on the number of favorable responses from the email, the selected research participants represented varying ages, years of tenure, and school type. Research participants were asked to complete a survey to collect demographic data including ethnicity, gender, age range, work location, number of years as an APS principal, and number of years as an Aberdeen resident. Given the nature of qualitative research, pseudonyms were used for all participant names and school names.

## Procedures

After providing a framework for the research, completing a thorough review of the literature, and presenting the research design, I secured approval for this study from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University. I emailed all APS principals to explain the purpose of the case study and invite them to participate. This recruitment email included a screening survey. Of the information collected, candidates indicated total years of experience as an APS principal. Demographic information including school name(s) where he/she is currently serving or previously served, the number of years as principal at each individual school, principal preparation program, teaching experience in urban schools, and residence status within APS boundary was also collected in this initial survey. The data from the screening survey was used for reporting purposes only and was not analyzed in any way.

Those who responded in agreement to participate and met variation and criterion-based sampling requirements were provided a consent form. Once consent forms were obtained, participants completed an electronic survey indicating their willingness to participate in interviews. Participants were asked if they were willing to complete a questionnaire, engage in an auto recorded interview, and provide a range of documentation related to their school. Based on that information, I organized participants in groups to reflect their demographics and willingness to participate in the various data collection methods. As part of the recruitment process, I offered a Zoom meeting to any principal who met the criteria but had reservations or questions regarding their participation.

I triangulated data using the following (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018): documentation (ranging from school's vision/mission statement and minutes from instructional leadership team meetings to principal's Outlook schedule for the current month and parent-

teacher organization agenda and minutes), interviews (one-on-one virtual interactions), and questionnaires. Interviews were auto recorded and resembled “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin, 2018, p. 118). These three forms of data were triangulated during the analysis process to identify common themes.

### **Role of Researcher**

My main role in this research study was as an observer, interviewer, and data collector. Because of the uniqueness of the researcher’s role in the process of scientific inquiry, Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to the researcher as the human instrument. As the human instrument, I gathered and interpreted data obtained from research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through one-on-one interviews along with analyzing questionnaires and a documentation review, I was the primary tool by which the data was collected. I served as the interpreter when analyzing transcriptions from interviews. As a former APS principal, I was straightforward about my relationship with APS and my biases as a former principal and principal coach within APS. I previously served as principal at two of APS’s lowest performing middle schools from 2009-2011.

I actively reported my values and biases as well as the values surfaced from research participants. I believe in data driven and equity-based decisions, transformative actions, collaboration, and daily reflection as attributes of an effective urban school principal. Currently, I work for an organization that provides professional develop and training to APS’s first year principals, aspiring principals, and teacher leaders. I do not provide direct support to APS.

Because this was a case study, I bracketed my personal experiences and history with APS to lessen the potentially negative effects of preconceptions that may flaw the research process. Bracketing allowed me to mitigate the potential adverse effects of unacknowledged

preconceptions (Tufford & Newman, 2010), while going through the research process. Because I am a passionate advocate for transformational leadership in underperforming urban schools, I made every effort to not allow my personal views to interfere with the interpreting of data and the reporting of findings. I engaged with the highest ethical standards including being open to evidence that was contrary to my beliefs and giving enough attention to all data collected (Yin, 2018).

### **Data Collection**

Case study is described as a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system over time, through comprehensive, in-depth data collection methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Of the six sources of data Yin (2018) identified in case study research (documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, physical artifacts), I used documentation, interviews, and a questionnaire. Documents are typically used to supplement interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Documentation such as school improvement plans, state assessment scores, and vision and mission statements provided broad (covering a long span of time) and stable (can be reviewed several times) data for review (Yin, 2018). Interviews were selected because they are targeted in nature and focus directly on the case study topic (Yin, 2018). Interviews also serve as an insightful approach to gather explanations as well as personal views from research participants (Yin, 2018). The third data collection method, questionnaires, allowed participants space to reflect and revise responses to questions about district-level support and their future role as leaders.

Patton (2015) exclaimed researchers who use qualitative methods must be willing to go in the field and get close to participants to capture their perspective and circumstances. “When qualitative researchers locate evidence to document a code or theme in different sources of data,

they are triangulating information and providing validity to their findings” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). This section provides a detailed description of the data collection methods that were used in this research study. In determining the sequence for each data collection method, consideration for the study’s purpose, participants, logistics, data collection procedures, and potential threats to internal validity (Deshefy-Longhi, Sullivan-Bolyai, & Dixon, 2009) were considered. To study principal persistence, data collection methods included documents, interviews, and questionnaires.

### **Documents**

Yin (2018) described the significance of documents in qualitative studies as support of experiences reported by the interviewer. Documents included vision and mission statements, the school’s mantra, and the principal’s calendar. Kouzes and Posner (2012) related these artifacts to a principal’s leadership theory. Evidence of shared values and goals may help to capture the culture of the school and the principal’s ability to successfully include others in establishing cultural norms.

### **Individual Interviews**

Yin (2018) identified interviews as one of the most important sources of data in a case study. Interviews resembled guided conversations and were fluid (Yin, 2018), allowing time for probing questions. Interviews were recorded to allow for an accurate reflection of participants’ experiences during the transcribing process. While engaging in interviews, I took into consideration the planned line of inquiry while putting forth a friendly non-threatening line of relevant interview questions (Yin, 2018).

I conducted one-on-one interviews via Zoom, an online video conferencing platform. I remained flexible throughout the process and accommodated schedule changes when necessary.

Face-to-face interviews with principals were preferred, but Zoom interviews were scheduled due to restrictions.

The purpose of the interviews was to gain the principals' perspectives on each of the research questions. Interviews lasted 30 to 45 minutes. Interviews were audio-recorded via Zoom on my password protected personal computer. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed.

### **Interview Questions**

The following questions were used during the principal interviews:

1. Please introduce yourself to me. (RQ2)
2. Why did you choose to become an educator? (RQ2)
3. Describe your path to the principalship. (RQ2, RQ3)
4. How would you describe your philosophy of education? (RQ2)
5. How does your philosophy of education inform your approach to school leadership?  
(RQ2)
6. What factors influenced your decision to become a principal? (RQ1)
7. What supports did you receive during the first five years of your principalship in  
APS? (RQ3)
8. What are the most difficult challenges to overcome as an urban school principal?  
(RQ3)
9. Considering the challenges you indicated, what intrinsic influences cause you to persist  
as a principal? Intrinsic influences are related to internal rewards or emotions. (RQ2)
10. What extrinsic influences cause you to persist in the principalship? Extrinsic  
influences are related to the basic needs of your position. (RQ3)



11. What altruistic factors cause you to persist in the principalship? Altruism is related to one's actions for the sake of others. (RQ4)

Questions one through six helped to relax the participant and support a trusting relationship between the participant and myself by encouraging the participant to share their personal views on education and leadership. It was my intention through these first five questions to gain important information about the participants' journey to the principalship and their personal views on education and leadership. In addition, the fifth question provided insight into participants' reflections of themselves as school leaders.

Question seven was designed to better understand the general supports that lead to principal persistence. The theoretical framework of this study includes Maslow's hierarchy of needs which contains five sets of goals called basic needs. These basic needs include physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization which influence a person's desire to achieve (Maslow, 1943). These three questions are encouraging the participant to reflect on their basic needs as an urban school principal related to district led supports and structures.

Question eight stands alone as the only question explicitly referencing the challenges urban school principals encounter. Herzberg's theory of work and motivation examines peoples' attitudes and motivation towards their jobs (Herzberg et al., 1959). This question solicits reflection from the principal on how challenges impact their overall job satisfaction. To better understand employee attitudes and motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959), this question was crafted to gain insight into the factors responsible for bringing about job dissatisfaction.

Questions nine, 10, and 11 relate to the factors that influence principal persistence. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's theory of work and motivation are all theories related to job satisfaction and motivation. These three questions solicited responses that were

linked to each theory. While Maslow suggested that basic needs drive behaviors associated with work attitudes (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg distinguished between intrinsic and extrinsic influences (Herzberg et al., 1959). Applying these theories to each research question provided insight for the factors related to job satisfaction and motivation which may encourage principal persistence.

### **Questionnaires**

Posing good questions is essential to case study research (Yin, 2018). I shared a questionnaire with participants to complete electronically via a Goggle Survey. The questionnaire included the following three reflective questions.

1. What district led supports or structures that currently exist would you consider effective to encouraging principal persistence? (RQ3)
2. What, if any, additional supports or structures would you recommend encouraging principal persistence in your school district? (RQ3)
3. What would be the determining factor(s) if your chose to transition out of the principalship within the next three years? (RQ1)

These questions are designed to better understand the general supports that lead to principal persistence. The theoretical framework of this study includes Maslow's hierarchy of needs which contains five sets of goals called basic needs. These basic needs include physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization which influence a person's desire to achieve (Maslow, 1943). These three questions encouraged participants to reflect on their basic needs as an urban school principal related to district led supports and structures.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis in a qualitative study involves a thorough approach to collecting data (Yin, 2018), organizational skills, and clarity of thought when searching for patterns and trends. For

case study analysis, Yin (2018) provides five analytic techniques: (a) pattern matching, (b) explanation building, (c) time-series analysis, (d) logic models, and (e) cross-case synthesis. In researching ways intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence, several steps were taken during the analysis process including: (a) identifying themes, (b) coding data, (c) asking questions about that data, (d) analyzing antecedents and consequences, and (e) sharing what is missing. My laptop computer and Zoom online platform were used during the data analysis process. Transcribing hand-written notes and audio-recordings from principal interviews were included. Recording principals' responses to interview questions allowed me to remain attentive throughout the interviewing process. Because I am a former APS principal, I took careful measures to bracket myself, remain open-minded, and identify my biases early so that this portion of the process was completed without compromising the quality of the research.

I analyzed data from documentation, interviews, and questionnaires to determine if commonalities existed in the data and divided the data into thematic groups. Data triangulation included documentation, interviews, and questionnaires. The coding process occurs when the researcher categorizes data and assigns labels to each code (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This process allowed me to identify themes which emerge from the documentation, interviews and questionnaires. Documentation from all participants was organized in two distinct groups: personal and public. I transcribed interviews at the conclusion of each day to efficiently manage this task. Lastly, questionnaires data was categorized.

After analyzing the codes to find similarities, I grouped data into categories based on their common properties; identifying the names of the categories, including intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation, to express the scope of the collected data. According to Yin (2018), this process involves six distinct steps: (a) researcher describes personal experiences of the

phenomenon, (b) researcher develops a list of nonrepetitive & non-overlapping responses from collected data, (c) researcher groups significant statements into meaning units, (d) researcher writes description of the phenomenon, (e) researcher writes a structured description, and (f) researcher writes the essence of the experiences of participants. This process allows the researcher to consider all statements related to the shared experiences of the participants, cluster the data into themes, and synthesize all themes into groups (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Trustworthiness**

Due to the subjective nature of qualitative studies, qualitative researchers must include methods to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the data collection and analysis (Patton, 2015). With a unique voice and perspective, researchers can communicate authenticity and trustworthiness through reflexivity (Patton, 2015). Reflexivity requires the researcher to disclose personal biases or experiences concerning the subject material (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While researchers are required to suspend judgment while analyzing the data, reflexivity understands that humans will still have preconceptions and biases (Yin, 2018). Disclosing this information allows the audience to understand the position the researcher has within the study, and to critically evaluate if the researcher's biases or experiences impacted his analysis or interpretation of the data. One way to demonstrate reflexivity is by stating your role and previous experiences, and to consistently memo throughout the data collection and analysis process.

### **Credibility**

Credibility assures that respondents' views are accurately represented by inquirer's representation of those views (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Utilization of multiple data sources can contribute to credibility. Triangulation is a common method for validating the existence of themes or patterns and it's naturally built into case-studies because the very nature of this

research design requires gathering data from a variety of sources to corroborate evidence and to help build the narrative (Yin, 2018). Member checks are a critical method of establishing credibility because it validates the accuracy of the descriptions derived from the personal experiences of the participants (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). To address credibility, I accurately interpreted participant responses from interviews through a thorough transcription process. To ensure triangulation within this study, data was gathered through documents, interviews, and questionnaires. Furthermore, I established credibility using member checks and peer reviews. After each interview was transcribed, I shared a written transcription with each respective principal and encouraged feedback. This ensured no errors were made in the interpretation or transcription.

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

Yin (2018) explains through dependability and confirmability a subsequent researcher should be able to pick up this study, follow the same procedures, and arrive at the same findings and conclusions. Although opportunities to repeat a case study rarely occur (Yin, 2018), the principles of dependability and confirmability should still exist. To ensure dependability and confirmability of this study, I approached this research study as if someone was observing my movements in hopes of repeating the same study and arriving at the same conclusions. Using descriptive language throughout each chapter supports these efforts. Additionally, while engaging in the process of data collection through documentation, interviews, and questionnaires; I consistently ensured the collection and analysis process was completed with accuracy.

## **Transferability**

Transferability provides adequate information to allow readers to apply the studied case information to other cases (Yin, 2018). Through the generation of data and rich descriptions, other researchers can make judgments regarding the findings' transferability. Dependability assures that the process is logical and that it is fully documented. Transcriptions, coding, and themes generation are available if requested by other researchers. Confirmability involves interpretations based on information retrieved from the participants.

## **Ethical Considerations**

As the research instrument in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), I followed the guidelines set forth when conducting research with human subjects and led each interaction with integrity. Prior to obtaining demographical information, gathering documentation, or completing interviews and questionnaires, IRB approval was secured. Potential research participants received an email that explained the study and their role as potential participants. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time. Issues of confidentiality were addressed to maintain confidence and trust. Member checking was used to ensure the accurate representation of participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants had an opportunity to read their transcripts to make corrections where necessary.

## **Summary**

Chapter Three provided an in-depth overview of the methods I used to conduct a single-case study focused on understanding factors that lead to principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. Within this chapter, I described the methodology of my research study, including the design, research questions, and setting. I identified one central research question and three sub-

questions to collect data on the perspectives of principals regarding intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations and principal persistence. Twelve principals in APS, with at least five years of experience serving in the principalship, were selected as research participants.

Also, this chapter included a description of the research participants, procedures, and role of researcher. The procedures section explicitly described the steps I took ranging from receiving IRB approval from Liberty University to collecting data in APS. Lastly, I provided a summary of the data collection methods, data analysis procedures, methods for establishing trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Triangulating data using documentation, interviews, and questionnaires allowed for a robust research study ensuring trustworthiness and credibility (Patton, 2014).

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. Chapter Four includes an overview of each research participant, results from the data analysis, and overall themes that arose providing insight into each research question. The thematic development is presented by a discussion of themes followed by a discussion for each respective research question.

### **Participants**

Research participants for this study included 12 urban school principals, all of whom had a minimum of five years of experience as an urban school principal. The 12 participants represented all levels PK3 – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The participants in this study were all female, mostly African American and one Caucasian. All participants currently hold an Administrator II certificate having met master's level course work and a passing score on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment. At the time of the research, one participant earned a Doctor of Education degree, and three participants were enrolled in a doctoral program. Given the nature of qualitative research and to protect the identities of all participants involved in this study, pseudonyms were used for all participant names and school names in narrative form and tables.



**Table 1**

*Participant and School Characteristic, Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS), Special Education (SPED)*

| Years of Experience | School Type | School Level | Grades | Enrollment | %FARMS | %SPED |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------|--------|------------|--------|-------|
| 9                   | District    | Elementary   | K-6    | 521        | 72.5   | 11.3  |
| 5                   | Charter     | High         | 9-12   | 326        | 69     | 29.4  |
| 12                  | District    | Academy      | K-8    | 1662       | 39.8   | 7.3   |
| 10                  | District    | Elementary   | K-5    | 523        | 75.3   | 9     |
| 8                   | Charter     | Elementary   | K-6    | 207        | 50.7   | 10.1  |
| 10                  | Charter     | Academy      | K-8    | 238        | 67     | 10.9  |
| 5                   | Charter     | Preschool    | PK3-4  | 54         | 33     | 9     |
| 5                   | District    | Middle       | 6-8    | 286        | 42.7   | 13.6  |
| 12                  | District    | Elementary   | K-5    | 309        | 43     | 8.1   |
| 10                  | District    | Elementary   | K-5    | 915        | 90.9   | 13.2  |
| 6                   | Charter     | Preschool    | PK3-4  | 60         | 26.7   | 10    |
| 5                   | District    | Elementary   | K-5    | 542        | 29.5   | 16.4  |

### **Alicia**

Alicia is an elementary school principal serving grades K-5. She has been a principal for nine years at the same school. A career switcher, Alicia was “impressed by how educators are able to help and support students with determining who they are and how to be successful and really giving them the resources and the support to do that.” As a teacher, Alicia never considered herself on a path to the principalship; she thought the role mainly consisted of managerial tasks. After becoming a reading specialist and having multiple opportunities to support different schools, Alicia was inspired by principals who demonstrated instructional leadership and led professional learning for teachers. Alicia’s philosophy of education considers

the whole child including academic, social, emotional, and mental health. She believes a balance between those four areas will support students to become the best version of themselves.

### **Angela**

Angela is a high school principal serving approximately 300 students. She has been a principal for five years, including a year as a resident principal. Prior to her current position, Angela was a teacher, department chairperson, instructional coach, and assistant principal at the same school she now leads. She is in her 14<sup>th</sup> year at S.O.A.R. Public Charter School (pseudonym). Angela was inspired by her parents and mentors to realize “the doors that are open” and to embrace opportunities “to just keep going”. In describing her philosophy of education, Angela highlighted the need for creative thinking and engagement so that each student can create, design, and develop his own thinking.

### **Deshawna**

Deshawna is principal of the district’s largest K-8 elementary/middle school which is located within a mile of her home. She is currently in her 12<sup>th</sup> year as principal. Deshawna has served in two schools as principal. Deshawna always wanted to become an educator but was pushed in a different direction. As a career switcher, from finance to education, Deshawna earned a lot of attention as a successful first year teacher. Because of her success, she was offered several leadership positions within the 6 years she taught elementary aged children. Equity is at the center of Deshawna’s philosophy of education. Deshawna shared the importance of educators having a strong work ethic and passion for children. She believes without a passion for children, it is impossible to ensure equitable opportunities for each child.

**Elizabeth**

Elizabeth is in her tenth year as principal of an elementary school. This is the only school Elizabeth has led. As a child, Elizabeth imagined growing up and becoming a teacher. Her dream of becoming a teacher turned into a passion after observing poor treatment of students with disabilities while in high school. Elizabeth recalled, “that experience had an emotional effect on me, and I began to develop a passion for wanting to help and support because, for one thing, I knew they could learn.” Elizabeth’s philosophy of education stems from her servant leadership style. She believes educators should work to ensure the needs of all students are met.

**Evelyn**

Evelyn has been an elementary school principal for eight years. She is currently serving in her second principalship at a charter school. Prior to the principalship, Evelyn served as an elementary teacher, reading specialist, and literacy coach. As a teacher, Evelyn was encouraged by her principal to take advantage of professional learning opportunities that would prepare her for school administration. She reflected, “I thought I would just be this dynamite rock star reading specialist and literacy coach and had no aspirations of being a principal.” Evelyn describes her philosophy of education as a belief that all children can learn regardless of socioeconomic circumstances. She referred to education as the deserved social justice.

**Felicia**

Felicia has eight years of administrative experience and is currently in her fifth year as principal of middle grades in a K-8 charter school. Felicia explained her path to leadership began as a child. She shared, “So, it was something that I was innately supposed to do. I spent my childhood years teaching lessons from books that we had pulled out of the dumpster from the school up the street.” After college, Felicia worked for a clinical research company for five

years before transitioning into education to fulfill her passion for helping others. Felicia described her philosophy of education as a belief that everyone can learn, given the right opportunities and level of support to shape quality learning experiences.

### **Jalisa**

Jalisa is in her fifth year as principal of a small PK3-4 charter school. While in college, Jalisa was encouraged to switch her major from social work to education due to her being a good writer. Jalisa's leadership journey started when a principal asked her to interview for an instructional coach position. From there, Jalisa embraced leading others and set a goal of becoming a principal. She was motivated by a desire to build efficacy among teachers and to have positive impact on a greater scale. When asked about her philosophy of education, Jalisa shared, "Everyone deserves to know the right answer." Jalisa believes everyone should have the opportunity to succeed and to know the actions that led to that success.

### **Jazmine**

Jazmine has been an elementary school principal for ten years. Since childhood, Jazmine wanted to be a teacher. As a high school student, Jazmine organized a group of tutors to volunteer at the local middle school. Her passion for helping others continued as an education major in college. As a teacher, Jazmine's principal gave her opportunities to lead. She reflected, "My principal really pushed me into those leadership roles, so I was like the department chair and the grade level chair." It was her principal who recommended she take advantage of opportunities to grow; thus, supporting Jazmine's journey to the principalship. Jazmine is a firm believer that all children can learn. Jazmine believes when students are "put in the right environment and put with the right teacher in front of them," no matter a student's socio-economic background or disability, learning can occur.

**Katie**

Katie is completing her fifth year as principal of a middle school charter for girls. Katie's choice to become an educator was her entry point into social justice. She reflected, "My life's work is not really about education, my life's work is really about empowering in underserved communities". She hopes her students will in turn teach within their communities. After experiencing success as a teacher, Katie wanted to coach teachers to have similar success. After leading a team of teachers and influencing instruction for over 125 students, Katie began training for the principalship. Katie believes children must be masters of content to be masters of their world. Katie reflected, "Education should be one that is increasing scholar agency so children should walk away feeling really empowered to do something with this education."

**Sadie**

Sadie is a principal of twelve years in the same district she completed her K-12 education. First inspired by an elementary teacher who showed interest in her educational development, Sadie wanted to be an educator so that she too could have a positive impact within her community. As a teacher, Sadie was inspired by her growth and the growth of her colleagues after working with a resident principal for one year. Sadie reflected, "I was just kind of wowed by the work that she did and how she impacted us and how my instruction changed." This inspiration led Sadie to begin her career as a principal. Sadie shared, "Children do not care what you know until they know how much you care," when asked about her philosophy of education.

**Tanisha**

Tanisha is the principal of an early learning school with preschool aged students. She has been a principal for five years. Tanisha was an elementary school teacher for seven years before being encouraged to leave the classroom and become a principal. After completing a district-

funded professional learning program, Tanisha was placed in Aberdeen Public Schools principal pipeline. After serving as an assistant principal for three years, Tanisha became a principal.

Tanisha's philosophy of education is rooted in the belief that all children can learn, and it is the responsibility of educators to tap into their potential.

### **Xavier**

Xavier is in her fifth year as an elementary school principal. While in high school, Xavier enjoyed the process of teaching and learning. She became a teacher to work with students with special needs, specifically students with learning disabilities. Pursuing the principalship was a natural progression as Xavier wanted to multiply her impact by helping other teachers and serving more students. She had the support of many who guided and supported her path to the principalship. Xavier's philosophy of education is centered around the belief that every child can learn and laying a solid foundation for learning is essential to the growth and development of children.

### **Results**

This section contains the results of the data analysis process. The results are organized thematically followed by responses to each research question. The findings are explored from data collected through interviews, a questionnaire, and the review of documents.

### **Theme Development**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence APS. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documents review. Interviews were recorded via Zoom, questionnaires were completed electronically, and documents were reviewed electronically. Creswell and Poth (2018) highlight the importance of theme development in the data analysis stage of research writing,

“Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data for analysis; then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes.” After transcribing, organizing, and analyzing the data, I used tables, with the assistance of Microsoft Word computer program, to identify short phrases, ideas, and key concepts that emerged. I then built descriptions of the data and applied codes to make sense of the data. This process resulted in the emergent of three themes.

**Table 2**

*Presentation of Themes and Codes*

| Themes                     | Sub-themes                          | Codes   |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| All Means All              | Acceptance of students              | Belief in all students’ abilities<br>Prosperity<br>Love<br>Socioeconomics   |
|                            | Appropriate conditions for learning | Equity<br>Differentiation<br>Teacher effectiveness<br>Collective efficacy<br>Resources<br>Supports and modifications<br>Achievement |
| Commitment to Serve Others | Giving Back                         | Paying it forward<br>Life’s purpose<br>Impact on families<br>Helping others   |
|                            | Serving the Community               | Fulfillment<br>Civicminded<br>Connection  |

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Self-efficacy as a Driver | Problem solver<br>Difference maker<br>Visionary<br>Community Advocate<br>Effectiveness<br>Competitiveness  |
| Continuous Improvement    | More work to be done<br>Solutions oriented<br>Goals oriented<br>Working through challenges<br>Coaching experiences<br>Parents as stakeholders<br>Partnership |

**Theme 1: All means all.** In understanding the factors that lead to principal persistence, the first theme to emerge from the data was the belief that all children can learn. During the interview process, principals were asked to share their philosophy of education. The belief that all children can learn was a clear thread in their responses. Evelyn reflected, “I wholeheartedly believe that all children can learn given whatever circumstances they're coming through the front doors with.” Similarly, Tanisha reflected, “I do believe, like all kids can really learn and I just think we just have to tap into the kids where they are.” Evelyn and Tanisha included acceptance of student diversity in relation to circumstance or readiness. Other principals included in their responses conditions for learning. Xavier shared, “Every child really can learn, they just really need the staples in place; the foundation in place to support their learning process.” Felicia responded, “I believe that everyone can learn, given the right opportunities and level of support, and I believe, with those opportunities and support you can require exposure that helps to shape your learning experience.” Similarly, Jazmine noted, “I’m a firm believer that all children can



learn when they are put in the right environment and put with the right teacher in front of them.”

In addition to responses describing their philosophy of education, principals also included references to the theme All Means All in their responses to questions about factors that influence principal persistence. There were two subthemes that emerged from the theme All Means All: (a) acceptance of students and (b) providing appropriate conditions for learning.

**Acceptance of students.** Every principal shared a commitment to positively impacting all students within their respective schools. Words and phrases related to this commitment illuminated in several schools’ vision or mission statements. One school’s vision statement included college and career preparation for all students, while another school’s vision statement referenced a personalized career plan for every student. Some schools expounded on their commitment to all students including phrases such as “a future where all students, regardless of background or experiences, have access to high-quality learning environments” and another included all students “regardless of their background, have the skills, tools and qualities to develop as leaders in their communities and the world.”

**Appropriate conditions for learning.** Principals talked about the conditions for learning. Jazmine talked about the importance of creating the best environment with the right teachers for children. Sadie shared the importance of students feeling cared for stating, “Children do not care what you know until they know how much you care.” Angela shared the importance of a learning environment that encourages creativity and engagement. The conditions for learning were also present in schools’ public statements about student learning. Alicia’s staff is committed to providing rigorous instructional practices, collaboration, and inclusion. While another school is committed to implementing a character-based program with high academic and social expectations. Some of the schools’ core values included phrases such

as ‘believe in ourselves’, ‘working together to resolve challenges in meaningful ways’, and the sharing of responsibility among staff, parents, and students for the school’s success.

**Theme 2: Commitment to serve others.** Every principal referenced a commitment to serving others. When participants were asked what factors influenced their decision to become a principal, responses included (a) the ability to impact change within a community, (b) a love of teaching others, (c) finding enjoyment in helping others, and (d) seeing a need to champion equity for students. Sadie shared how, as a child, an elementary teacher influenced her trajectory by recognizing her potential, working with her after school, and advocating to be her teacher two consecutive years. Sadie reflected, “It was so monumental in my life that I felt that I wanted to be an educator so that I too could have that level of impact on a child.” Felicia shared, “Through a series of life events, I just think it was a calling for me so I’m very passionate about helping people. I like changing trajectories.” From the coding process, three subthemes emerged: (a) giving back (b) serving the community and (c) self-efficacy as a driver.

**Giving back.** One participant shared a quote from Michelle Obama (2012), “When you’ve worked hard, and done well, and walked through that doorway of opportunity, you do not slam it shut behind you. No, you reach back, and you give other folks the same chances that helped you succeed.” Principals shared the impact teachers, mentors, and family members had on their trajectory and how they hoped to have a similar impact on the lives of their students. For Jalisa, like Sadie and Felicia, the desire to help others learn was the result of a series of events. Jalisa shared, as a young teacher, a principal saw leadership potential in her and supported her development by giving opportunities for her to professionally develop other teachers. Jalisa recalled, “I kind of got the bug and realized that I really liked leadership. I

wanted to impart that on other teachers to ensure that I could somehow make a greater impact and that felt good.”

**Serving the community.** “At its core, the basic tenet of servant leadership is that the individual wanting to be a leader does so out of a desire to serve one's community, institution, or organization” (Huyen & Willian, 2020). Servant-leader school principals prioritize meeting the needs of their staff and students above achieving self-interest and material possession (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harhi, El-Din, 2016). Principals spoke about the impact their work has on the greater community and their hope for students to impact their respective communities. Katie shared, “My choice to become an educator was really like my entry point into social justice. So, my life’s work is not really about education, my life work is really about empowering underserved communities.” She continued, “Because when I think about them, I think about my own community as a black woman.” Katie’s decision to serve a socially disadvantaged community was to empower that community and her students to “go back and be empowered and have the skills needed to transform their own communities.” As a servant leader, Elizabeth believes her role involves providing a service to the community, teachers, and students. All principals talked about their primary role being of service to their students and ensuring high quality learning experiences. Deshawna shared, “I really wanted to be around children and help. All of our kids need the opportunity because all of our kids can be successful.”

**Self-efficacy as a driver.** Leader self-efficacy is defined as the leader’s beliefs about their own capabilities to motivate others and organize courses of action to attain effective, sustainable performance for their organization (Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2012). According to Zhang, Cao, Shen, and Qian (2019), “Self-efficacy can influence individuals’ motivation for active engagement, their perseverance when dealing with hardships or failures,

and the amount of effort they invest in pursuing personal goals.” Although many principals did not set a goal to lead a school when beginning their career as an educator, they developed an aspiration to lead as the result of being an effective teacher and wanting to use their talents to impact more students within a school community. Sadie shared, “I always only wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be directly connected to student achievement.” Once Sadie experienced a high level of success as a teacher, she wanted to share her knowledge with other teachers in hopes of them experiencing similar success. As a young teacher, Jalisa thought of principals as seasoned professionals with tones of experience. After serving in the role of instructional coach, Jalisa began to build self-efficacy around her ability to lead. Jalisa liked leadership and being able to impart wisdom on other teachers to ensure she could make a greater impact. Angela shared, “It is awesome to see and feel the fruit of the labor.”

**Theme 3: Continuous improvement.** In understanding the factors that lead to principal persistence, the third theme, continuous improvement, emerged from the data. In K-12 education, continuous improvement may be the result of a school or district’s constant commitment to researching and implementing quality improvement efforts that are informed by data. According to Yurkofsky, Peterson, and Mehta (2020), “To be effective, improvement efforts need to attend not simply to data, evidence, and iterative cycles but also to the relational elements of schools, which can serve as invisible enablers and barriers to change.” References to continuous improvement were noted when principals responded to interview questions related to challenges as urban school principals and district-led supports. Evelyn spoke about the district’s efforts to sustain a high-quality workforce by implementing a support system for ineffective teachers, while Xavier spoke about leveraging her colleagues as support. Alicia talked about the need for alignment throughout the school district. Alicia reflected, “One thing that is definitely a

difficult challenge is making decisions that are in alignment with the school system's initiatives and goals." Because APS is a large district, she feels decisions that impact all schools "may not necessarily be as tailored for the specific needs of your school".

Other principals applauded the school district's efforts for providing mentors within their first few years of their principalship. Sadie shared, "Williams (pseudonym), she was monumental in my success and getting through that first year, she came to support me with my collaborative planning meetings." Elizabeth shared, "Having the coaches come in on a regular basis, I could look forward to that." Jazmine also reflected on the impact of a coach in her first few years as a principal stating, "We had an ongoing coach and ongoing support so that was pivotal for me, because I can call up anytime I need help. They would be able to come in, observe what's taking place, and give me critical feedback." Additionally, continuous improvement was also discussed in terms of parental involvement. Sadie shared, "As long as I build relationships with the children, even in the absence of their parents, I am able to get them to see their potential." Tanisha shared the need for parents to understand the importance of early learning stating, "They see us as a daycare babysitter, so they really don't see the importance of early childhood and why students, need to be there every day, and they need to come prepared for school." Parental involvement has been linked to increased academic outcomes for children (Mahuro & Hungi, 2016).

### **Research Questions Responses**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. To anchor the study, a central question and three sub-questions were identified. The research questions that grounded the study focused on how urban school principals described their motivations to persist in the

role of principal within an urban school setting. Participants gave powerful, detailed accounts through one-on-one interviews, a questionnaire, and sharing documents that gave insight into their school's theory of action. Responses to the research questions are shared below.

**Central question: What are principal descriptions of their efforts to persist in their administrative positions in an urban school district?** The principals who participated in this study were given the opportunity to present their reflections, thoughts, and feelings about principal persistence through one-on-one interviews and a questionnaire. During interviews, there was a high level of transparency as principals shared what motivated them to enter the teaching profession and what fueled their aspirations for the principalship. Principals also shared what supports they were offered, and which supports were the most beneficial as they navigated the first few years of their principalship. Principals described the challenges of leading an urban school and what intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors influence their ability to persist as urban school principals. From the data collected, themes were identified. "In qualitative research, themes are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The themes that emerged were: (a) all means all, (b) commitment to serve others, and (c) continuous improvement. The following sub-themes were also identified: (a) acceptance of students, (b) appropriate conditions for learning, (c) giving back, (d) serving the community, and (e) self-efficacy as a driver. These themes mostly give insight into the adaptive nature of the principalship, with little focus on the technical side of the work.

The sub-themes acceptance of students, giving back, serving the community, and self-efficacy as a driver are related to the adaptive nature of leading in an urban school. According to Güss, Burger, and Dörner (2017), "Motivation intensity varies among individuals based on

perception of the stimulus and the adaptive abilities of the individual.” Principals’ reflections commonly surfaced their ability to be open-minded, flexible, responsive, and focused on the needs of teachers and students. Felicia shared a goal of broadening her impact to be able to make even more of a difference. To do so, Felicia acknowledged the need to be open-minded to professional learning and flexible around new initiatives. Angela talked about being “driven by knowing that there's a space to keep going, that there's more work to be done.” Angela’s responsiveness to the needs of staff and students resonated when she described a life-threatening situation at her school comparing the quickness of her actions to a “flipped switch.” The sub-theme, appropriate conditions for learning, is an example of a technical component of work urban school principals addressed. Jazmine discussed supporting students and ensuring all students would have the appropriate resources to match their individual needs including the “right teacher”. Xavier discussed the impact of inheriting “people who potentially don't need to be in front of children.”

**Sub-question 1: How do principals in urban schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?** The goal of this question was to understand and gain insight into the intrinsic motivations that help urban school principals persist. Related subthemes to this question include: (a) giving back and (b) serving the community. Intrinsic motivation is often viewed as a principal’s source of vitality (Zhang, Pi, Li, & Hu, 2021). During the interview process principals were able to express which intrinsic motivations influenced their persistence as urban school principals. Some principals shared the desire to make a difference and improve possibilities for children while others shared being intrinsically motivated by a calling or purpose. Principals also expressed an intrinsic motivation as the ability to solve problems. Alicia shared, “By nature, I am a problem solver. When problems arise, it

doesn't necessarily cause frustration for me, it actually causes me to think about doing something a different way.” Felicia shared, “I am a solution-oriented person. I like to see things resolved; I like victory. I like meeting a challenge and working through it.” Jalisa shared:

My desire and life's purpose that motivated me to keep going, to wake up every day, was the factor that it [educating children] was bigger than I. And so, when you're not waking up for just you every day, you wake up at six o'clock in the morning, so you can get there before everybody and make sure that every single person that you're going to impact is going to come away with something.

**Sub-question 2: How do principals in urban schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?** The goal of this question was to understand and gain insight into the extrinsic motivations that help urban school principals persist. Gupta (2020) defines extrinsic motivation as “the performance of an activity in order to attain some external separable outcome.” The two related sub-themes for this research question are: (a) appropriate conditions for learning and (b) self-efficacy as a driver. When asked to describe the extrinsic motivators that influences their ability to persist, some principals shared competitiveness or the feedback they receive when staff and students are successful. Other principals shared salary, benefits, or certifications and title as an external motivator. Deshawna shared “we can’t discount money”. Angela was motivated by earning her principal certification stating, “Being able to strive for that and to see that I was able to actually obtain it in a world where it’s very busy working in the charter field.” Angela is the first principal at her charter school to hold a school principal certification.

Responses to sub-question two had the most variability in principals’ responses. Additional responses ranged from other principals’ support and the impact of families to the will



and drive of students. Evelyn reflected, “I did have a lot of support initially as a new principal from not only my new leader coaches, that I could call on all the time, but also from my associate superintendent at the time.” The support of a leadership coach, supervisor, and colleagues helped Evelyn to persist, especially in the first few years of the principalship.

**Sub-question 3: How do principals in urban schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence?** The goal of this question was to understand and gain insight into the altruistic motivations that help urban school principals persist. Altruism can be described as the selfless concern for the wellbeing of others without expecting anything in return. Acceptance of Students is the related sub-theme to this question. Principals’ responses uniformly spoke about serving the community and making a difference for children. Angela talked about having “the ability to make a difference in someone else's future.” Felicia recalled experiences from her childhood that built altruism as a value stating, “I think that those opportunities to do community service and those opportunities to serve gave me a finger on the pulse type of understanding that this could be something that would be useful or helpful to people.” Deshawna, who is currently eligible for retirement, shared:

This is my third career, and I could easily retire. But it’s also about can I make an impact and why I’m here in the first place. Now, I have a chance to make an impact because I do have the tenure. I can make a huge difference in what happens to the kids in this school because I can speak with authority to all stakeholders. All the things that I’ve done and proven, they [stakeholders] know I’m here for kids and not for myself.

### **Summary**

Chapter Four provided an overview of the twelve principals included in this study and described the results of the data analysis conducted to understand participants’ reflections of

their efforts to persist as urban school principals. The participant description includes the number of years each principal has served in the role, insight into why they chose to become an educator, their philosophy of education, and school demographics data. The chapter also includes the thematic development process and provides the codes, themes, and subthemes identified in the analysis process. The three themes that emerged were (a) all means all, (b) commitment to serve others, and (c) continuous improvement. Additionally, the chapter provides insight into the central research question and the three sub-questions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. By exploring these different types of motivation, the researcher attempted to fill a gap in the research related to understanding reasons that contribute to urban school principals' decisions to remain in the principalship for 5 or more years. This chapter includes a summary of findings, a discussion of theoretical, empirical, and practical implications, and the delimitations and limitations of the study. Additionally, this chapter provides recommendations for future research.

### **Summary of Findings**

This case study investigated descriptions of school principals' efforts to persist in their administrative positions in urban schools. Twelve principals shared experiences that assisted in answering three research sub-questions by describing how intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and altruistic motivation impacts their ability to persist as urban school leaders. When principals are describing influences that impact their ability to persist in the principalship, three main themes emerged: (a) all means all, (b) commitment to serve others, and continuous improvement. There were two subthemes that emerged from the theme All Means All: (a) acceptance of students and (b) providing appropriate conditions for learning. Additionally, subthemes (a) giving back (b) serving the community, and (c) self-efficacy as a driver emerged from the theme Commitment to Serve Others.

**RQ1: How do principals in urban schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?**

Research question one was answered by the common themes that emerged from the data analysis process. Principals reported the desire to make a difference, improve possibilities for children, and lead urban schools to fulfill their purpose or calling. Principals also shared the ability to solve problems as an intrinsic motivator. Tanisha described leading in the principalship as a calling and the reason she remains in the role. Several principals described their personal belief that all children can learn when provided the appropriate supports. Principals reported holding themselves accountable for ensuring students receive high-quality learning opportunities and access to various supports to aid in that endeavor. Angela ensures students have opportunities to be creative thinkers and experience meaningful interactions with teachers and peers to create, design, and develop their own thinking. Every principal shared a commitment to positively impacting all students within their respective schools.

**RQ2: How do principals in urban schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence?**

Research question two was answered by the common themes that emerged from the data analysis process. Principals reported competitiveness as one extrinsic motivator. Jalisa spoke about a competitiveness among schools within APS. Principals also spoke about the feedback they receive when staff and students are successful. Felicia stated, “Yes, I like to win. Other schools are looking at your scores.” Principals named certification and salary as an extrinsic motivator. Angela shared, “Yes, there's a weight to it. But there's also a sense of respect that you earn in time.” Although principals’ responses varied, two related sub-themes were identified that related to research question two: (a) appropriate conditions for learning and

(b) self-efficacy as a driver. This study revealed attainment of some external outcomes are valued as contributing factors that influence persistence for urban school principals.

**RQ 3: How do principals in urban schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence?**

Research question three was answered by the common themes that emerged from the data analysis process. Principals described selfless concern for the wellbeing of their students and communities without expecting anything in return. Acceptance of students is the related sub-theme to this question. Principals' responses evenly reflected their commitment to serving the community and making a difference for children. Xavier spoke about morals and values being centered around helping children and the community. Jazmine spoke about the impact a quality education can have on one's trajectory and her goal of encouraging a love for education within her school community.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. Although sustained school improvement may take up to five years to accomplish, less than 30% of public-school principals have 3 years or more experience (NCES, 2012). It is critical to understand the experiences of urban school principals who have chosen to remain in the principalship. As a result of this study, the motivating factors that lead to school leaders persisting in the principalship are revealed. This section of the chapter examines the study findings in relationship to the empirical and theoretical literature previously discussed. The section also explores how the case study findings confirm, extend, diverge, and add contributions to previous

research conducted to understand the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors that motivate urban school principals to persist in the role for at least five years.

### **Empirical Literature Discussion**

Empirical literature is grounded in observation, original research, and objectivity. It is reported in a manner that allows interested stakeholders or researchers to precisely understand the methodology and results of the study. By exploring intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation, this study extends previous research because it focuses on understanding reasons that contribute specifically to urban school principals' decisions to remain in the principalship for 5 or more years. As continuous improvement initiatives remain the focus of urban school districts, principals' ability to persist in the role, for more than five years, is of great interest and value to school district leaders and school communities. Themes emerged from the data analysis process which supported answering each of the research sub-questions.

**Intrinsic motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence? A common theme from previous qualitative research that aligned to the current study is principals view themselves intrinsically as problem solvers. Bauer, Silver, and Schwartz (2017) reported, "pull forces that led to principals' persistence were their sense of self-efficacy and/or desire for challenges." Angela referred to herself as a "problem-solver" and someone who embraces challenges. Felicia described herself as "solutions-orientated" when faced with challenges. Tan (2016) reported, "Principals need to address challenges of resource constraints related to the shortages of qualified teachers and support staff." Xavier talked about staffing as a challenge and her commitment to having "the right people in the seat." Although principals are faced with challenges daily, Hancock and

Müller (2009) found principals are committed to making critical decisions followed by decisive action.

Hancock, Müller, Wang, and Hachen (2019) found “principals were attracted to their leadership roles by opportunities to influence their learning environments in order to have a positive impact on teachers and students.” Another common theme was improving possibilities for children. Sadie spoke about children needing love, direction, and guidance and her ability to lead a school when adults are working in service of children. Several principals included messages related to growth and possibility in their schools’ mission and vision statements. One school envisions a world where every student will have the skills, tools and qualities to develop as leaders in their communities. Another school envisioned all students being college or career ready to be contributing members of their community. The principalship is a highly influential position with opportunities to create, nurture, and sustain supportive learning environments that positively impact student growth and development.

**Extrinsic motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence? Findings from previous qualitative research that related to the current study is salary. Baker, Punswick, and Belt (2010) determined a principal’s “relative salary, compared to peers in the same labor market, exerts a consistent influence on stability— the higher the salary, the more likely a principal is stable and less likely he or she is to move to another school.” Frank (2007) concluded schools with “higher proportions of at-risk students and less-qualified teachers are disadvantaged with respect to their ability to retain principals”. Frank (2007) also offers higher salaries can be used to compensate principals for leading schools with large population of at-risk students. Alicia shared, “The level of pay for the principalship versus the level of pay for maybe some other similar types of positions - the

principalship often pays more than some of those other positions.” According to Cieminski (2018), principals do not regard increasing salaries as a strong strategy for principal retention but expressed that providing competitive salaries may help. Deshawna stated, “We can’t discount money no matter how we say it. But I’m a believer that principal money or salaries and benefits, and all of that, are more of a disincentive than incentive.” Deshawna continued, “I think as a district we need to start looking at that [principal salaries]. If it’s not a disincentive, I think that most principals would stay.”

**Altruistic Motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence? Altruism is fundamentally based on a concern for others. There exists a gap in the research on altruism and principal leadership. A common theme in previous research that aligns to the findings of this study is principals lead to make a difference for children. According to Ellis and Brown (2015), principals enter the role to impact the lives of students, making transformational change to improve the likelihood of their success. Angela shared her desire to make a difference for her students stating, “I want to create opportunities so that someone else will be able to have doors open for them so they can see the world and travel and learn new things and get a sense of self awareness.” Deshawna stated, “If I didn’t think I could make a difference then I would walk out of the door.” There is a positive relationship between altruism, commitment, and job satisfaction (Koster, 2014). Deshawna continued, “It’s about can I make an impact and why I’m here in the first place.”

According to Dolph (2017), “The context of urban educational systems often differs from other districts due to a variety of factors, such as student demographic composition, higher rates of community poverty, high teacher turnover, and limited fiscal resources, to name a few.”



The study findings also diverged from previous research. Baker, Punswick, Belt (2010) concluded “school racial composition—specifically percentage of students who are Black—may lead to instability and greater likelihood of a second move” within a principal’s tenure. Principals did not relate the likelihood of leaving their school to the school’s racial composition. Instead, principals spoke about being committed to serving in their school communities. Katie spoke about antiracism work, intentionally seeking out an underserved urban community. Katie stated, “You should be in an urban school district for a reason. You shouldn't be here for no other reason but making sure children are learning, succeeding, and moving”. Evelyn proclaimed, “Schools are responsible for making sure every child, despite socio economic status, race, or class, is prepared for the workforce.”

### **Theoretical Literature Discussion**

On average, urban school principals’ persistence is low in high poverty communities. This study helped to understand how Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg’s theory of work and motivation, and the Self-determination theory applies to the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic factors that motivate urban school principals to persist in the principalship. As a key component in the research process, the theoretical discussion relates relevant theories, models, concepts, and approaches to guide the conception and implementation of the study (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Hermon, 2007).

**Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory.** Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory used the principle of relative potency to arrange basic human needs in a definite hierarchy. Principals in this study were motivated to persist in the principalship for a variety of reasons including a commitment to ensuring high quality learning experiences where all children are accepted. Principals spoke about the appropriate conditions for learning including an effective teacher,

differentiated supports, and resources. Elizabeth referenced the basic educational needs of students when describing her philosophy of education stating, “They [children] are all entitled to the same education; to be treated in the same way.” Jalisa spoke about meeting students’ educational needs by “empowering teachers to know what the right strategies are for their students and so that they can ultimately feel confident in their career.” Once lower needs, such as physiological and safety needs, are satisfied higher needs, such as social, esteem, and self-actualization emerge (Maslow, 1954). Angela shared her journey of “growing as a leader in the very place that [she] began” and the enjoyment, satisfaction, and sense of fulfillment she experiences when supporting teachers to “capture the minds” of students.

**Herzberg’s theory of work and motivation.** Herzberg’s model of work and motivation is grounded in the belief that the presence of one set of job characteristics or incentives leads to satisfaction at work, while a different set of job characteristics leads to dissatisfaction at work (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg’s stance on motivation defines the motivation as an inner force which drives people to achieve personal and organizational goals (Khanna, 2015). Herzberg’s theory identifies a need for organizations to focus on improving both motivation and hygiene influences to retain employees. Although there exists a gap in the research for direct correlation between Herzberg’s theory and principal persistence, the study revealed two motivating factors, solving problems and serving the community.

Solving problems is a quintessential characteristic of effective educational leadership (Visone, 2018). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) noted principals’ ability to navigate situational awareness daily to anticipate challenges that may occur. Whether a principal embraces a directive, behavioral, analytical, or conceptual decision-making style (Williams, 2006), principals must contend with problems and be prepared to make informed decisions daily.

Angela described herself as a “problem solver” and Felicia described herself as “solutions oriented”. Included in one of the school’s core values is the recognition of challenges and a written commitment to focusing on solutions. Ultimately, principals recognize problems and challenges will arise frequently. As such, principals strive to meet each situation with the goal of making the best decision for children. Principals, especially urban school principals tasked with transformational work, are expected to “employ situationally-appropriate strategies for improvement, including transformational and incremental, adaptive approaches and attention to different phases of implementation” (NPBEA, 2015) when solving problems.

**Self-determination theory.** Edward Deci and Richard Ryan empirical theory of motivation focuses on the degree in which behavior is self-motivated and self-determined (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory explores human behavior and personality development with an emphasis on differentiating types of motivation along a continuum. The continuum identifies intrinsic motivation as important for completing a task, whereas extrinsic motivation reflects acceptance of the value or utility of a task (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Urban principals are often faced with significant challenges beyond those confronting their counterparts including students who experience poverty or limited English proficiency and a shortage of properly certified mathematics, science, and special education teachers (Dolph, 2016). Uniformly the principals in this study expressed the belief that all children can learn. In alignment with the self-determination theory, principals are intrinsically motivated to complete a task; the task of ensuring high-quality educational experiences for all students. One school is focused on fulfilling this mission to creating a supportive learning environment where students’ potential is maximized through rigorous courses, character development, and leadership opportunities.

Another school is focused on becoming a great school, with great students and staff, within a great community.

Principals described their work, or daily task, as helping others. Xavier shared personal morals and values grounded in help others. Jalisa reflected on her task, which is grounded in her Christian faith, stating, “I believe that I’m not here for me. The things that I’ve been gifted to do, I’m here to help others.” As the first college graduate in her family, Jazmine shared how she is intrinsically motivated to help students understand how prioritizing education can help them reach their goals. At the core of leading an urban school is the goal of effectively leading, developing, advocating, and enacting a “shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015).

### **Implications**

District leaders, principal supervisors, and principals can use this case study’s results to understand the influences that lead to principal persistence. The implications of this study are provided to help increase principal persistence which leads to sustained school leadership, continued student achievement, and lasting community support. This section includes the theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of the study. Also included are specific recommendations for district leaders, principal supervisors, and principals.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Grounded in motivational theory, Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs, Herzberg’s (1959) theory of work and motivation, and self-determination theory (2000) provided a foundation to better understand principals’ decisions to remain in urban public-school leadership. This study helped to clarify how these theories apply to the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in urban schools. According to Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs, people

are motivated for various reasons. Principals shared reflections associated with the levels of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy. When asked about the support received in the first year of the principalship, Evelyn shared how her leadership coach would monitor her transition by "checking in" and "always embracing" her as a leader. Jalisa shared, "I pretty much had a fail-proof first couple of years" because of the support she received from her coach. The support of leadership coaches and feeling a part of a community are aligned to the lower-level needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Principals also shared reflections associated with the highest level, self-actualization. Angela described herself as a "problem-solver" and someone who embraces challenges, while Felicia described herself as "solutions-orientated".

According to Herzberg's (1959) theory of work and motivation there are some job factors that result in satisfaction while others prevent dissatisfaction. Research participants identified various obstacles faced by urban school principals and the motivating factors that encouraged persistence despite prevailing challenges. Deshawna shared, "You must be motivated from within to really analyze the needs and the root causes of what a particular school is facing."

Also explored was Deci and Ryan (2000) self-determination theory where basic psychological needs are the core of personality growth and integration, well-being, and positive social development. The self-determination theory includes three basic psychological needs: (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness. Angela spoke about her journey from teacher to principal and becoming one of her school's first certified principals stating, "It is awesome to see the fruit of your labor." Alicia, Felicia, and Jalisa talked about having the confidence to tackle different situations as "problem solvers".

## **Empirical and Practical Implications**

Each research participant engaged in a one-on-one interview with the researcher, shared documents to be reviewed by the researcher, and completed a questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in urban schools. Empirical implications are motives or actions not directly observed but suggested by the resulting themes from the data analysis process. Practical implications are outcomes based on specific events, logic, and reasoning. Presented by research sub-question, this section focuses on the empirical and practical implications of the study.

**Intrinsic motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that intrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence? An intrinsic motivator that impacts principal persistence is service. “The priority for a servant leader is not their aspirations as a leader, nor the goals of the organization, but to the people that they serve as a leader” (Crippen & Willows, 2019). Xavier shared, “I think intrinsically it's just a part of what I enjoy, leading and supporting children. I just enjoy this work to my core. I'm a servant leader to the core.” Deshawna stated, “I am a servant. My job is to provide a service. I provide a service for my community, for my teachers, and for my students.” Evelyn spoke about wanting to “serve the community” with a team of like-minded individuals. According to Schroeder (2016), “Servant leadership starts with desire.” For principals to demonstrate persistence, the will to serve must be present. “Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015).

**Extrinsic motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that extrinsic motivation impacts principal persistence? An extrinsic motivator that influences principal persistence is impact. School leadership is a significant component to teacher effectiveness and

student achievement (Anderson, 2017). Principals in this study discussed their impact on students, staff, and the community as a motivating factor leading to principal persistence. Xavier is motivated by the messages from families when her team has made a positive impact. Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay (2021) asserted principals' contributions to student achievement are close to the average effects of teachers. Katie's philosophy of education included increasing scholar agency. For principals to demonstrate persistence, the goal of impact must be present. "Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and cultural responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015). Principal impact is present through the development of staff by empowering and nurturing collective responsibility for all adults to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students.

**Altruistic Motivation.** How do principals in urban schools perceive that altruistic motivation impacts principal persistence? An altruistic motivator that impacts principal persistence is the ability to help others. Deshawna stated, "I can make a difference." With staggering statistics revealing a 32-point gap in mathematics scores between fourth-grade students in high-poverty schools and those in low-poverty schools (NCES, 2020), urban school principals are needed more than ever to make a difference in urban schools and communities. When asked if there are altruistic factors that influence her persistence, Angela replied, "I have the ability to make a difference in someone's future. Just being able to open doors and create opportunities, even if it's just having a conversation or having a moment when I'm challenging [students'] thinking."

Effective urban school principals find ways to encourage growth, create positive change, and prioritize the needs of students and the community. For principals to demonstrate persistence, a core value of helping others must be present. Principals advocate for their school

community and lead by example when communicating the importance of education and student needs. Principals set the conditions for their leadership to help others by preparing the school community for improvement, promoting readiness, and instilling mutual commitment and accountability (NPBEA, 2015).

**Recommendations to Stakeholders.** The recommendations provided because of this study will help to increase principal persistence which leads to sustained school leadership, continued student achievement, and lasting community support.

**District leaders.** The lack of principal persistence has serious consequences for student achievement, teacher turnover, and community engagement (Heffernan, 2021; Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). Principal turnover presents as a costly cycle to the school community and financially for districts. Districts spend approximately \$75,000 to prepare, hire, and place a new principal (SLN, 2014). According to School Leaders Network (2014), “For a typical urban school district with 110 schools, investments made to draw retention to the same rate as typical affluent schools (20% turnover) would save the district 330K annually.” Districts can help combat principal turnover by being intentional about language and actions around principal persistence. While the research on principal persistence is emerging, the data on the impact of principal turnover is vast. Districts can leverage research and begin the conversation of principal persistence during principal induction programs.

Principal pipelines involve talent management activities “that fall within a school district's scope of responsibility when it comes to school leaders, including leader standards, preservice preparation opportunities for assistant principals and principals, selective hiring and placement, and on-the-job induction, evaluation, and support” (Gates, Baird, Master, & Chavez-Herrerias, 2019). Districts can prioritize and differentiate professional learning and support for



principals. Districts can make meaningful selections of mentor principals that serve as principal coaches for first- and second-year principals. Districts can create effective structures for hiring a quality school-based workforce and terminating consistently underperforming staff who are diminishers of quality education. Districts can also support principals in communicating gains in student achievement, school culture, and parental engagement to rebuild and restore community perception of underperforming schools. Principals enter urban schools with a desire to help others, impact communities, service the community, and create lasting opportunities for children.

**Principal Supervisors.** Principal supervisors directly support principals' instructional leadership development. They are tasked with supporting school improvement planning across a set of schools to ensure successful implementation of the districts' vision for instructional excellence and equity. Urban school principal supervisors lead change at scale. As such, principal supervisors are uniquely positioned to encourage principal persistence. As the chief coach, mentor, and evaluator of the school principal, principal supervisors can create trusting relationships with principals and work to build principals' self-efficacy for decision making, problem solving, and innovation. Principal supervisors can create an ongoing cadence for supporting principals that is specific to individual principal needs and school context. Joint work experiences between principal supervisors and principals provide opportunities for principals' professional learning and development. Key tasks such as (a) development and use of tools, (b) classroom observations, and (c) planning, facilitating, and reflecting on teams (Thessin, 2021) helps principals to experience success which leads to master experiences and principal persistence.

**Principals.** Urban school principals are tasked with developing "an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015).

First, principals must clearly understand their motivation for education and leadership; their “why” for leading in a school. Principals can then build self-efficacy by leading with their “why” as a central motivator and making decisions for the best interest of children. Principals can build trusting collegial relationships to create a support system. Principals can celebrate wins along the way by exploring their achievement data, conversing with families, and having personal reflections on their growth and support for others.

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher which describe the boundaries of the study. The purpose of this case study was to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools. The first delimiting choice was to focus on one urban school district. Aberdeen Public Schools represented a “common case” of an underperforming urban school district and encompassed the circumstances and conditions of everyday situations in urban schools. Principals serving in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities encounter several challenges on their journey while transforming urban schools (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Leveraging the perspectives of principals in an urban city with severe needs in both schools and the community was significant in representing the experiences of urban principals. The second delimitation was to select principals with at least five years of consecutive experience leading an urban school. It was important to capture the reflections of principals who have demonstrated persistence for at least five years, given the significance of school improvement work requiring at least five years to be sustainable. (Fullan, 2001).

This study included several noteworthy limitations. The first limiting factor was the size of the study. With only 12 principals selected to participate in the study, the data analysis

process was limited. The study was conducted using one school district. Opening the study to multiple urban school districts may have resulted in a broader knowledge of motivating factors that assist with principal persistence. Additionally, the participant group lacked diversity. The group included all females and 11 out of 12 participants were African American. As a result, the findings are dissolved of the male and Hispanic perspective, of which both groups are often present in urban school leadership.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Supporting principal persistence has been increasingly important in urban schools (Kelly, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005). “Principals are uniquely positioned to offer insights into why school leaders might leave their schools for more comfortable and rewarding environments—or abandon the profession altogether” (Ritchie, 2019). Urban schools need principals that demonstrate persistence so that transformational change can occur and be sustained (Fullan, 2001). Closing the gap in the literature related to the contributing factors that lead to persistence among urban school principals would be valuable in supporting long-lasting effective school leadership. Observing principals in a school setting would be helpful in capturing principals’ words and actions, and the actions of others that may promote persistence. Examining how principal preparation programs ready principals for the tedious and unpredictable work of an urban school leader may also prove to be meaningful in supporting persistence. Interviewing principal supervisors to gain an understanding of how they work with multiple principals may be helpful to determining district-wide systems that could encourage persistence at scale. A final recommendation is to implement a study that follows first-year principals over the course of five years to understand the nature of persistence within the most critical years of the principalship.

### **Summary**

Principal leadership has the potential to transform a community. I am energized by the persistence of urban school principals to provide strong educational opportunities and improve outcomes for students. This study revealed to me the significance of self-actualization on principal persistence. Altruism is paramount; urban school principals lead with a personal commitment of service to improve and empower. Year-over-year changes in leadership can be challenging not only for students and teachers but for communities. Principals who demonstrate persistence provide the stability required to lead sustainable change within urban communities. Urban school communities deserve the ability to sustain transformative change for students. High-quality persistent principals, therefore, are essential to the effectiveness of our nation's urban schools, especially those serving children with the fewest advantages in life.

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**APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT LETTER**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are currently a principal with at least five years of principal experience in an urban school district and you are willing to participate in this study, you will be asked to (a) complete an electronic screening survey, (b) complete a questionnaire, (c) engage in an auto recorded interview, and (d) provide a range of documentation related to your school. It should take approximately one school day for you to complete the procedures listed. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.]

To participate, complete the linked electronic survey. Once completed, the researcher will contact you to schedule the interview.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

If you choose to participate, you will be entered in a raffle to receive a \$100 American Express® gift card.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Washington  
Liberty University Doctoral Candidate

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF INTRINSIC, EXTRINSIC, AND ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION ON PRINCIPAL PERSISTENCE IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY

Kimberly Washington  
Liberty University, School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on principal persistence in urban schools. You were selected as a possible participant because you have at least 5 years of experience as an urban school principal. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Kimberly Washington, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

**Background Information:** The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools.

**Procedures:** If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete an electronic screening survey
2. Provide sample documents for review (ranging from school's vision/mission statement and minutes from instructional leadership team meetings to your schedule for the current month and parent-teacher organization agendas and minutes)
3. Participate in a recorded interview. The recorded interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes
4. Complete an electronic questionnaire.

**Risks:** The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

**Benefits:** There are no direct benefits to participants.

Benefits to society include significant implications to improving principal persistence which in turn improves outcomes for urban school communities through stronger school/community relationships, improved teacher stability, and improved student achievement.

**Compensation:** Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. Participants will be entered to win a \$100 American Express® gift card.

**Confidentiality:** The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

**Conflicts of Interest Disclosure:** The researcher serves as Senior Director of Program Implementation at New Leaders. To limit potential conflicts all collected data is stripped of identifiers before data is shared publicly. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or your school district. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

**How to Withdraw from the Study:** If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Contacts and Questions:** The researcher conducting this study is Kimberly Washington. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Chris Taylor.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

*Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.*

**Statement of Consent:** I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

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Signature of Participant

Date

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Signature of Investigator

Date

## APPENDIX C: ELECTRONIC SCREENING SURVEY

### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF INTRINSIC, EXTRINSIC, AND ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATION ON PRINCIPAL PERSISTENCE IN AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT:

A CASE STUDY  
Kimberly Washington  
Liberty University  
School of Education

Thank you for your commitment to leading in an urban school and your interest in participating in this study. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivation on principal persistence in Aberdeen Public Schools.

This screening survey will help to identify participants for this study. Please complete the survey and return it to the researcher.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Current School: \_\_\_\_\_ # of years: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous school as principal: \_\_\_\_\_ # of years: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous school as principal: \_\_\_\_\_ # of years: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of years as an urban school principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of principal preparation program: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of years as a teacher in an urban school district: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live in the community in which your school is located: \_\_\_yes or \_\_\_no

Thank you,

Kimberly Washington  
Liberty University Doctoral Student



**APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE**

1. Please introduce yourself to me. (RQ2)
2. Why did you choose to become an educator? (RQ2)
3. Describe your path to the principalship. (RQ2, RQ3)
4. How would you describe your philosophy of education? (RQ2)
5. How does your philosophy of education inform your approach to school leadership?  
(RQ2)
6. What factors influenced your decision to become a principal? (RQ1)
7. What supports did you receive during the first five years of your principalship? (RQ3)
8. What are the most difficult challenges to overcome as an urban school principal?  
(RQ3)
9. Considering the challenges you indicated, what intrinsic influences cause you to persist  
as a principal? (RQ2)
10. What extrinsic influences cause you to persist in the principalship? (RQ3)
11. What altruistic factors cause you to persist in the principalship? (RQ4)
12. Thank you again for your participation in this study. Before we conclude, please  
provide any additional influences, supports, or motivations that impact your  
ability to persist as an urban school principal. (RQ1)

**APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. What district led supports or structures that currently exist would you consider effective to encouraging principal persistence? (RQ3)
2. What, if any, additional supports or structures would you recommend encouraging principal persistence in your school district? (RQ3)
3. What would be the determining factor(s) if your chose to transition out of the principalship within the next three years?

**APPENDIX F: DOCUMENTATION REVIEW TEMPLATE**

| School:               | Principal:                                 | Date:            |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|
| Type of documentation | Participant's description of documentation | Researcher Notes |
|                       |  |                  |
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