An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to Examine The Influence of Principal Servant Leadership on New Teacher Engagement in Urban Public Schools: From the Teacher’s Perspective

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Abstract

Principals in urban public schools are tasked with addressing many challenges and this often leaves very little time to explore the influence of leadership style on the engagement of new teachers. Daily professional demands often prevent principals from researching and implementing a leadership style that would reduce the significant number of new teachers who exit the profession between years one and five. While principals have a primary goal to increase academic achievement of their students; in urban public schools it is equally as important for these leaders to focus on the engagement of new teachers who will remain in their schools and provide the necessary instruction to increase student achievement. This interpretative phenomenological analysis explored the lived experiences of 8 teachers employed in urban public schools in the city of Baltimore to examine how principal servant leadership practices impacted new teacher engagement. The literature which explored the impact of principal leadership and student engagement in urban public schools was exhaustive. However, additional investigation was needed to close the gaps in the literature which examined the impact of principal servant leadership and new teacher engagement in urban public schools. As such, the findings obtained from the study participants were defined in five themes: 1) reaching back and responsibility, 2) rise above, 3) respect me as a person first, 4) relationships matter and 5) reality check. Each of the eight participants identified principal leadership style as the primary factor which influenced their decisions around remaining engaged in their current school, in their school district or in the profession.

Keywords: new teacher engagement, servant leadership, principal servant leadership, urban public schools
Acknowledgements

I will forever serve those children, teachers and leaders who rise above the obstacles they face each day—in the name of making life better.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Principals leading urban public schools face significant challenges indicative of urban environments. Among those challenges are learners who may be overly exposed to violence, students living in shelters, students without appropriate resources to close academic gaps, dilapidated buildings, reduced school budgets, outdated or non-existent technology for students and teachers lacking the appropriate instructional material or supplies (Jacobs, 2007). As such, issues of racial and ethnic diversity, especially in densely populated areas where high rates of poverty are often equal to high rates of crime, create schools that are less attractive for motivated new teachers to establish careers where they remain. Therefore, principals leading urban public schools must be equipped with knowledge of leadership practices which promote and encourage these new educators to remain in their assigned schools and in the teaching profession long enough to increase student achievement. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the extent that principal servant leadership influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

According to Wong (2004), the primary goal of a school is to provide an education where students are academically successful. In order to achieve this goal, Freedman and Appleman (2009) and Sachs (2004) assert that urban public schools must attract and maintain highly qualified educators with a desire to remain engaged in the profession long enough to improve student achievement. This research utilized the definition of urban schools offered by Anyon (2014) which states: urban schools are located in communities where the majority of the families are black or brown, poor or low-income wage earners struggling to make a living and who produce learners who are often unable to complete college as a result of an under-resourced
curriculum. In an attempt to combat these challenges; urban school districts employ many strategies to recruit and hire new teachers only to have a significant number leave the profession after a very short time (Langford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2002). The leadership style of principals leading urban public schools can provide the support new teachers require to remain engaged in the profession and therefore improve student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

Principals leading urban public schools require a greater understanding than they have of the extent to which their leadership style influences new teacher engagement. These school leaders are often overwhelmed with completing tedious managerial tasks associated with the demands inherent to leading urban public schools including: daily meetings to analyze data obtained from benchmark assessments, trying to resolve parent disputes which have quickly seeped into the classrooms of their school and most importantly recruiting and retaining teachers to provide high quality instruction.

As a former Assistant Principal in an urban public school, my primary responsibility was to serve as the liaison between teachers and the principal. In this role were numerous conversations with new teachers who expressed the lack of support they received from the principal. My nights were spent reading and replying to emails sent by new teachers detailing their immediate resignation and/or decision of their physician to keep them home from work due to a work-induced anxiety disorder or depression.

These decisions to disengage from professional responsibilities were often effective immediately and many teachers declined to return to the schools even to retrieve personal items left in the classroom. Each school year, groups of new teachers would arrive to school as early as 6am and remain to well after 7pm. The upbeat, energetic educator who passionately described
their commitment to work in an urban public school expressed feelings on non-support and abandonment by the principal who had just hired them a few months earlier. Undeniably, the role of the principal is primarily to serve as an instructional leader in the school (Brown & Wynn, 2009). However, serving as instructional leader should not come at the cost at ignoring the non-instructional needs of the new teachers being led.

Though charged with many tasks as an instructional leader, one of the principal’s top priorities is keeping the school fully staffed. When new teachers in urban public schools experience a lack of support, according to Ingersoll (2001) a significant number decide to disengage from the school they are assigned to or from the profession. Adding to the phenomenon is often the lack of adequate exposure on the part of the principals to the literature which defines various types of leadership theory to increase their understanding of how to provide the support needed to keep new teachers engaged at their schools and in the education profession.

According to Shaw and Newton (2014) former Secretary of Education, Richard W. Wiley, suggested the hiring of a record number of new teachers to alleviate the approximately two million teacher deficit projected as a result of massive retirements of “Baby Boomers.” Although Wiley’s strategy was exceeded with the hiring of 2.25 million teachers by 2010, an unexpected 2.7 million teachers also exited the profession simultaneously. A closer look at the findings these researchers presented revealed that upward of 10 percent of new teachers left after completing one year and 12 percent of new teachers left the profession after completing two years. Urban public schools experience new teacher disengagement to a greater degree than those in non-urban settings.
Scholars O’Rourke, Catrett and Houchins (2008) provided findings relevant to this research which indicated that new teachers require between three and seven years of experience in order to acquire the necessary skills to be reach the level of competency for classification as effective. The research of Ingersoll and Smith (2001) gave evidence to value of teacher-to-teacher support. However, a study completed by Brown and Wynn (2009) concluded that principals’ support for new teachers actually improved engagement and their decision to remain in the profession to a greater degree. Finally, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF) reported that 33 % of new teachers identified a lack of support from their principal as the factor which greatly impacted their decision to leave the profession. While each of these studies add value to understanding new teacher engagement, as principals in urban public schools attempt to address the challenges previously discussed; they often lack time to examine how their leadership style influences new teacher engagement.

Wong (2004) identified the knowledge of an experienced classroom teacher as the most significant factor when seeking to improve student achievement. Therefore, principals leading urban public schools require an in-depth understanding from the teacher’s perspective of how leadership style influences new teacher engagement. Similarly, Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (2001) determined that in order to improve student achievement, the primary emphasis should be placed on hiring and retaining effective teachers. When principals leading urban public schools understand how their leadership style influences new teacher engagement, the opportunity to improve the number of new teachers who remain at their school and in the profession can increase.

**Purpose of the Study.** Greenleaf (1977) defined the servant leader as one who leads with the natural, innate desire to develop individual’s, endeavors to meet their needs and
advocates a group-centered approach when making decisions for the organization. The research of Patterson (2003) extended Greenleaf’s (1977) construct and suggested that servant leadership embraces the understanding that the needs of the followers are primary and come before the needs of the organization. This research combined Greenleaf’s (1977) construct with Patterson’s (2003) extension for a working definition of servant leadership as it relates to principals leading urban public schools. As such, this study examined the extent to which principal servant leadership style influenced new teacher engagement in urban public schools. By gathering data on new teacher engagement from a teacher’s perspective in urban public schools, this research was conducted in order to develop an in depth understanding behind the phenomenon of new teaches in urban public schools disengaging from their school or the profession within the first five years of their career. Wong (2004) identifies the knowledge of an experienced classroom teacher as the most significant factor when school leaders identify strategies to improve student achievement. Based on Wong’s (2004) assertion, principals should make it a priority to attract and maintain qualified teachers in an attempt to close the achievement gap for students attending urban public schools. As principals are the leading factor which impacts decisions around engagement (Brown and Wynn, 2009), principals in urban public schools require an in depth understanding of how servant leadership influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools from a teacher’s perspective.

Principals leading urban public schools face a myriad of challenges. Two of the most significant being: maintaining qualified teachers and increasing student achievement. Ingersoll (2001) purports that high turnover contributes to staffing problems in urban public schools and these findings suggested that there is a direct connection between ineffective teacher performance and teacher engagement. As such, Ingersoll (2001) further asserted that a
significant number of teachers disengage from the profession through a process defined as the “revolving door” long before they were eligible for retirement and long before they are able to improve the academic achievement of the students in urban public schools. While Ingersoll’s (2001) study examined teacher engagement and student achievement, it is significant to this research and provided additional relevance for examining the impact of principal servant leadership on new teacher engagement in urban public schools to extend the findings around the “revolving door” which provided an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

**Significance Statement.** Although this research examine a small number of participants and focused solely on Baltimore City, this research is significant in that it discussed the issue of new teachers relinquishing their assignments or their decision to teach altogether in schools across America, but especially in urban public schools. Researchers Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2009) asserted that one of the key elements of good school leadership centers on the support of teachers. While these researchers followed school leaders, their recommendations are relevant to this research in that they determined the importance of principals putting the needs of the teachers (followers) as a priority to the success of the school. This study analyzed and provides an in-depth understanding of the influence of urban school principal’s use of servant leadership practices on the engagement of new teachers in urban public schools. Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) offered that frequent employee turnover is an undesirable element in any work environment or organization’s culture. Contributing to this undesirable element is the realization that turnover rates among new teachers in low-income, urban public schools are reported to be close to fifty percent higher than in schools located in wealthy districts (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).
In an attempt to encourage new teachers to begin their career and remain engaged in the profession, urban public school districts have used salary bonuses and monetary incentives as means of attracting them to some of the most challenging schools (Guin, 2004). In addition, many urban school districts invest a large amount of time and financial resources orienting and training new teachers (Guin, 2004) only to have a significant number decide to disengage from them or from the profession altogether. The findings obtained in the research conducted by Guin (2004) suggest that high turnover in schools leads to a decline in the quality of service (education of students) and to a compromised working relationship between teacher and administrator where trust and rapport are little to non-existent.

Though urban public schools are part of a collective or school system where the overall leadership is centralized through a board of education and a superintendent, each principal asserts a unique leadership style which often defines the organizational culture. While there are many factors which influence a school’s culture, when new teachers disengage and exit urban public schools prematurely, the school’s organizational culture is negatively impacted and countless hours of training and staff develop exit with them (Guin, 2004).

The research of Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) offered that there is a direct connection between the school leader (the principal) and the academic achievement of the students. Principals are primarily evaluated on their ability to increase student achievement. As such, it is vital to explore all variables which influence student achievement. The empirical data that obtained from this research contributed to the expansion of understanding of how principal servant leadership style influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

**Research question.** This research sought to answer the following questions:
• From a teacher’s perspective, how do principal servant leadership practices influence new teacher engagement in urban public schools?

• From a teacher’s perspective, how does the principal use of servant leadership practices effect the organization?

**Definition of Terms.** The following terms were used operationally throughout this research to ensure consistency in comprehension relative to this study.

**Servant Leader:** The natural feeling that one has of desiring to serve others. It seeks to develop individuals who ensure that other’s needs are met, and advocates a group-centered approach to decision-making as a means of strengthening institutions and society.”(Greenleaf 1977,p.13).

**Servant Leadership:** Leaders who serve with a focus on the followers, whereby the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral (Patterson, 2003).

**Engagement:** “Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption” (Schaufeli et al. 2004).

**Principal:** “an individual who serves in the position as a principal and who is certificated under COMAR (Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations) 13A.12.04.04 or certificated as a resident principal under COMAR 13A.12.04.05.

**Teacher:** “any individual certificated under COMAR (Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations) 13A.12.02 as a teacher and who delivers instruction and is responsible for a student or group of students’ academic progress in a Pre-K-12 public school setting, subject to local school system interpretation.
**Student Achievement/Student Growth**: student progress assessed by multiple measures and from a clearly articulated baseline to one or more points during one academic year.

**Urban area**: The U.S. Census Bureau (2002) defines an “urban area all territory, population and housing units located within an urbanized area or an urban cluster. It delineates urban area and urban cluster boundaries to encompass densely settled territory, which consists of (a) core census block groups that have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile, and (b) surrounding census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile”.

**Urban public schools**: Public schools in urban areas are characterized by the area they are located in. Therefore urban public schools are characterized as follows: “overcrowding, large class sizes, more violent than non-urban schools, students less likely to meet minimum scores on standardized testing, students less likely to have access to appropriate medical care, live in households headed by single mothers, more likely to be a victim of crime, female students more likely to become pregnant, absenteeism and tardiness rates higher, have a parent who didn’t finish high school, less access to technology and underfunded/under-resourced.” (Lee, 2005). Anyon (2014) expands this characterization to include urban schools are comprised of a majority black or brown students and produce learners who are often unable to enter or complete college as a result of an under-resourced curriculum.

**Limitations of the Study**. Regardless of the type of research, inherent to all studies was the existence of possible limitations. As such, this researcher has identified the limitations within this study.

The researcher conducted structured interviews and completed an analysis of the responses from a small and unique sample of respondents identified as new teachers in urban
public schools. The size and unique characteristics of this unique sample presented some difficulty to the researcher’s ability to apply the results to groups of teachers beyond those identified as new teachers in urban public schools. However, the findings can be applied to other groups of teachers employed in urban public schools.

The researcher also identified the self-reported data which was collected from respondents as an additional limitation of this study. Without the opportunity to verify the data that was obtained from the respondents, the researcher had to accept that all information obtained was factual. Respondents were asked to self-report experiences which may have occurred up to five years prior to their interviews and the amount of time elapsed between experience and self-reporting could therefore influence their ability to accurately recall the events. The researcher has also identified time as a limitation of this study. The interviews conducted were completed within one month of each other and did not provide the benefits obtained in collecting longitudinal data. The researcher did not identify severe limitations which may have influenced the value of this study.

Theoretical Framework. In order to examine how the leadership style of principals in urban public schools influences new teacher engagement, servant leadership theoretical framework was utilized as the underpinnings for this study. Coined by Greenleaf (1977), the construct was studied extensively in attempts to bring validity, to examine leader/follower relationships and analyze its impact on organizations (Russell & Stone, 2004; Reinke, 2004; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Hartnell & Oke, 2010 and Kilburg & Donohue, 2011).

The concept of leaders serving followers is certainly not a novice approach to leadership. A historical examination of leaders who served their followers was traced back to the origins of Christianity and the teachings of Jesus Christ when he urged his disciples (leaders) to humble
themselves enough to become a servant similar to Christ serving the church” (Philippians 2:5-7, The New King James Version). Another example of the servant leader was found in the noted Civil Rights Activist, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and stressed the importance of leaders who were known for their ability to serve others. During King’s delivery of his infamous sermon entitled “The Drum Major Instinct,” he offers that the most important reflection of his accomplishments was to be considered as a man who “served humanity” (King, 1968).

Researchers Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008) conducted empirical research which found that servant leaders demonstrate behaviors which illustrate care for followers which led to employees who worked harder and increased their dedication to the company.

While each of the previous scholars made significant contributions to the construct of servant leadership; the work of Greenleaf (1977) was utilized to ground this study. Robert Greenleaf (1977) author of the seminal work, “The Servant Leader” “is credited with coining the term servant leader. Greenleaf (1977) used the term to describe leaders who put “the needs of others above their own.” The servant leader, according to Greenleaf (1977), makes a conscious decision that serving others is more valuable than leading others. As such, Greenleaf (1977) offered the following explanation to define a servant leader found on pages thirteen and fourteen:

The servant-leader is servant first…It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first…the leader…the leader-first and servant-first are two extreme types…the difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the influence on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?

Greenleaf’s (1977) definition of a servant expanded further to include those leaders who “purposefully” put the needs of their followers before themselves or before the needs of the
organization. In doing this, Greenleaf (1977) posited that the servant leader would transform the followers to the degree that they, in turn, would then become servants who then would serve others.

By all accounts, servant leaders, according to the work of Greenleaf (1977), emphasize service over leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Guided by their commitment to improve the lives of their followers, he asserts that altruism is a fundamental characteristic of servant leaders. As a result, servant leaders continuously develop opportunities which contribute to the growth and development of their followers (Luthans and Avolio, 2003) and lead to the growth of the organization.

Similar to Greenleaf’s conceptualization of the construct, the findings of Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004) determined that behaviors of servant leaders created a work environment where positive and trusting relationships were developed. Once these relationships were established, the followers responded by committing to bring their best efforts to the organization (Stone, et. al 2004). These findings supported Greenleaf’s (1977) expansion of the construct and defined the value servant leaders placed on leader-follower relationships (Reinke, 2004).

Van Dierendonck (2011) asserts that as scholars began to examine Greenleaf’s (1977) construct, questions were raised addressing its similarities to several existing leadership theories: transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985), authentic leadership (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004; Avolio and Luthans, 2006; Avolio and Walumbwa, 2006; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003) and ethical leadership (Brown, Trevino, and Harrison, 2005). Similar to servant leadership; transformational, authentic and ethical leadership styles emphasized leaders who were self-aware and concerned for others.
However, Reinke (2004) asserts that the originality of servant leadership was in the fact that serving followers was the primary focus of servant leaders.

A review of literature discussing the origin of the construct revealed that Greenleaf (1977) spent a significant number of years employed as a senior level executive for A T&T. While serving in various leadership roles within the organization, Greenleaf (1977) observed various styles of leadership implemented by other senior executives (Spears, 2005). These observations and interactions, according to Reinke (2004), coupled with inspiration he received after reading *Journey to the East*, were identified as the origin of the foundation which became Greenleaf’s (1977) conceptualization of servant leadership.

While the construct continued to exist without a precise definition, the findings of Spears (1995) extended Greenleaf’s (1977) theory and led to the development of a model which identified ten characteristics of servant leaders. Shortly thereafter, Laub (1999), Russell and Stone (2002) and Patterson (2003) each contributed research which also identified behavior traits of a servant leader (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). As these researchers are credited for extending Greenleaf’s (1977) construct, Reinke (2004) offers that an exact definition was not reached and without such, empirical research could not validate its meaning.

Noted scholar and expert in the study of urban education and teacher preparation, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006), offered that the *achievement gap* is one of the most challenging issues plaguing urban public schools in America. Having devoted over three decades of research examining teacher preparation programs, Ladson-Billings (2000) emphasized the importance of ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared to educate African American (and none-White) students who primarily comprise the student population in urban public schools.
Arguably, when principals provide adequate support for their teachers, they are addressing the needs of their followers, as Greenleaf’s (1977) servant leadership defines. Although the literature discussing servant leadership continues to call for empirical research, the existing research of Wong and Page (2000, 2003) and Walumbwa, Hartnell and Oke (2010) found that Greenleaf’s (1977) construct of servant leadership adds value with regard to productivity, the growth of the organization and the personal development of followers and clearly contributes to the adequate preparation and support identified by Ladson-Billings (2008). What is less clear is how does the principal’s use of servant leadership influence the engagement of new teachers in urban public schools?

This research examined the influence of principal servant leadership on new teacher engagement in urban public schools from the perspective of the teacher. The results obtained from this research adds to the existing literature to help new teachers in urban public schools continue their careers where they are desperately needed. Principals implementing servant leadership practices in urban public schools should increase the engagement of new teachers and in turn those teachers should remain in the profession.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This research examined how principal servant leadership influenced new teacher engagement in urban public schools from the perspective of the teacher. In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of principal leadership style and new teacher engagement in urban public schools, the researcher conducted a detailed review of the literature. As a result, there were several themes which emerged: (a) context of urban schools, (b) the experience of the principal (c) early experience of new teachers, (d) principal-teacher relationships (e) leader-follower relationships and (f) servant leadership. The researcher organized this literature review to begin with an examination of the context of urban public schools, followed by an in-depth analysis of both the experiences and relationships between new teachers and principals. The review of literature concludes with the researcher providing an analysis of scholar work which examines leader-follower relationships and servant leadership theory and their relevance to this research.

Methods of the Literature Review

Literature searches of several databases including ProQuest, JSTOR, EBSCO, ERIC and SAGE Reference Online were conducted by entering several key terms. Included in this list were: “experience of the principal”, “principal leadership style”, “leadership in urban public schools”, “leader-follower relationship”, “servant leader”, “new teacher engagement”, “collaborative leadership” and “social context of urban schools” “principal-teacher relationships” “experiences of new teachers” and “school culture”.

Context of urban schools. The researcher determined that there is significant value in providing awareness regarding the context of principals leading urban public schools. As such,
an explanation of the socio-economics, intra and inter perceptions of school violence and
identified challenges were discussed.

America’s urban backdrop provides a myriad of social issues and challenges which
influence students in urban public schools. The typical American urban neighborhood is
comprised of drug trafficking, addiction, abuse, violent criminal activity, teenage single-mothers,
welfare dependent families, high illiteracy rates, high STD rates, poverty; violence and countless
other challenges educators attempt to overcome (Blake & Darling, 1994). Most of the urban
environments are filled with residents who are African American, Latino, Mexican or a
combination of the three. Literature repeatedly described America’s urban public schools as
some the most challenging environments to teach in (Dworkin, Haney & Dworkin, 1990; Chester
& Beoudin, 1996; and Hollin & Guzman, 2005).

A significant and compelling variable that exacerbates the challenges of how principals
lead urban public schools is the socio-economic status of families. Data obtained from a study
completed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that an average of
sixty-four percent of students in urban public schools receive free or reduced meals (USDA,
2013) and received financial assistance from the government. In an attempt to explain the socio-
economic status of families with students attending urban public schools, the research of Dahl
and Lochner (2005) offered additional data explaining socio-economic factors principals must
consider. These researchers found that many students attending urban public schools reside in
households where single mothers provide the only source of income (Dahl & Lochner 2005).
Similarly, Jaffe-Walter and Less (2011) asserted that much of the employment obtained by the
single-parent households were earned from low-end jobs in the service industry which offered
little opportunity for advancement. As a result of these limited economic opportunities, the
researchers concluded that many of the families in urban communities experienced minimal hope of being able to support the needs of their children beyond the basics of food, clothing and shelter (Jaffe-Walter & Lee 2011).

Jacob (2007) offered additional relevant data obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics in describing urban public schools and it was relevant to understanding the context in which most principals lead: over forty percent of urban schools receive Title I services, approximately twenty-eight percent of the students are African American, roughly twenty-nine percent of the students Hispanic American, sixty-four percent of students are mixed minority, slightly under fifty-seven percent of students receive free or reduced lunch, thirteen percent of the students receive special education services and approximately seventeen percent of the students have a limited proficiency in English. The data offered by Jacob (2007) and Jaffe-Walter & Lee (2011) illustrates the necessity of principals leading urban public schools to locate additional resources to offer to their students’ families with limited economic opportunities. Moreover, urban environments are often depicted as areas of increased crime rates and urban schools are often portrayed as learning environments where student violence impedes learning (Noguera, 2003). As such, school violence or perceptions of school violence, is included in the context of urban schools.

Researchers Helman and Beaton (1986) used an inductive analysis through qualitative research to determine if a link existed between infractions committed by students in school and crimes committed within the student’s community. These researchers examined data collected from school suspensions along with in-depth interviews of teachers in urban public schools of Boston, Massachusetts and concluded the following: urban public schools did experience significant rates of violence which lead to increased student suspensions, however, school crime
was not determined to have a link with crimes community within the community (Helman & Beaton, 1986). These researchers concluded that crimes committed in the urban public schools studied, were directly associated with increased student to teacher ratio and with the perceptions of teachers that their school community was a reflection of the violence that occurred in the surrounding community.

Adding to the discussion of violence in public schools, Noguera’s (1995) research also focused specifically on urban public schools. Similar to the work of Helman & Beaton (1986), Noguera (1995) posited that urban public schools across America have implemented strategies and interventions to reduce school violence. However, these interventions, according to the findings of Noguera (1995) proved to be unsuccessful and did little to reduce school violence.

Interestingly enough, Noguera (2003) revisited his research from 1995 which also examined the violence in urban public schools. Unlike his previous work, this study concluded that school leaders implemented violence prevention strategies with the primary goal of “retaining control” and consequently, were not concerned with “cultivating compassionate learning environments”. Because the focus was on control as opposed to compassion, urban public schools did not see the drop in school violence they aimed for (Noguera, 2003). Perhaps one of the most significant findings he offered as a result of this research was that the disparate economic and social conditions which existed in urban environments were significant contributors to the violence which occurred in urban public schools. As a result, Noguera suggested that strategies to reduce violence in urban public schools should begin by improving the environments which surround urban public schools.

Urban schools have a unique set of challenges which add to the discussion of context. Many of America’s urban children report to school each day and bring a host of issues which
require principals to assume the roles of psychologist, social worker, medical professional or allocator of outside resources. Too often urban school leaders and teachers must address the emotional and social needs of their students, before they can even begin the process of developing their students academically (Dotson-Blake, Foster & Gressard, 2009).

Teacher engagement is not a challenge exclusive to urban public schools (Olsen & Anderson, 2007). However, poor student academic progress, distance and location of schools; along with the behavioral needs of students contribute to the challenge of teacher engagement to a much greater degree for urban public schools (Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2002). Undeniably, this research illustrates that the context of urban public schools influences the challenge of attracting and keeping teachers engaged to a much greater degree and therefore is significant to this research examining new teacher engagement.

To offset these challenges in recruiting and teacher engagement, urban public school districts must offer incentives to include a signing-bonus and tax credits (Lankford et al. 2002) in exchange for the significantly increased workload teachers experience. In urban schools across Baltimore, principals heavily rely on the incentives discussed in the research of Lankford et al. (2002). While budgetary constraints ultimately dictate the amount of available incentives, principals and district leaders have historically allocated additional financial support for new teachers (followers) and often forgo the financial support for themselves (leaders). In spite of limited financial resources, funding incentives contributes to answering one of the research questions of this study and serves as an example of how district leaders support principals’ use of servant leadership style to engage new teachers in urban public schools.

Building on the findings of Lankford et al. (2002) Boyd, Lankford and Loeb (2003), also examined the challenges of attracting and engaging teachers in urban public schools. These
scholars used quantitative research and concluded that fundamentally, teachers preferred to work in school districts which they shared the following commonalities: similar characteristics to those found where they grew up and a close proximity to where they currently live. This research posed a significant question to those recruiting teachers for assignments in urban public schools: can district leaders compete against what teachers inherently prefer when recruiting staff for urban public schools? This research posed a significant question to those recruiting teachers for assignments in urban public schools: can district leaders compete against what teachers inherently prefer when recruiting staff for urban public schools? The significance of this research was that the assertion that the expressed preferences of teachers not to teach in urban public schools often outweighed incentives and salary increases. According to Boyd et al. (2013), if teacher preferences continue to drive their decisions to work in urban public schools, then the challenge of recruiting and teacher engagement will continue. As such they offer the following recommendations for principals and district leaders of urban public schools is to establish initiatives with colleges and universities located in and around urban public schools to identify education majors who have: (1) grown up in an urban environment or (2) currently reside in an urban environment; as a viable solution to address this staffing challenge.

Of greater importance regarding the recommendation which emerged from the research of Boyd et al. (2003) was its striking similarities to Greenleaf’s (1977) assertion regarding servant leadership in education and its value to this research. Beginning on pg. 163, the creator of the construct discussed his recommendations for who should lead disadvantaged students by explaining disadvantaged students who “experienced and conquered challenges” were best suited to become the educational leaders for those who found themselves in “similarly challenging or disadvantaged environments”.

While Greenleaf’s (1977) writings did not directly identify the “disadvantaged” and “poor” students as those attending urban public schools, his categorization of such students illustrated significant parallels to those attending urban public schools and therefore, are easily applied to students in urban public schools. The research of Boyd et al. (2003) extended Greenleaf’s (1977) construct of servant leadership and gave value to his recommendation of leaders having shared experiences with followers and identified this as another area of focus relevant to understanding the social context of urban public schools is the experience of the principal.

**Experience of the principal.** Robert Schulman, President and CEO of The fund for Educational Excellence recently crafted these words describing principals in Baltimore City Public Schools:

“Being a principal in an urban school district is one of the toughest and most important jobs there is. A principal is a strategic planner, staff motivator, curriculum developer, business manager and the caring trusted adult students turn to day after day—all rolled into one,”

Schulman’s organization coordinated an event to recognize the work of principals who lead urban public schools. Interestingly and pertinent to this research, Schulman’s description of the experience of principals in urban public schools echoed similar themes which emerged in the literature review. Literature discussing the experience of principals in urban public schools was reviewed and the following themes emerged: principal preparation/training, the work/function of principals, traits of effective principals and principals/the community.

**Principal preparation/training**

Important to this research is the understanding that urban public schools are greatly influenced by the leadership of the principal. Therefore, the type of preparation and training afforded to principals serving urban public schools can influence their ability to effectively lead. A review of the literature investigating principal preparation programs revealed that Arthur Levine (2005), while serving as president of Teachers College at Columbia University, evaluated
the course content covered by the most prestigious graduate schools across the country that were granting degrees in educational administration (Hess & Kelly, 2007). According to Hess and Kelly (2007), Levine’s (2005) research is recognized as the first longitudinal study to examine the effectiveness of principal preparation programs and his findings urged for a redesign of graduate programs created to prepare aspiring leaders for the role of principal.

While the aforementioned researchers concluded that principal preparation programs contained little content relevant to current responsibilities of their position, the research of Hess & Kelly (2007) was the first endeavor to identify the relevant course content that graduate schools should cover in principal preparation programs. Hess & Kelly (2007) conducted a study that examined syllabi from 31 graduate programs designed to prepare aspiring leaders for the role of principal. As such, the findings of these researchers asserted the following: 1) principals completing these graduate programs reported the content studied was inadequate and was not applicable to their daily role; 2) absent from their preparation program was time to put theory into action.

In an attempt to move from research to action and to address a gap in the literature Hess & Kelly (2007) developed a rubric for the purposes of defining the skills graduate schools should cover in principal preparation programs and establish guidelines for revising the existing outdated graduate programs. As such, they offered seven essential content areas to be covered in redesigned principal preparation programs: 1) data driven and managing results; 2) managing personnel/ develop talent; 3) technical knowledge of school law, school finance and facilities management; 4) leading external constituencies; 5) advocate for equitable schooling; 6) instructional leadership and 7) the ability to navigate school culture.
Adding to the discussion of principal training and preparation programs, Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson & Ylimaki (2007) used case-study methodology and examined qualitative data obtained from interviewing three principals leading urban elementary schools. These researchers extended the findings of Levine (2005), Farkas, Johnson & Duffet (2003) and Hess and Kelly (2007) and investigated principal preparation specifically for those leading “high-needs” schools. The “high-needs” schools described by the researchers shared some of the characteristics of the urban public schools described in this research including: large class sizes, limited financial resources and difficult maintaining new teachers.

Similar to the work of Tucker (2003), this investigation emerged as a result of previously asserted conclusions regarding irrelevant content contained in principal preparation programs (Levine, 2005; Hess & Kelly, 2007); however the significance of this research was that scholars determined that a lack of financial resources, as found in many of the urban public schools which will be examined in this research, could significantly delay or prevent district leaders serving “high-needs” schools from restructuring principal preparation programs and therefore, a group of un/under prepared principals with a need for relevant course work in order to adequately meet the unique challenges of leading their students emerged.

The findings were analyzed and researchers offered the following strategies as primary areas of focus/guidance for newly appointed principals leading “high needs” schools: 1) setting direction/establishing a vision; 2) learning how to develop current people in the building and 3) developing a plan to redesign the organization using current funds. While these strategies, according to Jacobson et al. (2007), do not represent a comprehensive list of the content needed by principals leading “high needs” schools, they serve as areas of central focus for schools and
districts plagued with limited financial resources, as found in the urban public schools this proposed research.

Interestingly, the recommendations offered by Jacobson et al. (2007) were parallel to those from Leithwood and Riehl (2003) and added value to district and state-mandated policy revisions including giving consideration to the experience, or lack there-of, when assigning principals to lead urban public schools. These researchers suggested that district leaders should implement a program whereby experienced (or even retired) principals are compensated to work with/support new principals for a significant period of time, and state supplied and state-funded mentoring programs for aspiring and current principals to observe examples of successful school leaders.

Without the recommendations mandated and funded at the state level, graduate schools, according to Jacobson et al. (2007), would be slow to alter the course content of principal preparation programs, if at all. Consequently, principals seeking to lead the urban public schools described in this research could be among the least prepared due to the strained financial resources associated with funding the recommended changes. The findings of this research seeks to address the inadequate preparation received by principals leading urban public schools through utilizing servant leadership style to enhance their ability to combat the challenges associated with new teacher engagement.

The work/function of the principal

Continuing the discussion of the experience of the principal, the following literature reviewed examined how principals work/function and their ability to complete a set of complex activities each day. Included in those activities were tasks related to staffing, budgetary, facilities and instructional leadership. Dwyer, Barnett and Lee (1987) conducted field study
research and examined how principals allocated use of their time during the school day. These researchers spent two years investigating the activities of 17 principals and obtained data obtained from interviews and observations to analyze the routines of principals.

From this study emerged empirical findings which were classified into eight themes: 1) delivery of instruction; 2) staff relations; 3) student relations; 4) safety and order; 5) facilities and equipment; 6) community relations; 7) relationships with the district/other institutions and 8) the organizational identity of the school. These researchers determined that principals spent approximately 95% of their work day speaking to a variety of stakeholders, including teachers; on issues not related to instructional leadership but directly related to building and maintain relationships and meeting needs.

Dwyer et al. (1987) offered findings that were considered valuable when answering one of the questions offered in this research regarding central office/district support of principals’ use of servant leadership style in urban public schools. As central office/district leaders understand the value of principals (leaders) allocating a significant amount of their day to build and maintain relationships with teachers (followers), as Greenleaf (1977) purports in his construct of servant leadership: their willingness to embrace servant leadership style could improve without fear of retaliation for not spending the majority of their day on instruction related activities.

The qualitative research conducted by Horng, Klasik & Loeb (2010) was similar to that of Dwyer et al. (1987); however, it expanded the discussion of principals’ use of time and included an exploration of the connection to school effectiveness. These researchers agreed with previous findings which identified instructional leadership as a valuable means for principals to deliver professional development to their staff. However, with just over 10% of their day spent
on instructional leadership, their commitment to improve school effectiveness was not reduced or devalued.

In addition, these researchers also found that the concept of principals and teachers sharing the responsibility of instructional leadership offered two valuable benefits: 1) principals were afforded additional time to devote to complex and important non-instructional activities and 2) the opportunity for teachers/staff members to provide instructional leadership previously completed by the principal lead to increased feelings of value to the school community. Therefore, principals (leaders) concerned with addressing (serving) the needs of their teachers (followers) will recognize that sharing the role and responsibility of instructional leader can serve as an example of trust and support of their professional goals.

While the research of Horng et al. (2010) did not limit their participants to principals leading urban public schools, the findings offered are applicable to the proposed research and provide additional information regarding the discussion of how principal leadership style can influence new teacher engagement. While literature examining the amount of time principals in urban public schools actually devote to the role of instructional leader is vital, of equal relevance was literature defining the attributes of successful principals in urban public schools.

Traits of effective principals

There was an exhaustive amount of literature identifying traits of successful school leaders. However, a review of literature revealed a considerably smaller amount of scholarly writings which identified the traits of successful leaders of urban public schools. One of the most important studies emerged from the work of Weber (1971) and laid the groundwork for Edmonds’ (1979) investigation that identified the behavior traits of successful principals who led urban public schools. Edmonds (1979) conducted a qualitative study that examined the traits of
four principals considered successful in their leadership of urban public schools. Using schools located in the city of New York, Edmonds (1979) offered that the behaviors of the school leader (the principal) played a vital role in the success of the school.

Through an analysis which included structured interviews, review of school performance data and extensive examination of reading achievement scores, he identified a list of traits present in principals who lead successful urban public schools. Included in the list were: a commitment to building relationships with teachers and with community members, high expectations for student achievement, ability to create and maintain an orderly/safe learning environment and a value for academic rigor. Worthy to note were the parallels that existed between Edmonds (1979) identification of the principal’s commitment to care enough to build relationships with teachers and Greenleaf’s (1977) thesis of servant leadership: “caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built.” (p. 49).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2004) asserted that as a result of school districts using state mandated assessments to evaluate principals, urban public school leaders spend a significant amount of time identifying strategies to close the achievement gap for their students. However, the researchers posit that although students reaching these set scores are extremely important, achievement on assessments should not be the only determinant of a successful leader in urban public schools. In an attempt to identify the traits of effective principals, the qualitative research of Jacobson, Brooks, Giles, Johnson & Ylimaki (2007) expanded the findings of Weber (1971), Edmonds (1979) and Leithwood & Reihl (2003) and offered that successful urban public schools are led by principals with the ability to build and sustain relationships with members of the community where the school is located. The researchers examined the leadership of three
principals serving schools with high poverty rates whose leadership was credited for implementing the core values identified in the work of Leithwood & Reihland (2003): setting direction, developing people and modify the organization.

The principals participating in this study were described as “willing to do what they asked others to do” with philosophical beliefs grounded in the concept that “effort is not limited by financial resources” and effectively established and maintained relationships within the school and throughout the community. The schools investigated in this research bear strong characteristics to those in the urban public schools in this research and therefore the findings provide valuable information with regard to how principal leadership style influences new teacher engagement. Once again, the literature reviewed identified the importance of principals building and maintaining internal relationships when leading urban public schools. The next section will examine the experience of the principal through the lens of external relationships.

*Principals and the community.*

Of no surprise, review of the literature investigating the experience of the principal revealed numerous studies which have examined collaborative relationships between home and school. However, Siddle-Walker (1993) offered that of these studies completed, a relatively small amount examined urban public schools and community relationships. According to Noguera (2003) and Warren (2005), the challenges of leading urban public schools require input, participation and advice from community stakeholders who will collaborate with the principal. Therefore, the discussion of the experience of the principal expands to include collaboration and the need of support of community organizations as a requirement when increasing student achievement is a goal (Ishimaru, 2012).
Ishimaru (2012) conducted qualitative research and investigated how principals in a majority Latino urban public school district located in California, developed and maintained relationships with community organizations. Similarly, Khalifia’s (2012), ethnographic study examined principal-community relationships over a 2-year period in an urban school of majority African-American students. The findings of Ishimaru (2012) and Khalifia (2012) were similar in that both researchers offered that the benefits of building principal-community relationships when leading urban public schools were identified as: increased trust between home and school, increased family participation in school activities, community that embraces principal as trustworthy and principals can more effectively manage student-student conflict that began in the community.

These researchers found several similarities in the benefits of principal-community relationships for urban public schools. Khalifa (2012) used Epstein’s (1987) school-community theory and examined the historical context of African-American principals as community leaders of urban public schools (Morris, 2002; Morris, 2008; Siddle-Walker 2009). As such, Khalifa (2012) asserted that prior to the Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, Black principals leading urban public schools embraced the challenge and responsibility of improving the education their students received through community relationships.

Additionally, Khalifa (2012) offered that principals currently leading urban public schools must also embrace this model of the past to build and maintain effective school-community relationships necessary to improve urban public schools of the present and those in the future and utilize the model where principals leading urban public shared an address with the school they lead. The findings of this study are important to this research in that they echo Greenleaf’s (1977) recommendation that those emerging from the condition are best suited to
serve so that others can find their way out of challenges found in urban communities (urban schools).

While Khalifa (2012) and Ishimaru (2012) both examined school-community relationships, there were significant differences offered regarding how these relationships should evolve. Ishimaru’s (2012) research was guided by combining three conceptual frameworks: shared leadership theory, social capital theory and role theory and concluded that building community relationships is the responsibility of every teacher and staff member of the school. In return, the community members would be empowered to participate in school decision making and would be more available to advocate for policy and assist in resolving conflicts.

Another difference which emerged in the school-community research offered by Ishimaru (2012) was in the perceived role of the principal. According to Khalifa (2012) the role of the principal would fluctuate between “school leader” and “community leader”. Regardless of the term used to define the principal, Khalifa (2012) offered that he/she was individually responsible for building and maintaining school-community relationships. With a stronger emphasis on empowerment for the community, Ishimaru (2012) defined the role of the principal as “community organizer” and suggested that every teacher, staff member and school employee, was responsible for improving school-community relationships; and the principal was simply a facilitator.

The literature examined that defined principals in urban public schools as community leaders unequivocally stated that successful urban public schools are led by principals who embrace and implement skills to enhance school-community relationships (Ishimaru,2012 Khalifa ,2012) in a manner which mirrors serving the followers as Greenleaf (1977) discussed in his theory of servant leadership. Similar to how this research determined the value of principals
building and maintaining external relationships to influence engagement within the community, the findings are also applicable to principals establishing and maintaining internal relationships with new teachers to influence engagement as this proposed research seeks to examine. In addition to the review of the principal’s experience, the next excerpt examined will be that of the teacher.

**New Teacher Experience.** The challenge of recruiting and retaining teachers is an unfortunate reality that public school districts across the United States encounter each year. However, according to Guin (2004), urban public schools experience this challenge to a greater degree and as a result the ability of the school to function successfully is limited. The literature reviewed which discussed the experiences of new teachers in urban public schools developed in three central themes: 1) challenges with the hiring process, 2) students and retention and 3) the need for support. Each theme is discussed through the literature and the relevancy to this proposed research.

**Hiring process**

According to researchers Liu & Johnson (2006), the process used by school districts to hire new teachers, serves as an important factor of their job satisfaction and to their decision to leave or remain in the profession. As a result of previous collaboration with Kardos, Johnson, Peske & Kaufman (2001), Liu & Johnson (2006) used a qualitative research methodology and examined the relationship between hiring and job satisfaction/retention of new teachers in public schools. These researchers sought to expand their findings own from 2001 and developed a survey which investigated how new teachers experienced the hiring process.

This research duo asserted that new teachers, as well as the district representatives coordinating the hiring process, needed additional information in order to determine if the
position they were matched with was in fact a “good fit.” Without this additional information, according to Liu & Johnson (2006) teachers were often inappropriately placed and as a result of misplacement, left the profession prematurely. Having studied new teachers from California, Florida, Massachusetts and Michigan, they suggested that following had a significant impact on job satisfaction for new teachers and therefore, should be considered by district personnel hiring officials and school-based leaders concerned with new teacher engagement: new teachers were offered positions by district personnel and school-based leaders had little involvement in the hiring process; parents, teachers and students were minimally involved in the interview process of new teachers assigned to their school; less than 25% of new teachers were asked to provide a writing sample (including lesson plans) during the hiring process; less than eight percent of new teachers were required to be observed as part of the hiring process; and teachers were hired on average, as late as 22.5 days before school began (p. 342).

The results obtained by Liu & Johnson (2006) are significant for urban public school districts seeking to improve the experience of new teachers. These researchers pointed out that while mandates resulting from the No Child Left Behind (2001) legislation required school districts across the country to primarily focus on scores obtained on certification tests. However, their findings provided valuable data which illustrated the need to revise hiring practices which provide new teachers (especially those in urban public schools) with additional information to determine if a job offer is actually a “good fit” in order to reduce the number who prematurely exit their school, the district or the profession.

Similar to Ingersoll and Smith (2003), these researchers asserted that without changes to current hiring practices, public schools will continue to experience new teachers who become dissatisfied with their jobs and that dissatisfaction could continue to contribute to the
significantly high exit rate of new teachers having one to three years of experience (30%) and new teachers having one to five years of experience (50%). While these researchers did not limit their study to urban public schools, each of the four states that participated in the study is comprised of school districts with a significant student population in urban environments. Therefore, the fiscal challenges present in urban public schools, are barriers to implementing the recommendations and improving job satisfaction of new teachers in urban public schools. Consequently, according to Liu & Johnson (2006) hiring practices continue as a significant challenge that contributes to experiences of new teachers which could lead to a lack of engagement.

*Student characteristics and teacher retention*

Also worthy of attention are student characteristics and their effects on new teacher retention. The huge emphasis on student achievement in public schools has exposed the need of school leaders to investigate why teachers chose to leave both their school and their school district (Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, 2002). As such, researchers Lankford et al. (2002) conducted a descriptive analysis and explored “teacher sorting” in urban public schools located across the state of New York. These researchers posit that there is limited research on the topic of teacher sorting; however, the literature reviewed suggested that student characteristics (including race and achievement level) are strongly considered when district hiring officials place teachers in schools (Lankford et al. 2002). Therefore, urban public schools located in New York City were staffed by less qualified new teachers than those placed in suburban schools located in affluent areas around the state. In addition, these scholars found that teachers who exited urban schools were more qualified than their peers who remained, indicated the academic needs of their students contributed to their decision to exist (Lankford et al. 2002). The
implication of this study was that district leaders in urban public school systems began to understand that recruiting and keeping highly qualified teachers was significantly impacted by the achievement of students and not the reverse. The findings from this research lends additional value to conducting the proposed study as a means of providing principals leading urban public schools with relevant knowledge to address the “teacher sorting” in urban public schools.

Adding to the body of research discussing the experience of new teachers in urban public schools, researchers Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin (2009) investigated teachers employed in Texas public schools to identify contributing factors which effect teacher’s decision to leave the school, the district, or the profession. While these researchers did not restrict their study to new teachers, results obtained are significant to this proposed research and are discussed. Similar to the findings of Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff (2002), Hanushek et al. (2009) concluded that when early career teachers have students who are significantly underachieving, they are more likely to leave the school system. This is primarily related to the fact that underachieving students require an extensive amount of additional work which new teachers, often lack the necessary skills to provide. Additionally, researchers Hanushek et al. (2009) concluded that the likelihood of white teachers exiting their schools increased when the minority (African American and Hispanic) student enrollment increased. Finally, and perhaps most significant to this proposed research, Hanushek et al. (2009) discussed the option or necessity of providing a salary differential for new teachers employed in the most challenging urban public schools. However, the limited financial resources which plague urban public schools significantly hamper the districts’ ability to increase salaries to new teachers who are working in the most challenged urban public schools and as a result, these schools will continue to experience the phenomenon of new teachers exiting prematurely and at alarming rates (Hanushek et al. 2009). While grossly underfunded
budgets prevent principals leading urban public schools from offering the added compensation; principals using servant leadership style could positively influence new teacher engagement with providing the support and development requested to increase their instructional knowledge necessary to support those underachieving students.

Need for support

Similar to the students in their classrooms, new teachers require additional support as they learn to improve their ability to provide effective instruction. Adding to the discussion regarding the experience of new teachers in urban public schools, the research reviewed overwhelmingly suggested mentoring and induction programs as strategies which contribute to the success and engagement of new teachers. According to Darling-Hammond (1997), new teachers leave the field for personal and professional reasons. Included in the professional reasons is the lack of mentoring programs which provide instructional and emotional support to help new teachers develop and remain engaged in the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

In an attempt to add to the research of which investigated the experience new teachers, scholars Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Katz & Schwille (1999) completed The New Teacher Induction Study and offered several conclusions. First, new teachers need to learn both content and delivery of the content that they are teaching. As a result, navigating the district’s curriculum coupled with understanding the flow of the school year become the priorities of teachers in years one to three of their career. Second, these researchers suggested that new teachers must have time to learn about the culture of the school community in which they teach and in order to receive the identified support, district leaders must design mentoring programs that embrace the value of helping new teachers. Likewise, new teachers must be dedicated enough to participate in quality mentoring programs delivered by seasoned colleagues where
they can obtain instructional and emotional support required to improve their practice (Feiman-Nemser et al. 1999). Bringing these suggestions into fruition is the responsibility of the principal. Principals who support mentoring programs for new teachers in urban public schools demonstrate concern to improve their experience through servant leadership Greenleaf (1977) defined.

Additionally, Youngs’ (2007) qualitative study of an urban school district characterized with challenges of new teacher engagement, is significant to this proposed study and determined the need for future research to examine the influence of principal leadership style on the process of new teacher engagement. Finally, Youngs’ (2007) concluded that when principal leadership style included the priority to support new teachers, an increase in student achievement and instructional knowledge were evidenced as a result of an increase in decisions to remain engaged in their assigned school or in the profession. The literature reviewed discussing new teacher support concluded and the review of principal-teacher relationships are next.

**Principal-teacher relationships.** Teachers and principals work towards the same goal of increasing student achievement, however, the relationship between these two groups can influence the manner in which student achievement is obtained. Research reviewed examining principal-teacher relationships focused on three topics: 1) trust and rapport, 2) leader characteristics and relationships and 3) student achievement. The discussion below provides an analysis of literature pertinent to this research.

*Trust and rapport.* As previously reviewed, Khalifa (2012) and Ishimaru (2012) conducted research which identified the necessity of principals in urban public schools to establish and maintain community relationships. Both researchers determined that schools, students and communities greatly improve when principals establish positive relationships with stakeholders
in the surrounding neighborhoods where the school is located (Ishimaru, 2012; Khalifa, 2012). Equally, if not more important, is the relationship between principal and teacher. Gallagher (2012) asserts when principals create a school culture with a foundation of collaborative professional relationships, teachers are more engaged and focused on their delivery of instruction and examination of student data.

Adding to the discussion on principal-teacher relationships, the research of Marks and Printy (2003) examined leadership style (Bass & Avolio, 1993) through the lens of shared instructional leadership (Barth, 1986) in their investigation of shared leadership in 24 public schools. While this research included a variety of schools, the mixed-method research included schools across 16 states and several were defined as urban public schools. Based on the results obtained, the following conclusions were presented: 1) principal leadership style determines their willingness to integrate shared instructional leadership and 2) principal-teacher relationships impacted opportunities for collaboration and participation in decision making (Marks and Printy, 2003). Therefore, according to Marks and Printy (2003), principals concerned with improving student achievement should emphasize a leadership style which build relationships with teachers who participate in school-wide leadership and implement data-driven instructional practices. This research is significant in that it validates the need for principal servant leaders to improve the lives of teachers who will in turn improve the experience of their students.

In their investigation of principal-teacher relationships, researchers Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) conducted quantitative research and recognized the need for additional research to identify what influenced the principal’s ability to create schools where teachers willingly engaged in the process of data analysis to improve student achievement. Similar to Marks and Printy (2003), the team offered that the construct of shared leadership improved principal-teacher
relationships as evidenced by growth in: professional community of support, teacher’s instructional practices and teacher efficacy, thus, providing teachers with opportunities to participate in decision making on both instructional and non-instructional activities was important for improving trusting relationships (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Another interesting finding obtained from this research which proved beneficial to principals leading urban public schools, was the assertion that shared leadership is more important to high school teachers. Therefore, principals leading urban public high schools, should consider this study when creating instructional leadership teams or other school-wide leadership opportunities which include new teachers to further influence engagement.

The characteristics of leaders are discussed throughout the literature of principals in urban public schools. While there are many perspectives identifying the characteristics of “effective” school leaders, of value to this research is the investigation of principal characteristics which develop and hinder instruction provided by classroom teachers. The seminal research of Blase and Blase (1999) offered an examination of instructional leadership through the lens of teachers. As such, these researchers were credited with being the first to conduct empirical research of principal-teacher relationships based on Relationship-Growth (RG) model they developed (Blasé and Blasé, 1999). Similar to the findings of Wahlstrom and Louis (2000), the (RG) model developed by these researchers, offered two central concepts for principals concerned with building positive relationships with teachers as: talking with teachers to encourage reflection and promoting professional growth of teachers. An analysis of the findings revealed that the strategies defined in the (RG) model, resulted in significant emotional gains for teachers and consequently, improved principal-teacher relationships (Blasé and Blasé, 1999).
The final piece of literature reviewed examining principal-teacher relationships on academic achievement was conducted by Louis, Dretzke & Wahlstrom (2010) and built on the previously discussed works of Marks & Printy (2003) and Johnson et al. (2004). These researchers investigated the characteristics of school leaders who utilized instructional leadership, shared leadership and trust in their relationships with teachers to determine the influence on student achievement (Louis et al. 2010). Unlike previous research, Louis et al. (2010) also explored how principal leadership influences teacher-teacher relationships in schools and offered that as with principal-teacher relationships, teacher-teacher relationships grounded in trust, sharing of leadership and opportunities for instructional support lead to increased student achievement. For the first time, the research discussing principal-teacher relationships determined that the characteristics of principals also influenced teacher-teacher relationships and their ability to trust each other to effectively collaborate around instructional issues such as student achievement (Louis et al. 2010).

**Servant Leadership.** Throughout history, the topic of leadership is perhaps one of the most important to organizational success. Undeniably there exists an exhaustive amount of literature which defines numerous types of leadership styles which are used in various disciplines and professions.

The literature review of the conceptualization of servant leadership was categorized into four themes: (a) attributes of servant leaders, (b) measurement of servant leadership, (c) leader-follower relationships and (d) organizational benefits of servant leadership. The researcher aims to provide justification for the use of servant leadership by principals in urban public schools.

*Attributes of servant leaders*
While Greenleaf (1977) is undeniably credited with coining the construct, scholars recognized that the construct lacked a working definition that could be tested using empirical research. Servant leadership, according to Wong (2007), is a multi-dimensional construct where personal development and character of the leader play equally important roles in the lives of the organization.

In an attempt to develop a working definition of the construct, Spears (1998) used the work of Greenleaf (1977) and identified 10 attributes of servant leaders must possess: listening to followers; empathy to understand accept people for who they are; healing to help bring people to a place of wholeness; awareness to ensure followers are conscious of what’s taking place; persuasion to allow influence on followers based on logic not power; conceptualization to embrace forward thinking; foresight to use intuition and forecasting as tools to aid in decision making; stewardship to serve others while keeping their needs in the forefront; commitment to growth of the followers and building community with a special focus on the local communities of the followers. While the research of Spears (1998) is noted for making significant contributions to construct of servant leadership, his findings ended with the admission that there were additional attributes of servant leaders (p.6) and encouraged future researchers to question and extend his list of attributes by completing additional research.

Adding to the discussion of attributes of servant leaders, Laub’s (1999) research emerged as the first attempt to measure Greenleaf’s (1977) construct. As such, Laub (1999) used a sample of 847 people who represented 41 organizations to identify the fundamental characteristics of servant leaders. Laub’s (1999) combined methodologies included a Delphi study and an extensive literature review to complete an analysis of the data collected. His results, concluded that the attributes of servant leaders could be grouped in six clusters: develops
people, shares leadership, displays authenticity, values people, providing leadership and builds community. Although the construct expanded with the addition of Laub’s (1999) attributes; research continued to emerge in an attempt to move closer to defining the construct.

Research which continued the examination of the attributes of the servant leader was conducted by Russell and Stone (2002) and the findings added value to the construct for two reasons: (1) identified that servant leaders have nine functional attributes (vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation and empowerment) and eleven complementary attributes (communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation; and (2) from the identified attributes, the researchers developed a model to serve as the foundation for theory development of the construct.

While Laub’s (1999) research classified attributes of servant leaders into six clusters, Russell & Stone (2002) categorized attributes of a servant into two groups: functional and accompanying. These scholars noted that the functional attributes were not considered to be of greater value than the accompanying attributes. Functional attributes, according to Russell and Stone (2002) represent what leaders do; or the specific behaviors leaders which determine their effectiveness. Whereas, the accompanying attributes are defined as competencies which assist a leader in becoming effective (Russell & Stone, 2002) both sets of attributes are relevant and vital to the success of a servant leader. These researchers provided relevant findings towards defining the construct of servant leadership. However, along with the relevancy of these findings, of importance was the difficulty in understanding the rationale Russell & Stone (2002) used to identify each attribute.
Additional review of the construct of servant leadership to identify traits of a servant leader was expanded by Bass (2002) as he responded to those seeking to a more precise definition of servant leadership style. In an attempt to develop that definition, Bass (2002) conducted research and the findings offered that servant leaders possess the following traits: (1) ability to care for others, (2) followers who experience improved lives and improved culture of their organization and (3) followers who are more likely to remain with the organization. With these three descriptors, a definition of servant leadership began to emerge.

Another relevant body of research who contributed to the discussion of attributes of the servant leader, Patterson (2003) identified attributes of servant leaders through a clearly defined theoretical foundation for the construct. Patterson’s (2003) doctoral dissertation utilized Aristotle’s: *Nicomachean Ethics* as a backdrop and offered that servant leadership was a virtue theory with of seven attributes: (a) agape love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service. Patterson (2003) explained that as virtue theory suggests (Kennedy, 1995) servant leaders are not focused on “right and wrong”. Servant leaders, according to Patterson (2003) are concerned with doing what’s considered right when confronting different challenges. Similar to the research of Russell & Stone (2002), Patterson’s (2003) investigation evolved into a theoretical model and concluded with recommendations for further research to investigate the follower’s perception of servant leadership.

The final piece of literature reviewed identifying the attributes of the servant leader was offered from the findings of Reed, Vidaver-Cohen & Colwell (2011) and provided significant contributions in an attempt to further identify servant leadership. These researchers compared various types of ethical leadership and defined servant leaders using a few key terms: role model, concern for others, moral manager and integrity to identify behaviors/attributes of servant
leaders. Reed et al (2011) suggested that servant leaders modeled the behaviors they want to see in their followers to create an organizational culture that focused on the values of the group rather than those of an individual. In addition, Reed et al (2011) realized the need to examine servant leadership with top executives. This study added the body of research conducted to identify servant leadership traits and the researchers identified five traits associated with those identified as executive servant-leaders (ELS): interpersonal support, building community, altruism, egalitarianism and moral integrity.

According to Reed, Vidaver-Cohen & Colwell (2011), when leaders embraced these traits at the executive level, in this case the principal level, the focus of the organization moved the individual members from “competency inputs to “performance outputs”. As a result of the findings of these researchers, comes an understanding of servant-leadership at the executive level as an example of a management strategy which could be implemented in various types of organizations, including urban public schools. Principals are often referred to top executives or CEOs of their schools. As such, the research identifying traits of the servant leader at the executive (or principal) level, adds relevancy to the proposed research and to examining how principal servant leadership influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

Measurement of servant leadership

Responding to the reoccurring questions around the validity of servant leadership, several scholars conducted research intended to add validity to the construct and to close the existing gaps in the literature. Donaldson & Davis (1991) also supported Greenleaf’s (1977) conceptualization of servant leadership. These researchers used an empirical test to examine the relationship between shareholders and a CEO, who simultaneously served in the role of board chair. Donaldson & Davis (1991) concluded that when CEOs held dual roles, they continued to
render decisions which had a positive influence on shareholder returns. Similar to the “dual roles” held by the CEO participating in study, principals leading urban public schools also hold “dual roles” including school leader and member/advocate of the community their students represent. After more than a decade employed in urban public schools, observations and data obtained anecdotally determined that at some point during their childhood, many principals leading urban public schools were a product of the environment they now work. As such, they serve the “dual role” of employee of the school district and advocate for the community they grew up in. These urban communities contained schools were students were nurtured into scholars and leaders and encouraged to reach for academic excellence. The results of these researchers extend Greenleaf’s (1977) construct and offer that both the leader and the organization, have a social responsibility to improve the lives of the followers and this is especially true with regard to urban public schools.

Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) arguably, presented one the most important findings which contributed to the validation of the construct. These scholars conduct quantitative research and identified a direct correlation between servant leader subscales and the subscales identified in Graen & Uhl-Bien’s (1995) Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Although the theory continued to lack empirical research, servant leadership’s correlation to a well-known theory which was grounded in empirical research, increased the validity of the construct. While the work of Barbuto & Wheeler (2006) added validity to the construct; servant leadership continues to lack empirical testing required to solidify the theory. For some this lack of validity poses a problem in accepting servant leadership as a viable theory offered for use in the discussion of leadership style. However, similar to the conceptualization of love which also has various
definitions; should the discussion center on validity or should the discussion focus on how the concept positively changes those who experience it.

*Leader-follower relationships.*

Of great significance to this proposed research is the notion that Greenleaf (1977) began to develop the construct of servant leadership as the result of his experience on American college campuses during the social challenges which emerged during the 60s and 70s. As a result of the Civil Rights Movement of 1964, Greenleaf (1977) observed educational institutions grapple with ways to improve relationships between leaders and followers (p. 3). Literature reviewed which discussed leader-follower relationships serve as the final topic for this proposed research to examine how principal servant leadership influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

Greenleaf (1977), Donaldson & Davis (1991) and Russell, Stone & Patterson (2004), determined that the priority of servant leaders was to create a work environment where trusting relationships are built with followers. In doing so, the followers recognized the authenticity of the relationships created by servant leaders, an organizational culture would emerge where achieving their personal best becomes the goal of each employee (Donaldson & Davis, 1991 and Russell, Stone & Patterson; 2004). These researchers found that when employees gave their personal best, the organization will experience growth. Therefore, the servant leader, according to, Russell, Stone & Patterson (2004), understands the connection between serving followers, building relationships and growth of an organization.

Reinke’s (2004) research added to the discussion of servant leadership by examining the role of relationship building of the servant leader. This scholar’s work emphasized that leaders can improve employee performance when they establish trusting and affirming relationships.
While prior research on the theory of servant leadership lacked a scientific foundation, Reinke’s (2004) study was designed to bring empirical evidence in an attempt to further explore the validity of the theory set forth by Greenleaf (1977). Reinke’s (2004) quantitative research offered findings that solidified what Greenleaf (1977) postulated; when leaders create an organizational culture grounded in open communication, mutual trust and serving followers; the level of productivity of those members will increase.

Researchers Avolio, Walumbra & Weber (2009) contributed to the discussion of leader-follower relationships and investigated the values of leaders who self-identify as servant-leaders. These scholars offered that by understanding the difference in values between servant-leaders and non-servant leaders, important insight could be gained to obtain a deeper understanding of their followers.

Walumbra also collaborated with Hartnell and Oke in 2010 and continued to explore leader-follower relationships and the influence of servant-leadership using a cross-level investigation to measure the attitudes of employees and the type of citizenship they demonstrated in their organization. Walumbwa et al. (2010) suggested that servant-leadership places a significant level of importance on how a “leader behaves.” More specifically, these scholars discussed how a leader’s morality influenced their ability to lead an organization. These researchers extended previous research around organizational citizenship behavior and servant-level. In addition, the results of the research completed by Walumbwa et al. (2010) provided day-to-day practical outcomes which suggested that teaching managers the need to explain policies/procedures to employees and ensuring that there is an equitable decision making process in place are important when trying to improve relationships between followers and leaders through citizenship. As a result, the researchers offered an approach and findings that provided
additional insight into how servant-leadership should be researched and implemented. The findings offered from this study are significant to this research in that it offers practical reasons for principals leading urban public schools to improve relationships with new teachers through modeling the behavior they desire. In short, Walumbwa et al. (2010) provide evidence of how leaders (principals) who serve can positively influence their followers (new teachers) to also serve (remain engaged).

Organizational benefits of servant leadership.

With the research of Kilburg & Donohue (2011) the discussion around servant leadership, shifted to examine servant leadership within the context of organizational studies. Kilburg & Donohue (2011) concluded that while there had been an extensive amount of research conducted on the construct of servant leadership; scholars should not rely heavily on one particular perspective to examine the theory. Similar to Savage-Austin & Honeycutt (2011); Kilburg & Donohue (2011) supported the use of theories and models for an integrated approach to understand how leaders lead and how their leadership influenced the overall success of the organization. The researchers offered that an integrative model should include an understanding, consistent with the elements of servant leadership; where attitudes and ethics of an effective leader are valued. Consequently, when practitioners maintained the focus of integrating multiple perspectives, as the work of Kilburg & Donohue (2011) suggested, they led from a position where the needs of their followers and the organization were equitably considered.

Adding to the body of research that examined servant leadership; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, conducted a phenomenological study of fifteen servant-leaders to examine the benefits obtained by organizations led by servant leaders. The findings of this study offered a unique perspective to examine the influences from “leaders who serve and were accountable for
and to their followers emerged.” Additionally, the researchers provided an understanding of the aspects of the organization which can hinder servant leadership from being implemented. In researching both sides of the construct, Savage-Austin & Honeycutt (2011) examined how leaders created and maintained a genuine connection with their followers in their pursuit of achieved success for the organization.

Researchers Hu & Liden (2011) entered the discussion around servant leadership and examined the influence servant leaders had on teams. The findings noted that while there was a significant amount of research around motivation of individuals in organizational studies; missing from the literature was the connection between servant-leadership and team motivation. To address the missing component, the work of Hu & Liden (2011) examined servant leadership through the lens of team goals and motivation. These scholars determined that the level of trust the followers placed in their leader influenced the team’s ability to perform. As such, the researchers continued to elaborate on this construct and explained that when an organization valued teamwork, it was the result of extra effort given by the members (Hu & Liden, 2011). Servant-leadership, as defined by Hu & Liden (2011), placed emphasis on the members supporting and encouraging one another to perform at their optimum level. This support and encouragement identified by the researchers showed great similarities to the support new teachers in urban public schools seek from their principals and therefore, is relevant to the proposed research.

As revealed in the literature leaders who identify as servant leaders and embody attributes of servant leader (Spears, 1998; Laub, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002; and Patterson, 2003) experience positive relationships with followers (Walumbra & Weber, 2001; Reinke, 2004; Russell et al. 2004; and Avolio et al. 2009), resulting in benefits for the organization (Kilburg &
Donohue, 2011; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011 and Hu & Liden, 2011). Given the findings, which reveal the benefits of servant leadership regarding leader-follower relationships and organizational culture, it is vital that principals leading urban public schools be provided an understanding of this leadership style to examine its influence on new teacher engagement.

Marilyn Cochran-Smith (2004) authored *Stayers, Leavers and Dreamers: Why people teach and why they stay*; and offered that the American public schools should focus more on teacher retention and less on teacher recruitment. Cochran-Smith (2004) notes:

“Teacher shortages are not new. Periodically, throughout the past half century, there have been fewer teachers available than were needed, and policy makers at the state and federal levels have responded by stepping up recruitment efforts and issuing temporary teaching credentials to those without qualifications…the realization that is not so much teacher recruitment that is the problem in staffing the nation’s K-12 schools but teacher retention; and growing evidence that, similar to every other problem that plague’s the nation’s schools, the problem with teacher retention is most severe in the hard-to-staff schools.”

This doctoral thesis examined principal servant leadership as a method of educational leadership practice from the point of view of a new teacher. The findings from this qualitative study add to the existing body of research, contributed to fill the existing gap in the literature and guide future studies which investigates principal leadership style in urban public schools.
Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter included a detailed and comprehensive explanation of the methodology chosen for this study. It began with the positionality and the rationale for the chosen methodology and explained the research design and discusses participant selection process. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the data collection, data analysis and data interpretation for the study.

Positionality

Principals leading urban public schools face the challenge and responsibility of staffing the school with new teachers who are both qualified and dedicated to improving student achievement to remain engaged. This staffing challenge, according to researchers Murphy, DeArmond & Guin (2003), is reoccurring and has a significant influence on the overall function of the school. In order to meet state and district requirements for student achievement, countless principals leading urban public schools attempt to address the challenge of staffing schools by hiring new teachers. These efforts illuminate the need to engage new teachers with the expectation that they will remain in the positions long enough to help improve student achievement.

I have just under 25 years teaching and leadership experience in urban public schools. As a result of my years of service, I have personal experiences with the challenges associated with new teacher engagement. While having watched countless new teachers relocate from small towns to urban areas all across America, find housing in less than desirable neighborhoods, leave family and close friends, accept significantly lower salaries with the hopes of becoming the “Dream-keepers” Ladson-Billings (2009) identified in the lives of children attending urban public schools. I have also attended countless professional development meetings for principals
(and assistant principals) in the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) designed to equip urban school leaders with necessary tools to increase student achievement, integrate “data driven instructional strategies”, understand fiscal management procedures and maintain safe and orderly schools. While each of those “tools” provide value in their own right, as urban public school leaders work towards school improvement, principals in BCPSS received little, if any, training to expand their knowledge of the leadership theory/leadership style I feel is necessary to support new teachers and help them to remain in the profession of teaching in an urban school.

For many years, I purposefully avoided becoming a principal of an urban public school. The stress, long hours, union, non-support from parents, the lack of financial resources and minimal instructional resources were just a few of the reasons I would not assume the role. However, after serving as an assistant principal for a number of years, it became obvious that in order for me to establish a culture which supports new teachers, I needed to do so while serving in the role of principal. As such, I applied and passed the Principal Certification exam and began the process to become a principal in Baltimore City Public Schools. With two of the three phases passed, I participated in face-to-face interviews for the final portion of the process.

The final phase required the completion of the Lominger Competency Architecture (LCA) assessment. This 67-item survey measured leadership competencies in candidates seeking to become a principal in BCPSS. While completing this survey, I experienced a significant amount of difficulty. The difficulty was not a result of the complexity of the instrument, but rather due to my reflection and comparison of the competencies to the servant leader Greenleaf (1977) described. To my disappointment, I determined that there were only eight of the 67-competencies measured by the LCA that could be related to the servant leader Greenleaf (1977) espoused. Results from the assessment were analyzed and I was given
feedback describing my “preferred” leadership style. None of the options presented actually described my style of leadership and I remember thinking: if this tool is a reflection of how leadership is viewed in urban public schools, I can understand why new teachers leave.

Admittedly, as an educator with well over twenty years of experience, who decided to examine new teacher engagement in urban public schools, I was not aware of the term *servant leader*. I had, however, taken great care to ensure that the needs of my new teachers were adequately met, provided them with instructional support, encouraged work-life balance, assisted them with locating housing as they relocated to Baltimore and often served as spiritual mentor/guide when needed. It was not until the fall of 2015, when I enrolled in a course in which examined contemporary leadership styles. A group project required me to present on the topic of spiritual leadership where I discovered Greenleaf’s (1977) definition of servant leadership. As a result, I was able to give a name to the leadership practices I had successfully implemented with the new teachers assigned to my school for the past three years.

My personal biases caused me to question my ability to exercise value neutrality. However, after reading Briscoe’s (2005) article entitled: *A Question of Representation in Educational Discourse: Multiplicities and Intersections of Identities and Positionalities*, both my ability and responsibility in discussing this topic in a manner that brings understanding to such a significant challenge faced by principals in urban public schools was no longer questioned. As such, my experience as an assistant principal in urban public schools brings perspective and insight to the investigation of this study. This experience, according to Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty & Hendry (2011) is considered a benefit in examining new teacher engagement in urban public schools. Therefore, it is with great pride that I chose and conducted the following
research design which would provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

**Research design**

A qualitative research methodology was selected to gain a “detailed understanding” of the phenomenon of new teacher engagement in urban public schools. Creswell (2012) and Baxter and Jack (2008), recommend the use of qualitative methodology when the primary intent of the researcher is to “understand a phenomenon” that exists within society. The findings of Langford, Loeb & Wyckoff (2002) along with Jacob (2007) posits that “high-quality urban teachers are more likely to change schools or leave the profession”. As such, exploring this problem provided the researcher with important information necessary to “examine complex phenomenon” and “develop a detailed understanding” from the “perspective of the participants” in order to improve practice (Creswell, 2012).

Pringle et al. (2011) offered that the past 10 to 15 years have shown an increase in researchers’ use of qualitative inquiry. Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted that the combination of “compelling language”, stories from participants and detailed descriptions obtained from the data in qualitative research, allows the findings to be presented with a greater amount of “persuasion than the numbers obtained from quantitative research”. The researcher’s desire to go into the participants’ natural setting and hear the words of new teachers in urban public schools, to provide a “rich description and explanation” of how principal servant leadership style influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools further explains the choice of qualitative inquiry as the methodology for this research (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

A review of qualitative methodologies, according to Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) indicates that within phenomenology, there are various approaches for the researcher to consider.
For this research, an Interpretative Phenomenological analysis (IPA) method was chosen. Smith et al. (2009) further offered that when researchers utilize an interpretative phenomenological analysis, they intend to explain the “lived experiences” of the participants studied. Similarly, Larkin, Watts & Clinton (2006) offer IPA research is designed with the purpose of “giving voice” to participants’ concerns and experiences by providing a detailed understanding of the phenomenon examined.

Likewise, Spinelli (1989) and Moran (2006) offer that there are various approaches researchers can adopt when conducting IPA methodology research. Adding to this discussion Willig’s (2013) scholarly writing entitled: *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*, serves as a comprehensive guide designed to provide a detailed explanation of the process of conducting research using an IPA methodology. In chapter eight, Willig (2013) posits the following three questions which provide an explanation of IPA methodology:

“What type of knowledge is produced through the use of IPA? What kind of assumptions does IPA make about the world and How does IPA conceptualize the role of the researcher in the research process?”

Willig (2013) cites Kvale (1996b p. 38-9) and provides the following summation of IPA methodology:

“A phenomenological perspective includes a focus on the life world, an openness to the experiences of the subject, a primacy of precise description, attempts to bracket for knowledge and a search for invariant essential meaning of the description.”

Because the researcher seeks to understand the lived experiences of new teachers in urban public schools through principal leadership style and engagement in these milieus, this proposed study will utilize an interpretative phenomenological analysis to provide a detailed description of the findings from the view point of the participants.

**Protection of Human Subjects**
This study followed the protocol defined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Included in this application were the following: Completed copy of the Applicant Information Form (Appendix A); Copy of the IRB authorization letter from Northeastern University (Appendix B) and a copy of Research Plan with all attachments (to include informed consent forms, where, when and how research will take place, copies of any correspondence researcher will use to communicate with study participants). To ensure all procedures associated with this study met the institution’s requirements, all information submitted was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University and guided by the Principal investigator/advisor of the researcher conducting this proposed study.

In preparation for this study, the researcher took the necessary measure to ensure that the confidentiality of all participants was protected (Appendix C). Participants discussed personal details about their employment situation and personal life. This research did cause participants to experience any amount of discomfort as they reflected on challenging aspects of teaching in urban public schools. The researcher estimated and found that the risk for discomfort during this study was minimal, and no participants expressed any discomfort or needed those issues/concerns immediately addressed. Study participants were instructed that they were free to decline from providing responses if they felt uncomfortable about any question posed by the researcher. Additionally, the participants were informed of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time.

Confidentiality

All efforts were made to protect the confidentiality of each participant of this study. Any information obtained in connection with this study and that could be used to identify a particular individual remained confidential. The identification of study participants was not and
will not be disclosed. To ensure confidentiality of the study participants, pseudonyms were used to replace real names. In addition, the recording of the interviews were not labeled with the real names of the study participants, only with the pseudonyms. Rev.com was used to transcribe all interviews and a Transcriber’s Confidentiality Statement (Appendix C) was used as an additional measure to protect the confidentiality of participants. All data files were password protected and only known by the researcher. The data obtained was only used for the purpose of completing the Student Researcher’s doctoral thesis project. In the event that presentations, journal articles and interviews arise as a result of this research, confidentiality of participants will be extended to include any scholarly work completed as a requirement of the proposed research.

**Participants**

Participants for this research were new teachers who have completed a minimum of one year and no more than five years of employment in an urban public school, speak English proficiently and have a current teaching assignment as a contracted professional. No preference was given to the school’s student population; however all participants taught at the elementary level.

Pringle et al. (2011) referenced Smith et al. (2009) who stated participants in IPA research should be “fairly homogenous” yet still represent a “broad group”. The researcher accomplished the recommendation offered by Smith et al. (2009) by contacting new general education teachers on the elementary level, as well as those who teach academic and non-academic subjects (including the arts and physical education). In order to maintain consistency, participants teaching in public schools located in suburban areas or participants teaching in private schools were excluded from the study.
Recruitment and access

The Call for Participants (Appendix B) gave the criteria for participant selection and included the statement “Selection for this study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief 5-10 minute intake call.” In order to create a purposeful sample, participants for this research study were solicited using a letter of invitation distributed to urban public elementary schools in Baltimore, MD with the goal of selecting 8-10 general education teachers as participants for this study.

The Call for Participants gave a brief explanation of the purpose of the study, participant criteria, compensation and contact information. Participation in this research was entirely voluntary. However, as a gesture of appreciation for the time committed to this research, participants of this study, were be given a $25 gift card to Barnes and Noble or Amazon upon completion.

Ethical issues

Prior to any data collection, the researcher submitted a detailed Doctoral Thesis Protocol (DTP) along with an “Application for Use of Human Participation in Research” to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Northeastern University. IRB approval served as an indication that the researcher adhered to the protection of all human subjects and research ethics. Any questions which arose from participants or from the IRB were answered in detail and as often as needed. Prior to the start of each interview and following a statement of introduction, participants were provided with the purpose of the research along with all steps taken to ensure confidentiality. The researcher instructed participants to read the “Consent to Participate in Research” form and sign as a means of providing their consent (Appendix E) which allows the
participant to take part in this proposed study. All issues with regard to privacy, dignity of participants and eliminating harm were carefully addressed and reviewed with participants.

Data collection

For this study, the data collection process consisted of conducting two semi-structured interviews using open ended questioning for the eight participants. Barbour (2007) asserts that IPA methodology is not concerned with large sample size like grounded theory research. Furthermore, Barbour (2007) argued that IPA researchers focus on a smaller sample size in order to conduct a “deeper interpretative analysis” of the findings obtained.

To begin, the researcher conducted an intake call. During the intake call (Appendix D) the Student Researcher gave a brief overview of the project and then asked criteria-based questions. After determining if the individual was an adequate candidate, the Student Researcher stated that the individual qualified for the study.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each study participant. These interviews were extensive and lasted between 45-60 minutes each. The researcher maintained confidentiality of each selected participant. Each participant was interviewed two times with a span of one month between each interview. The first interview began with “Describe your education background and professional experience (See Appendix E for interview protocol). The interview continued with the interviewer asking questions to obtain additional details around the experience of the new teacher. The detailed description of the phenomenon, according to Strauss & Corbin (1990), allows the researcher to discuss the findings obtained from the structured interviews using descriptions that are without the use of numbers or statistics.

The researcher then recorded all interviews using a cell phone and Rev.com software application. After each interview was completed, all responses were uploaded and professionally
transcribed to ensure accuracy of responses. All interview notes were secured under lock and key and placed in a file cabinet located in the researcher’s office. All researcher notes and questions were not included in any identifying information of the participants was also be kept in the locked file cabinet located in the office of the researcher (Appendix D).

**Data storage**

To maintain confidentiality, all selected participants were not identified by name or by the school they are employed in. During the interview process, participants were instructed to use their pseudonym or assigned number, when making remarks. The researcher also adhered to this procedure and refrained from using and personal information which could identify the study participants. Data was stored several ways: on a password protected laptop, hard copy filed in a pad-locked file cabinet and on a removable disk drive. To maintain confidentiality around access to data, access was provided to the researcher and the researcher’s advisor only.

**Data Analysis**

While there is no specific process for analyzing qualitative data in IPA research, the researcher analyzed data using the Interactive Model offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). These scholars offer that qualitative research must be “well-documented” as the researcher “searches for understanding”. These researchers also assert that “coding” is analysis that is used to bring meaning to the rich descriptions of information obtained through IPA methodology. Therefore, this researcher decided to use the Six-step Qualitative Process for Data Analysis offered by Creswell (2012):

1. Date was collected and organized from all sources related to the study (including interview responses, field notes and memos.

2. Data was transcribed in order to prepare for analysis.
3. To obtain an initial or basic understanding of the data, the researcher read through transcribed findings.

4. While reading transcribed data, researcher conducted initial level of coding and assigned a category to words, clusters of words, sayings and other examples of *in vivo* coding to identify themes in the data.

5. Researcher coded the data to be used for the description discussed in the findings.

6. Researcher coded the data to be used for the themes discussed in the findings.

According to Creswell (2012), the coding in steps five and six occur simultaneously and in several rounds in order to identify “ordinary, unexpected, hard-to-classify and major-minor themes”. Similarly, Saldana (2013) suggests, that coding is beneficial when conducting qualitative research where participants which are interviewed. As a new researcher, Saldana (2013) suggests in-vivo as the method best suited to assist the researcher with the following: managing large amounts of data, maintaining accuracy and understanding a process which can be complicated.

When analyzing data obtained using IPA research methodology, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers look for patterns to emerge from survey and interview responses and that the identification of patterns or “coding”, be conducted multiple times and then categorized to determine if emerging themes exist. According to Barbour (2007), using the smaller sample size offered by IPA will allow the researcher to conduct that “deeper interpretative analysis” from the responses while identifying any “multiple-layer themes” which emerge from the responses. Pringle et al. (2011) cites Smith et al. (2009) and suggests that researchers using an IPA methodology be prepared to provide an analysis of the findings which
“extends beyond what is obvious”, which a key characteristic of IPA methodology. Scholars Pringle et al. (2011) offered a method to guide this extended analysis.

Pringle et al. (2011) posited that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) requires the researcher to use “dual-stage method” to interpret results obtained. Using this method of data interpretation, the researcher described two perspectives: how the participants describe their experience as new teachers in urban public schools and how the researcher interprets how the participants described their experience (Pringle et al. 2011). These scholars offered that the researcher will interpret findings from two perspectives: the researchers’ interpretations of how the participants describe their experience along and the words of the participants as they share their lived experiences. Accordingly, Smith et al. (2009) defined this “two-staged process” as “double hermeneutic” and added that use of this process assists the researcher in providing a detailed description of the phenomenon examined.

Furthermore, Smith et al. (2009), offered that using this “dual-staged method” will aid the researcher in providing the detailed description defined in IPA methodology. Implementing Smith’s et al. (2009) suggestion to provide an analysis which is beyond fundamental, the researcher used narrative discussions, and personal quotes to interpret the findings which allowed the researcher to provide a comprehensive understanding of the results and to identify themes to present findings in a persuasive manner to support and answer the research question.

Trustworthiness

The researcher took care to contemplate the importance of procedures used to uphold the validity of this study. The integration of member checking, as recommended by Saldana (2013) was used to ensure the findings are trustworthy. In addition, Saldana (2013) suggests, that coding is beneficial when conducting qualitative research where participants are interviewed.
Similarly, Smith et al. (2009) suggest the use of coding to look for themes or meanings across interviews. As a new researcher, Saldana (2013) offers In Vivo as the coding method best suited to assist the researcher in managing large amounts of data, maintaining accuracy and understanding a process which can be complicated.

In order to ensure the validity of the data obtained, Salanda (2013) suggests using member checking. This strategy provided a clearly defined process to address challenges and questions from study participants and was important when the researcher was trying to ensure that what was captured in the interview was a valid account from the participant (Harper & Cole, 2012). The researcher also used a journal to integrate Saldana’s (2013) three recommended strategies throughout the data analysis phase of this research: (1) capture concerns/reflections around the research and to write important notes for the researcher to review, (2) follow-up with participants once interviews were completely transcribed to ensure the accuracy of individual analysis and verification of researcher interpretations with study participants to prevent misrepresentation of data obtained. Utilizing these strategies enabled the researcher to take steps and additional measures which ensured trustworthiness of this research.

Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2006) asserted that researchers conducting qualitative research can use software to assist with managing the large amounts of data often produced. Similarly, Braun and Clarke (2006), suggest that using software can provide IPA researchers with a more efficient method of identifying the themes which emerged from the findings. However, use of software, does not prevent the researcher from manual coding. As a result, the researcher used manual methods to code for this study.

**Clarifying researcher bias**
My experiences as a former assistant principal of an urban public school greatly impacts the decision to study how leadership style of principals in urban public schools influences new teacher engagement. As a result, it is important to share potential bias which may exist throughout this study. Creswell (2012) offers the importance of the researcher using language which lessens the opportunity for researcher bias. Therefore, careful consideration was made to ensure language used in this study did not offend on the basis of race, gender, age, religious affiliation or sexual orientation.

Furthermore, the researcher was deliberate in choice of language and used glossary terms offered by Creswell (2012) as a guide for encoding findings, thoughts and ideas to better explain findings. Throughout this study, the primary goal of IPA research, according to Pringle et al. (2011), is “to interpret how participants make sense of their experiences”. While personal feelings and beliefs are an essential component of IPA methodology, Creswell (2012) suggests that researchers communicating personal reflections should take care to determine “what the data collected really means”. However, Braun & Clarke (2006) offer that capturing personal feelings and beliefs of participants does not mean that “anything goes”. To this end, the researcher integrated quotes obtained from participants in the findings to assist with accurate interpretations.

**Member checks**

While the process of data collection was previously discussed, it is equally as important to discuss the steps that were taken by the researcher to ensure that the information obtained from the participants was an accurate reflection of facts shared to ensure validation of results. Review of literature indicates ongoing discourse around the validity and rigor of qualitative research (Dixon-Woods et al. 2004 and Barbour 2007). To reduce inquiries on the validity of the
methodology, Casey and Murphy (2009) recommend triangulation from data obtained using a combination of sources. Once again, this method supports the recommendation of Smith et al. (2009) that findings obtained in IPA research should “extend beyond a basic analysis” to surpass the analysis presented using other research methodologies. Therefore, member checking was also used as a strategy to improve the degree of trustworthiness in the findings obtained in this research.

**Interpretation and accuracy**

As a qualitative researcher using IPA methodology, the findings of this study incorporated personal experiences and positions of the researcher (Creswell, 2013). To this end, the researcher focused on the value of presenting research findings that accurately captured the data of the new teachers who participated in this study in a manner that reduced questions of accuracy and authenticity.

IPA methodology according to Smith et al. (2009) is based on the researcher’s interpretation. As such, to reduce inquiries on the validity of the methodology, Casey and Murphy (2009) recommends triangulation from data obtained using a combination (two or more) of sources. As a result, the multiple sources of data for triangulation, supported the recommendation of Smith et al. (2009) that IPA research provide an analysis of the findings surpass a level of basic analysis.

Also, new teachers participating in this research study were asked to review and discuss the findings obtained by the researcher to ensure the researcher captured accurate statements during the interviews. As recommended by Brocki & Wearden (2006) these findings were closely interpreted to determine emerging themes which extended by the obvious and will
incorporate the personal words of the participants as they discuss their experiences as new teachers in urban public schools.

**Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis**

The purpose of this interpretative phenomenological analysis was to explore the research question: *How does principal servant leadership impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?* The researcher’s intent was to provide findings which offer an in-depth understanding of how new teachers in urban public schools experience the phenomenon of engagement. As such, an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to obtain meaning of how eight new teachers experienced engagement in urban public schools. Giorgi’s (2011) research identifies Husserl (1962) as the “founder and one of the experts” in the study of phenomenology who defined phenomenological analysis as a research method designed to provide a more rigorous approach in the field of social science research. Further adding to the discussion of the method of phenomenological analysis, the works of Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2013) suggest when researchers are seeking to obtain an in-depth understanding of how study participants experienced a unique phenomenon, the phenomenological research method should be employed. This research gave voice to how principal servant leadership impacted the engagement of eight new teachers employed in urban public schools.

Using the interview questions (previously discussed in Chapter 3) from two semi-structured interviews, the researcher gathered detailed explanations and obtained rich data from participants who shared their experiences as new teachers in an urban public school. A total of 16 semi-structured interviews were conducted, eight were face-to-face and eight were telephone interviews. Initially, the researcher planned to use Nvivo coding software to assist with the process of data analysis. However, once the interviews were professionally transcribed, the
researcher read each transcript multiple times and decided against the use of coding software and instead to code the interviews by hand to ensure to capture the lived experiences of the participants.

During the first round of coding, the researcher noted responses which closely aligned with Greenleaf’s (1977) definition of servant leadership. During the second round of coding, the researcher noted responses which indicated remarks in contrast to the definition of Greenleaf’s (1977) definition of servant leadership. All of the responses were placed on a chart and allowed the researcher to examine the data for another round of coding; this time looking for patterns in the data. After the data had now gone through three rounds of coding, the researcher identified responses which were provided by two or more participants. Once repeated responses were identified, the researcher noticed the emergence of five themes: 1) responsibility and reaching back, 2) rise above, 3) respect me as a person first, 4) relationships matter and 5) reality check.

Giorgi (2011) asserts that researchers using the phenomenological method must make “every attempt to meticulously provide a description of what the participants experienced” and to take every precaution to refrain from making judgements of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. As a former leader of an urban public school located in the city of Baltimore, who witnessed new teachers leaving the profession, the researcher used journaling to reflect on personal experiences and to clear the path to focus on providing an analysis of the rich data obtained from participants.

**Bracketing**

During the data collection process, each of the participants provided details about their experiences as new teachers in urban public schools. Many of the experiences shared were similar to those the researcher had witnessed during the span of 20 years serving in various roles.
in an urban public school system. Therefore, before beginning the process of data analysis, it was clear that the researcher needed to release what was already known and experienced about the phenomenon studied. Following the recommendation of Carpenter (2007) which states that researchers must take measures to ensure that personal beliefs and experiences are put aside during the research process, bracketing was implemented before and during data collection. After listening to the experiences of the participants during the semi-structured interviews, it was clear that bracketing was both necessary and challenging to ensure that the data collected remained was a valid representation of the phenomenon studied. The researcher struggled intensely with this process and reviewed the literature for additional confirmation of the chosen methodology.

During this review, the researcher utilized the work of Chan, Fung and Chien (2013) which discussed that the major difficulty with respect to bracketing exists with the challenge of removing the researcher’s direct knowledge and experience of the topic studied. Chan, Fung and Chien (2013) further asserted that within phenomenological research there is specific method of bracketing defined for the researcher to implement. However, it was not until an additional review of the literature discussing bracketing revealed that the work of Giorgi (2011) and solidified the researcher’s understanding of the value and necessity for bracketing. Bracketing, the researcher asserts, is a vital step of data collection in phenomenological research. When researchers employ this technique they are allowing themselves the objectivity to remain open to the unique interpretations which emerge from the data.

The researcher found the literature overwhelmingly spoke to the value of successfully implementing bracketing while conducting phenomenological research and used a two-step
process of bracketing to distinguish personal experiences and opinions from those offered by the participants during the interviews.

During step one of the bracketing process, the researcher wrote down all responses and thoughts when participants were providing answers during the interviews. This step allowed the researcher to distinguish personal thoughts from those provided by the participants. These thoughts were noted on the interview sheets of the respondents but were highlighted to prevent the comments from being confused with those provided by the interviewees.

During step two of the bracketing process, the researcher wrote down personal reactions the responses given during review of the transcripts prior to coding or identifying themes obtained from the interviews. This process allowed the researcher to process initial reactions to the answers given and to add personal reflections separate and apart from data analysis.

**Data Collection and validity**

As a former leader of an urban public school, access to current school leaders it was predicted that access to current school leaders would require little facilitation. However, what could be anticipated was the massive budget deficits which plagues Baltimore City Public Schools. This 130 million dollar deficit, which represented approximately 10% of the operating budget for City Schools, caused a great deal of stress, low morale and stress among school administrators, teachers and administrative staff. During the time the researcher was attempting to recruit new teachers to participate in this research, many were worried about facing the possibility of losing their job. As a result, the recruitment process proved extremely challenging. However, persistence and snowballing resulted in the identification of 8 new teachers who completed two semi-structured interviews.
All initial interviews were conducted in person in the school where the new teachers were employed and lasted between 40 and 45 minutes. One interview occurred before the school day began, five during the teacher’s planning period and two after the school day had concluded. All eight of the phone interviews were conducted during the school day at the time designated for planning and lasted approximately 30 minutes each.

Saldana (2012) suggest member checking to ensure accuracy of participants’ responses and to validate the participants’ responses. As such, the researcher audio-recorded all sixteen interviews and they were professionally transcribed using Rev.com. Each transcript was sent to the participant for review and to ensure the responses were deemed accurate as Creswell (2013) discussed; within twenty four hours after the interview was completed. With the exception of one respondent, there were no corrections needed to the transcribed responses and consequently, the responses were accurate before proceeding to identify central themes and summaries contained in the data. Following the completion of both interviews, member checking was completed and the researcher organized the data by identifying themes which summarized how principal servant leadership impacted new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

**Participants’ voices**

The essence and value of phenomenological research is illustrated by the researcher’s responsibility to analyze data which articulates an in depth understanding of how the participants experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). As such, the researcher accepted the responsibility to ensure that data obtained from responses used rich descriptions to anchor the analysis of their experiences. Teachers were identified using a pseudonym in order to protect their identity.
Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the researcher organized the results of the study and reports the findings to include: definition of servant leadership, demographics of the study participants, data collection and validity, participants’ voices, correlation of findings to research questions, followed by central themes and a summary of the findings.

Demographics of Study Participants

The new teachers who participated in this research all taught at the elementary school level (grades K-5). The teachers represented 3 nationalities: African-American, White and Latino and self-identified as 6 females and 2 males and had been teaching an average of 3.5 years in Baltimore City Public Schools. All participants held Maryland State Teaching Certificates. Participants taught students in the following grades: grade 1 – three participants, grade 2 – two participants, grade 3 – one participant and grade 5 – two participants (see Table 1a). The participants represented both primary (Grades K-2) and secondary (grades 3-5) level of elementary school teachers and served as archetype of how elementary schools are structured. During the initial interview, it became clear that some participants were not aware of the definition of servant leadership. Therefore, I provided the following definition of servant leadership: a servant leader is one who leads with the primary focus of taking care of the needs of the individual and in return, the individuals will take care of the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Average years of teaching in Baltimore City Public Schools</th>
<th>Current Teaching Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>African American – 4 White - 2 Latino - 2</td>
<td>6 – female 2 - male</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1st grade – 3 2nd grade – 2 3rd grade – 1 5th grade - 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gina (Female, 2 years of experience, Second grade), an African American female, describes herself as a “product of Baltimore City Public Schools” who became a teacher in City Schools because she wanted to give back and observe first-hand the academic growth in her students while building positive relationships with them. The level of parent involvement is consistent, according to Gina and she has experienced a good rapport with the parents. She shared that one way she cultivates this positive relationship with her parents is by creating a weekly newsletter that is sent home. It highlights the progress the students are making—outside of waiting for report cards/progress reports which can be negative if academic benchmarks aren’t met. Student behaviors were described as challenging—some extreme and disruptive to the instruction---but good classroom management skills helped to subdue those behaviors. The hiring process was smooth, with Gina having attended a job fair that resulted in multiple offers from principals. The decision to choose her current school was greatly impacted by the principal and how she communicated with Gina at the job fair. The hiring process did include a challenge with my email; for months after being hired, emails were not received. Gina identified morale, support from the principal and opportunities for professional development as the primary factors that influenced her current level of job satisfaction. In addition, Gina also discussed the support she received from her assigned mentor (also a second grade teacher) and the help she offered which increased her ability to understand the curriculum and how to effectively teach the curriculum. When discussing principal-teacher relationships, Gina described her principal as “very helpful, easy to approach, makes me feel safe when asking questions”. As a result, she has never considered leaving the school. Further details explaining the relationships between principal-teachers; Gina reflected that she’s always felt that her principal wants teachers to be successful and that leadership can hold teachers accountable to meet instructional demands while
simultaneously demonstrating their level of care for the “teacher as a person.” Gina expressed that she was not aware of the term servant leadership. However, once the definition was offered; she gave several examples of how she believed her principal demonstrated servant leadership behavior. Gina also indicated that district leaders would embrace principals who used servant leadership because it would lead to happy teachers and those happy teachers would do more to help students.

Terron (Male, 2 years of experience, First grade) The first of two male teachers participating in this research and the only African American male, started teaching in Baltimore City because of a desire he discovered in college “to give back, to mold young minds and to be an example for the youth in this city”. In his classroom, parents of the students were supportive and had even asked him to consider applying for the role of assistant principal because in their eyes he was “different than most teachers”. Behavior was not an issue in his class and he built positive relationships with the students he taught and those throughout the school. When discussing his experience was the hiring process; Terron described it as “divine”. He wasn’t looking for a job and a friend invited him to a networking event. While speaking with a group of young professionals; he expressed my concern for young people in Baltimore and his desire to give back and help them succeed. Afterwards, he learned that one of the people participating in the discussion worked for City Schools and invited me to apply for a teaching position—he did and was quickly hired. The company where he was currently employed wanted to promote him; but he decided not to accept the promotion and began his career in teaching. Terron identified two factors of job satisfaction: good mentors and a good principal. District leadership has provided a mentor who coaches me in an area that was initially challenging for me—guided reading. The current principal and I have a great relationship and I consider her a “second
mother”. The relationship didn’t begin that way—both worked at it—learned not to take things personal. Terron discussed the willingness of the principal to demonstrate that she cared enough to make adjustments in how she gave feedback and how she demonstrated support. This demonstration of support, did not diminish the high expectations for me to increase academic achievement of my students. An appreciation for leaders who are strong, have a vision but have a mind to serve the children was also offered by Terron. While Terron was not aware of the term servant leadership; he acknowledged the value of principals meeting the needs of teachers as an essential component of new teachers remaining in the profession. During the 2nd interview, Terron gave an example of how the principal demonstrated servant leadership during a difficult discussion regarding unavoidable budget cuts facing the district. Terron reported that the principal advocated for all faculty/staff and met one-on-one with them to provide individual time for questions regarding their specific situations. He stated: “that was servant leadership for me; many other principals didn’t take time to do that.” Finally, Terron offered that the district leadership would not even notice if principals used servant leadership because “they only focus on student data”.

Janet (Female, 3 years of experience, First grade) One of the two White female participants, Janet offered that at the very beginning of her teaching career, she quickly understood that her ability to manage a classroom was far better than the other teachers (new and experienced). She began teaching with a desire to teach students and help them develop their academic and social skills independent of adult support. This participant reported that parent involvement varies—some parents are very involved and others are not involved at all—due to work or life challenges. The use of an APP to help stay connected with families has increased parent involvement and increased response time to shared concerns. Student behaviors this
teacher observed include fighting, aggressive behaviors and sometimes multiple physical assaults by one student. To her dismay, these aggressive acts were with without the principal stepping in for support of teachers and/or students. The hiring process, according to Janet, was described as awful. She attended a college job fair and saw representatives from City Schools. Immediately she submitted all documents, was given a contract immediately at the college job fair. Unfortunately, over the course of the summer there was no contact with anyone from the Human Resources department. Finally, she received a call one week before the start of the school year and was informed that she was placed in a school back in June. The principal of the school has not contacted her and as a result, she was not able to attend any of the new teacher workshops/seminars which were held for two weeks to prepare for the upcoming school year. This teacher defined the factors which impact job satisfaction as: principals who appreciation for what I do and having a mentor who is consistently available to provide support. Additional probing around the topic of mentoring revealed that the district was supposed to provide “coaches” for new teachers for three years (per contract and literature provided during the on-site interview) but this did not happen—the assigned mentor did not support on a consistent basis and only lasted a portion of her first year. Janet described her relationship with my principal as “not positive:. Unfair expectations around student aggressive behavior coupled with lack of nurturing/support both contributed to this definition. In addition, Janet reported that she had considered leaving her school as a result of the poor relationship with the principal; but the money/salary prevented her as she has financial obligations to meet. Furthermore, Janet stated that supporting teachers and showing appreciation are the most important elements in principal/teacher relationships and principals with a leadership style where their vision is
articulated, they hold everyone accountable but yet are supportive of teachers are what’s needed in urban schools.

Janet defined servant leadership as: principals serving teachers by modeling what’s expected of us and providing feedback that can help us grow. While servant leadership would help teachers greatly, she felt that district leaders would not be support its implementation by principals as they appear to only focus on “controlling principals” and not give them the latitude needed to try to be a servant leader. Of significant value to this research was Janet’s decision to leave her current school due to the “lack of support I have received from my principal.” Janet recently interviewed with another principal who discussed support she provided to teachers in the building; and current staff verified it. “I will miss my students, but I am going where I can be supported by the principal so I can further my career.”

**Sandra (Female, 3 years of experience, First grade)** Like Janet, Sandra came to City Schools with the desire to “make a difference”. With the option of teaching at a parochial school; she chose an urban public school where the behaviors of the students were knowingly more challenging. Sandra reported that she was completely aware of the challenges she would face as a teacher in an urban public school and remains dedicated to the task. Teaching in BCPSS would provide the opportunity to give students more than the instruction; but the nurturing/care many lacked at home. Sandra reported that dealing with student behaviors is a big challenge second only to the lack of parent involvement. Simple things like getting permission slips signed or speaking with a parent to address disrespectful student behaviors are experienced each day. Class size last year was very large—over 30—and towards the end of the school year; the class was split and the behaviors of the students greatly improved. This change caused Sandra to ask: “Why had it taken so long for the principal to make this happen?”
With respect to the hiring process, the application was completed online and about 2 months later was interviewed. The hiring process for Sandra was very smooth; but I know it was largely due to the fact that her parent (who is a veteran teacher with over 30 years of experience) provided her with access to those hiring. As a result of this connection she received excellent support to help navigate the hiring process. For this teacher, job satisfaction is mostly influenced by the level of stress and by the working relationships with colleagues. There are days when physical exhaustion from doing the work of a teacher in an urban public school is overwhelming; however, having a group of teachers on her team to collaborate with helps a lot.

The relationship between teachers and principals must be built on mutual respect, trust and shared goals. Principals who micro-manage are not effective; leading by doing and consistently demonstrating respectful behaviors towards each other are what effective principals leading urban public schools implement. Sandra concluded that she considers her principal to be a servant leader as he makes every effort to meet the needs of teachers: ensures that we have planning time; often shows concern about my workload and just about me as a person. She urges other principals in City Schools to use servant leadership to demonstrate that they care about the “teacher as a person first and then as a teacher”. Finally, Sandra offered that district leaders at North Avenue are only concerned about the data and probably would not encourage principals to be servant leaders.

Michelle (Female, 2 years of experience, Third grade) Growing up in Baltimore City, Michelle knew she wanted to “give back and help students learn” and make the progress she knew they needed to make to be successful. Being a teacher in an urban public school was the method chosen to accomplish this. Similar to the previous teachers, she identified the challenges of minimal parent involvement as an ongoing concern and noted that there is even less
involvement from families this year than in previous years—without identifying an explanation. Challenging behaviors students bring into the classroom was also discussed and those behaviors interfere with teaching and learning.

With regard to the hiring process, Michelle noted that choosing to work in an urban public school was her first choice. Whereas many of her classmates desired employment in public schools located in the suburbs. With the goal of working in an urban public school, Michelle submitted an application and called Human Resources and was immediately scheduled for an interview and was hired. Job satisfaction for this teacher was defined using the following: support from the administrative staff responsiveness to problems, visible leaders and creating a family environment at work. She shared that support was provided in two forms: collaborative planning meetings (where the emphasis was understanding data) and the assignment of a formal mentor. The collaborative planning meetings continued for the entire school year; however the formal mentor program ended abruptly without explanation.

This teacher described her relationship with the principal as very positive. The principal visits her classroom almost daily; she knows all the students/families and called her at home following a surgical procedure to inquire about her recovery. As a result the support she receives from the principal, she has never considered leaving even on the most frustrating days. Her principal’s leadership style can be described in two words: aware and supportive. She knows what’s happening in the building, in every classroom and she is supportive of all the teachers. This support is greatly appreciated and it gives me the security of knowing that if “something comes up” my Principal will handle it. My principal encourages all teachers to continue their education and professional goals and these are examples of servant leadership-- she wants the best for her teachers as people—not just as teachers. District leaders should want principals to be
servant leaders; to be supportive of teachers and as long as “Servant leaders makes teachers better, the district should not mind.”

Kim (Female, 2 years of experience, Second Grade) This is the second year Kim has taught second grade. Coming from a family of educators (her mother is also a Principal in the same district, her aunt and her god-mother also hold positions of instructional leadership), this teacher grew up with a passion for teaching and learning that was passed down from her mother and other influential women in her family. During her freshmen year in college, she declared her major in Elementary Education and knew she would help children attending urban public schools reach academic success. Like Janet, she uses an APP called “Remind” to increase parent involvement; as this continues to be a challenge. With the use of the APP, she has seen parent involvement improve—however there is still much room for growth. Student behavior is extremely difficult to manage and she has garnered more “tools in her tool box”. She defined the principal as providing little to no support when it comes to addressing student behavior; even the most aggressive behaviors.

This teacher was hired through Baltimore City Teaching Residency Program and her experience with the hiring process was extremely structured and included special resources (assistance with housing, transportation and mentoring) for two years. The primary factor Kim uses to determine job satisfaction was the “gratitude and hugs from my students every day; it’s like they expect and need me to show up.’ Adding to the factors influencing job satisfaction were supportive colleagues—especially an experienced teacher who also teaches second grade. The principal assigned the majority of the new teachers a mentor; but Kim did not receive one---and did not understand why. She relies on the support provided by family members (mother, aunt and godmother) to help her navigate her way---but misses the support from her principal.
Kim reported that her principal’s strengths are in providing “things, supplies or materials”, but the relationship between principal/teacher suffers as she only receives feedback during the formal observations (twice a year) and none that nurture her throughout the challenging days of a new teacher. The limited interaction she receives from the principal causes her to ask: “why am I doing this? Am I not worthy of being acknowledged?” and especially when she sees firsthand the support her mother (a principal) offers her new (and experienced) teachers. She has thought of leaving her school and the district several times as a result the poor relationship with the principal. However, Kim had an accurate understanding of principal servant leadership style as she witnessed her mother with the teachers who are employed at her school. As a result, she discussed the value of principals leading urban public schools using servant leadership behaviors with their teachers as a way of demonstrating support, appreciation and motivation. Kim suggested that not only would district leaders support principals using servant leadership style but they, too would benefit from becoming servant leaders to principals leading urban public schools.

**Sarah (Female, 2 years of experience, Fifth grade)** Unlike the other participants, Sarah (the only female Latina teachers) used a unique approach to prepare her to teach in an urban public school. She has a background in social work and elementary education. Like many of the participants she “wanted to give back” and is dedicated to using her understanding of the whole child to help them first manage out-of-the-classroom issues (such as attendance) before they become issues impacting what occurs inside the classroom. Similar to comments offered by other participants; student behavior is an ongoing challenge and parent involvement is inconsistent at best. Her students expect her to demonstrate fairness and she finds the school-
wide behavior program helpful but her social work skills have been what has provided her with
the greatest ability to support her students.

Sarah was recruited and hired through Urban Teachers Program and did not report any
challenges with the hiring process. Through Urban Teachers she interned prior to becoming a
teacher and met with a mentor to further support her transition into the classroom. For Sarah,
freedom and flexibility are the factors which have the greatest influence on job satisfaction. Her
current school has time set aside each Friday for professional development. During these days
she has the flexibility of attending team meetings, planning with colleagues or participating in
professional development outside of her school or outside of the district. Through Urban
Teachers she is also provided with a coach—but reports no direct support from her principal.
Outside of the two formal observations each school year; she has not received any feedback from
the principal.

The principal, does set up structures in the building (programs, assemblies, professional
development) and she is appreciative of this. When discussing elements of principal and teacher
relationships Sarah offered that there has to be an element of trust and transparency---no
“backstabbing.” According to Sarah, effective leadership includes daily communication,
solutions-driven discussions, ability to delegate to teachers and a clearly defined organizational
structure. Sarah offered that servant leaders were defined as leaders who are genuine and
intentionally make their teachers feel good while valuing and listening to their teachers. While
her current principal does not resemble a servant leader, Sarah felt that new teachers would
benefit from principals using servant leadership style. District leaders, according to this teacher,
are only concerned with data; they probably would not support principals as servant leaders—
unless they could be shown how it improves data on student achievement.
David (Male, 2 years Fifth grade) is the only male, Latino teacher in the group of participants. Similar to Sarah (who is also Latino) he teaches fifth grade. David’s school is located in the southern part of Baltimore City and the neighborhood mirrors the ills associated with urban environments. Unlike the other participants, David did not grow up in Baltimore. However he arrived in City Schools fueled with a passion to “give back” and is determined to “expose his students to an academically rigorous education.” Admittedly, he discussed that the families of his students are minimally involved in their education and a great deal of them do not have positive experiences with him. David enjoys teaching his students and has minimal issues with challenging behaviors. As a math teacher he is dedicated to keeping his students engaged—challenging those who can handle it and pushing/encouraging those who require it.

He attended a job fair at his college and the hiring process was uneventful and much more efficient than he had heard from his colleagues. Job satisfaction was defined using three factors: support from principal, relationship with school leaders and diversity in student population. As a new teacher he receives support from his assistant principal who he defines as “very, very supportive” and from the other members of the fifth grade teaching team.

Principal and teacher relationships should include accountability (on both sides), mutual trust and care about the teacher as a person, first. David also offered the importance of a principal being able to laugh and show signs of humor (at themselves, at teachers and at the students/parents). Giving teachers some latitude when major life events happen is also an element of leadership needed by principals leading urban public schools. David discussed physical and emotional challenges he experienced as a new teacher and the lack of understanding his principal showed. The primary question was “when are you returning back to work” as opposed to “how are recovering? What can I do to help?” David suggested that principals using
servant leadership would get “more” from their new teachers. More effort, more work and more dedication. District leaders, he stated, are so “out of touch” that they would not support the use of servant leadership as they are only concerned about data.

**Correlation of findings with research questions**

Table 2 shows the correlation between the 5 central themes and the interview questions. The interview questions were guided by the research question and the researcher took care to correctly capture the experiences of the participants who openly shared their stories and examples around how principal servant leadership impacts new teacher engagement in urban public schools with the goal of using this information to help principals across the country who are leading urban public schools.
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| **Reaching Back and Responsibility**<br>Responses: Attended BCPSS, product of the city, had to give back, schools made me successful, my choice to teach here | Context of Urban Schools | What do you find most challenging as a new teacher in an urban public school?  
What do you find most rewarding as a new teacher in an urban public school?  
Discuss your experience with parent involvement in an urban public school  
Discuss you experience with student behavior in an urban public school |
| **Rising Above**<br>Responses: aggressive students, limited parent involvement, large class size, curricular boundaries | Experience of New Teachers | Describe your experience with the recruitment and hiring process  
Discuss the factors that influence your level of job satisfaction  
Describe the type of support you receive as a new teacher |
| **Respect Me as a Person First**<br>Responses: personal connection, my challenges outside of work, I want to be here and do well, mental health and physical health come before teaching | Principal-Teacher Relationships | Discuss the principal-teacher relationship you have experienced  
Have you considered leaving your role as a teacher in an urban public school? How has principal-teacher relationship influenced your decision to remain/leave?  
What do you consider as important elements which need to exist in relationships between principals and teachers |
| **Relationships Matter**<br>Responses: Trust me, support me, need feedback from the principal, demonstrate you value my work, want leaders to hold accountable and have a vision | Leadership | Describe the leadership style which you consider effective  
Describe the traits you consider important for principals leading urban public schools |
| **Reality Check**<br>Responses: Principals who show they care will make teachers work harder, servant leadership will keep new teachers in your building, District leaders only concerned about data—out of touch with reality | Servant Leadership | Discuss your experience with leaders, followers and service  
Are you familiar with servant leadership? If no, provide Greenleaf’s definition. If yes, explain your understanding of servant leadership  
Discuss how principals in urban public schools can use servant leadership style with new teachers  
Based on your experience with district office/central office leaders describe principals using servant leadership |
From the process of conducting repeated reviews of the transcripts; the researcher identified similarities in how multiple participants experienced the phenomenon of new teacher engagement in urban public schools into clusters of experiences which were shared by multiple participants. During the initial cycle of coding the data, the researcher used In Vivo coding to “capture participant inspired rather than researcher inspired” responses (Saldana, 2013). The researcher reviewed each transcript numerous times and the result yielded 19 responses which were repeated more than once from the participants. Saldana (2013) suggests that data be recoded during the second cycle in order for the researcher to further examine the findings. As such, the researcher used pattern coding of the 19 responses and grouped them according to similarities or patterns. From these patterns, the researcher found a total of five central themes identified and the findings were validated. All eight of the new teachers who participated in this research used their individual voice to discuss new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

While none of the eight participants indicated that they were familiar with Greenleaf’s (1977) definition of servant leadership, after the researcher provided the definition, all eight were able to reflect on Greenleaf’s (1977) theory and effectively articulate their experiences to describe how principal leadership impacts new teacher engagement in urban public schools. Additionally, all eight of the participants were overwhelmingly eager to share their experiences allowing the researcher to do what Seidamn (1998) defines as “exploring their experiences and the meaning they make of them”. All participants demonstrated a significant amount of ease as they communicated intimate details with the researcher and expressed a feeling of honor that someone wanted to learn from them. These new teachers were candid in the sharing of their responses and expressed hope that the information would help principals leading urban public schools towards gaining a deeper understanding of how they can improve engagement of the new
teachers they hire. These teachers shared anecdotes and used examples to describe their understanding of the context of urban schools, their experience as a new teacher, principal-teacher relationships, leadership and servant leadership. The findings which were analyzed based on individual responses and responses which emerged from multiple participants and those results are listed below.

*Reaching back & responsibility.* The first theme which emerged from the data was the importance of reaching back and responsibility. All participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the context of urban schools. Gina, Terron and Michelle self-identified as being a “product of City Schools” and therefore felt a deep commitment to reach back to the school system that had prepared them to be successful.

Gina: I was raised in Baltimore City and I went to schools in Baltimore City and I love Baltimore City youth. I wanted to have an opportunity to give back to the youth and this is the choice I made. *Teacher B:* I felt I needed to give back to my school system where I graduated from so I can pour into them the information I know they need to become successful.

Michelle: Having grown up in Baltimore City, I know the difference teachers make in the lives of their students and I wanted to give back and teach those who are growing up where I grew up.

While Janet and Sandra did not grow up attending City Schools; their responses echoed those who did with their desire to reach back.

Janet: My strong commitment to teaching students how to navigate the environmental and family challenges which exist in urban neighborhoods. In addition to teaching the academic skills they need, I wanted to reach back to a group of youth who I remember reading and hearing about who lived less than 15 miles from where I lived; but their educational experience was a lot worse than mine.

Sandra: I became a teacher in Baltimore City because I knew that many of the students have very little parent involvement and they act out by showing inappropriate behaviors; I wanted to give them what they were lacking and I use teaching to do that.
Similar to the previous teachers, Kim, Sarah and David did not attend Baltimore City Public Schools. However, they did express a strong passion “to give back” to the students who attend some of the most under resourced schools. For these teachers “reaching back” consisted making a conscious decision to educate students living in urban neighborhoods who were forced to combat the ills of drugs, violence and crime each day even before they arrived to the schools and they spoke passionately about their choice to teach in an urban public school. These teachers espoused a general concern for the challenges which exist in urban areas: lack of fresh food, not enough areas for children to safely play outdoors and schools which are often filthy with limited natural light. Teaching in urban public schools, therefore, was their way of “giving back” some of what they had been given growing up outside of urban environments.

David, for example, offered: I want to make sure my students are exposed to rigorous academics. As a math teacher, I want my students to know how to solve those challenging types of math problems—even if they can’t solve it right away; I want to expose them to it. I think exposing them to more challenging materials shows they are competing with the best of the best. Towards the end of the year, I’ve been realizing that they (students) do carry baggage into the classroom and coping with whatever they have is something they haven’t learned yet. Part of that is on me—some students just have a bad day, or a bad weekend with their parents. It’s during those times where I have to feel like I have to go under the wave and calmly talk to them to help them share what’s going on to stop the situation from going to something that I can’t handle.

Sarah: Trying to understand the entire child, so I can help them be successful in my classroom and help them address any issues outside of the classroom without taking the focus off learning. A lot of kids show up late to school and that’s something that I can’t control. I can see students are more involved and even care about their education if they have a parent that’s holding them accountable at home; that I can call and tell them what they need to work on—or even just caring about the behaviors they show in class and to call home to express my care for them as students as people.

Sandra: I always tell people that I feel like where I teach I have some kids that really don’t get much love at home so I like to be their love for the day—the person responsible for giving them love and for showing them how to receive love.

The sense of responsibility which emanated from the responses was grounded in the belief that education creates a new hope, a new reality and new set of opportunities. The participants
discussed the value the placed in not only adhering the scope and sequence outlined in the curriculum, but in arriving to their schools each day ready to be the bridge which supports their students on their journey to improving their life through learning. Although 50% of the respondents did not share similarities of race and socio-economic class of the students they taught in urban public schools, these participants did share in their identification that they experienced a deep sense of responsibility to teach and “serve” these students showed marked impact on decisions around engagement.

*Rising above.* All of the participants commented that they wanted principals leading urban public schools to know that as new teachers, they were fully aware that engagement required a great deal of ability to “rise above” the challenges associated with teaching in urban public schools. In fact, these respondents shared that “rising above” the challenges associated with teaching in urban public schools required little difficulty if they had the support of their principal.

Gina, offered the following: Student behavior can be a challenge. Some students have extreme behaviors and their behaviors can become very disruptive to other students in the class. It is difficult to manage and control and I good with classroom management; but there are students who have issues that are over and above.

Terron: The curriculum is challenging. I find it quite odd that I’m handed a lesson plan and told to teach from that. I, think it’s insulting because I went to school and learned what’s best for children and now working in an urban public school, I am not encouraged to even develop a schedule that meets the needs of my students but to stick to the rigid guidelines of time and curriculum...but I do; I do what I have to do.

Janet: It’s almost feels like I’ve had to force disciplinary action from my principal in order for anything to happen. When students are fighting and it gets to the third, fourth, fifth fight. Im having to say “It’s their third, fourth, or fifth fight—and they’re coming right back to class? Are there any supports/consequences?” Or if a child is throwing chairs across the classroom; no administrator comes to assist and if I manage to get the child to go to the office on their own—because I can’t leave my class; they sent back with Skittles or a Starburst.
Similar to Janet, Sandra’s experience with rising above focused on the area of student behavior:

My first year here was my most challenging because I had a lot of students with behavioral issues and not really many options as far as behavioral support. It was basically me on my own. Many of my students were being disrespectful, fighting, cussing, stealing, lying. There were 33 students in my class and most of them were well-behaved; good students. Many of the issues stemmed from the fact that there just too many of us in one room. But you stick it out.

While the remaining three participants also indicated that student behavior was a factor they had to “rise above”, these teachers identified lack of parent involvement as a contributing factor of urban public schools which required them to rise above. Kim and David shared personal experiences with rising above using these words:

Kim: The level of parent involvement in my class is very low; it’s difficult for parents to even respond and sign a permission slip.

David: Half of the time I’ll encounter parents who are very pleasant; just happy with my work and what I do and what their child is bringing home and what they’re learning. But I have met with parents who are not involved and are very displeased and this is difficult.

This researcher found that while the participants provided different examples; they all gave value to their ability to “rise above” the challenges of teaching in urban public schools and shared that they were well aware of these challenges and those challenges did not deter them. As the participants described the aggressive student behavior, families who showed minimal interest in even signing a permission slip or parent/teacher conferences with attendance rates less than 10%; they each offered that understood these factors and remained committed to educating children attending urban public schools.

*Respect me as a person first.* Building on the work of Greenleaf (1977), Spears (2010) discussed the importance in identifying character traits of servant leaders. As such, he identified ten characteristics servant leaders should exhibit: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of the people
and building community. This researcher found that the participants in this study overwhelmingly assigned value to the principal’s ability to demonstrate respect for them as a person; to show concern about who they are and not merely what they do and identified many of Spear’s (2010) traits of servant leaders as important for their principal to model.

David valued the principal’s respect for him as an individual: For the first year and maybe even the second, the principal should, I wouldn’t say just drop and forgot all the district requirements for that teacher, But I think supporting the individual is very crucial because the teachers really want to do well, and they want to do well for themselves. They’re working really hard to do well, and so if they were supported as an individual, they would feel more confident, more secure about doing their job. One example is I came here from the south—very warm and very nice weather all the time. In Maryland the air/climate is very different and I was sick often. I was so sick I actually could not go to work. I just couldn’t. So, I was sick more than I was allowed to be, really, so I took more days off than I should have. But my principal understood that, he didn’t come down on me for that. And he was really good about not coming down on me. I felt really good about how he treated me. After this, I trusted my principal a lot more because I knew he understood me at a different kind of level, not just a business-professional level, but more on a personal level. And on moral principle, I just had to give back more. During faculty meetings when he asked me to do something that the district was asking him to do; I did—because if how he supported me as an individual.

Michelle’s voice also assigned significant value to the principal’s ability to demonstrate empathy needed to respect her as a person.

Just having support from the principal and being able to talk about stuff that I’m dealing with or any questions that I have. My principal replies quickly to emails or calls, I can always walk in and be able to talk about any issue I am having and there’s no pushback or anything. There’s always and open ear. That’s personal or professional. If it’s personal we set up a meeting very quickly so that we can talk about it. I just returned from having a medical procedure and while I was out, my principal called to check in on me several times. It was nice that someone was checking on me and that someone cared about me.

Sandra also identified the principal’s ability to demonstrate respect for the as an individual as an important factor.

I think with new teachers just checking in on us is important and ask: How are you? How is it going? Do you need any other assistance that I’m not providing? Things like that I definitely think are important especially teaching in an urban school setting. Sometimes I think “this is the most thankless job I’ve ever done in my life” Just to have somebody
concerned about your mental health could help you get through the tougher times you run into.

As these respondents offered their voices, some fought back tears as they described their need to have the principal demonstrate their ability to respect them as a person—not for the work they perform as a teacher in an urban public school; but for the person they are. The researcher listened intently as the participants gave heart-wrenching pleas for what many would call a basic human right— to be respected for simply being the person they are. The respect factor participants discussed gave significant similarities to the value of relationships.

*Relationships matter.* The theme which overwhelmingly resonated with all participants was that relationships between principals and teachers are highly valued and have significant impact on decisions around engagement. Gina described her principal as supportive and that she always felt “safe when her principal visited the classroom.” As the interview progressed, Gina shared that the principal was “helpful and caring” and consistently available to give support. Gina also indicated that she has never considered leaving her school and credits her relationship with the principal as the single reason behind her decision. Gina offered that she was never afraid of the overcrowded classrooms, lack of parental support, minimal instructional supplies or working in a neighborhood where violent crimes occurred each day that are often associated with teaching in an urban public school. The primary fear expressed by Gina was identified as working in an urban public school without a supportive relationship with the principal.

Similar to Gina, Terron also described his relationship with the principal as supportive. What was interesting about his description of the principal-teacher relationship was that it required a considerable amount of effort and adaptability from both of them. Terron described his principal as his “second mom” and that similar to the relationship between a parent and child;
the principal “pushed him to be better” and he “pushed back” when he needed more help. Admittedly he did not understand why the principal required him to do so much more than the other teachers; and he began to resent her. The two shared several open conversations where they each listened to one another and as a result, built a relationship grounded on a deeper understanding of each other. Shortly after this pivotal conversation, his principal witnessed his ability to spear-head a school-wide spirit event which motivated students to prepare for upcoming standardized tests, and their relationship has grown. Terron discussed how because of the relationship he and the principal have developed, he gained a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with leading an urban public school. The two realized they had attended the same Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and this shared experience became the cornerstone of their relationship and that relationship is what keeps him committed to remaining at the same school.

Using the same degree of passion and the previous teachers, Janet described her relationship with the principal as “unsupportive, not positive” and filled with his “unfair expectations.” Janet provided great detail as she discussed an incident which occurred during her first year with a classroom dubbed by the faculty as “having the most behavior problems.” According to Janet, without discussion, the principal placed her with this infamous class and said via email “I thought you would be the best candidate to attempt to coral them each day.” As Janet shared her experience, she became quiet, her eyes welled up and she took a few moments to compose herself before continuing the interview. After composing herself she continued to describe numerous days when her students were engaged in violent fights in the classroom and support from the principal was delayed by over an hour; or most times non-existent. Janet also offered that adding to this unsupportive relationship was the fact that the principal never came
into her classroom to ask her how things were going or to inquire about the transition he abruptly placed in without explanation. To make matters worse, this teacher was also experiencing a personal challenge at home which required her to move out of her home for a number of weeks and all this occurred without one word of support from the principal. As the second interview began, with this participant, she informed the researcher that she had recently attended a job fair and was hired by another principal for the upcoming school year. Without prompting she expressed that she had considered many reasons why she should stay but that the lack of support from her principal; not the student behaviors; was what ultimately influenced her decision to leave the school.

Interestingly, Janet and Sandra are both employed in the same school. However, Sandra described her relationship with the principal as “he’s just laid back and he doesn’t take care of student discipline”. Sandra reported that she has learned much about principal-teacher relationships from her father who is a 30+ year veteran in the same school system. While she has not experienced the lack of support her colleagues have expressed; she cannot describe him as supportive. However, she had discussions with several colleagues and understood their desire to leave the school in search of a more supportive relationship with the principal.

Collaborative planning, calls made during a recent illness and visibility were characteristics which Michelle used to describe the relationship she enjoys with the principal. Frequent classroom visits coupled with after school discussion about life contributed to the relationship where the principal shows concern for her outside of the classroom.

I think that the aura or space that the principal creates is very comforting and she tries to make it so that we all have conversations and we operate like a family. It is definitely a family feeling in this school. It’s very small, so everyone knows each other. The constant contact that is here and if a problem occurs—she’s on top of it. Just having constant contact with the teachers as well as the students.
Kim emphatically expressed that the principal-teacher relationship serves as the cornerstone of the school’s cultural identity. While she credits her principal for ensuring that the staff has tangible resources (technology, instructional supplies and books), he falls short in his ability to cultivate a relationship where he opens himself to building a professional and/or personal relationship that demonstrates his understanding of the demands she manages as a new teacher. This teacher hails from a long line of educators and administrators and has witnessed urban schools transform when the principal and teachers have a working relationship anchored in trust and respect. She credits the support she receives from family members and colleagues who provide the positive relationship which is non-existent with her principal:

Luckily I was fortunate enough to have a mother and an aunt who were both principals in the city. So sometimes after school I’ll go and plan with their teachers. Or I’ll go and plan with their support staff that has been very helpful for me. But as far as in my school building, the only person that really supports me a lot is the other second grade teacher and our reading intervention specialist. She’ll come in and watch me and tell me things that she sees that I could work on and the things that I have mastered. That’s very helpful. I would like more support from my principal other than making sure I had extra pencils for my students or a new projector. He’s there for us with providing materials; but he hasn’t been a factor in terms of me staying at my job; the biggest factor is because I love what I do. He’s not supportive.

Listening to Kim express her longing for a positive principal-teacher relationship continued well past the end of the school day on a beautiful and sunny Friday afternoon. Kim concluded her thoughts on principal-teacher relationships with the following comments:

Communication is the biggest thing. And presence is another big thing. If you don’t show that you are invested in your teachers and that you’re invested in what your students are doing and who the students are specifically, then it makes it a lot harder for teachers to do our job.

While Sarah holds a dual certification in education and social work, she credits her deeper understanding of relationships to her unique background. When discussing principal-teacher relationships she made the following reflections:
I feel like the interactions I’ve had with my principal are very minimal. He’s observed me twice for my formal observations and then I’ve had post-conference meetings, and we had a meeting beforehand. But on a day-to-day basis, I see the other administrators. I feel like he sets up structures in the school and I know he does things with a purpose and with reason. Teachers definitely have to feel appreciated and listened to. Leaders have to be genuine. You have to feel as a follower, like someone who’s under the leadership of someone, that that person is doing everything with the right intentions. You have to feel like you’re working towards a common goal, like you’re all working towards the same thing. I guess the messaging has to be consistent with that goal. It’s not going to work if you feel like your leader isn’t doing things to help you improve.

Similar to the previous participants, David also gave great value to the principal-teacher relationship. Specifically, this teacher emphasized how important it was for the principal to listen to their new teachers.

David: Not to micromanage, but they do have to go teacher by teacher, because just like students, we have different needs. Where principals and new teachers can come together to solve any problems; more like what can we do together to make sure you are on the right path?

*Reality check.* The final theme which emerged from the data came out of the question “*How do you think district leaders would support the principal’s use of servant leadership?*” Fifty-percent of the participants commented that district leaders are “only concerned about data” and therefore they would either not support principals who use servant leadership or would not even notice. These four teachers provided multiple stories of district leaders only coming to schools to examine student achievement data and how this data is the primary focus of discussions and professional development with their principal.

Terron, Janet, Sandra and Kim were exceptionally knowledgeable about data-driven results and shared that student achievement continues to be their first priority; however, as Terron stated: “Why is data the only priority when looking at new teacher performance? All participants expressed a clear understanding of how student achievement data is directly linked
to funding, to measuring teacher effectiveness and the main factor in determining whether or not a principal remains or is demoted. Sarah gave much thought to her response before sharing:

I feel like it would be very hard for servant leadership to be embraced as a whole. Teachers don’t feel like they are being served—many are promised raises and then it doesn’t happen and it just seems like it would be a long way to go before its’ 100% servant leadership.

David also shared his response: I think they (district office) would look down upon it negatively.

I think from it seems like they are much more concentrated in data, in numbers and I think that the individuals at North Avenue would see it some type of misdeed. Some principals, according to Sandra, would feel reluctant to implement servant leadership with their new teachers for the following reasons:

District leaders would ask: Why are you (principals) wasting your time? I need you to be checking data all the time and making sure teachers are completing tasks instead of check their mental health to ensure they are not losing their mind on the their children.

Michelle, on the other hand, felt strongly that district leaders would embrace principals using servant leadership with new teachers. “They should want principals to have good relationships with teachers, and they should teachers to want to stay where they are because they know someone is going to care and someone is going to have their back and someone is going to encourage them to be better teachers.

**Summary of Findings**

The researcher took care to develop interview questions that would cause the participants to reflect deeply on their experiences as a new teacher in an urban public school. Eight new teachers currently employed with Baltimore City Public Schools participated in this research considered it an honor to share personal stories, discuss intimate details of their professional life and illuminate the factors which impact engagement in urban public schools. The participants were not afraid to use personal examples and stories which enabled the researcher to gain the in-depth understanding needed to answer the research question: *How does principal servant leadership impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?* While participants
provided honest responses, the researcher repeatedly probed during the interview and asked them to share additional anecdotes which were added to the responses. The result of this multi-step process of data analysis produced a rich set of data which emerged in five themes: Reaching back & responsibility, Rise above, Respect me as a person first, Relationships Matter and Reality check.

**Reaching back & responsibility.** Close examination of the first theme revealed six of the eight participants stated that they taught in urban public schools because of a desire to reach back. Four of the eight participants attended and graduated from Baltimore City Public Schools and self-identified as a “product of Baltimore City” and shared a personal ability to relate to the challenges their students faced. Their desire to reach back was attributed to the support they experienced from a teacher who also graduated from City Schools and felt the need “reach back” to educate the children growing up in an urban environment. The other two of the six stated they wanted to “reach back” but not because they grew up attending Baltimore City Public Schools, but because they grew up hearing about the challenges students experienced attending City Schools; therefore they wanted to reach back and help a community in need. While giving different reasons, these six participants were clear in their reasons for becoming a teacher in an urban public school. The second part of the first theme emerging from the data overwhelmingly described the level of responsibility the participants expressed with regard to teaching in urban public schools. The participants discussed how students attending urban public schools are not “exposed to challenging math curriculum” and how he felt responsible to challenge his students intellectual capacity. Responsibility for another participant emanated out of concern for the amount of exposure to crime and violence which negatively impacts the development of positive and loving relationships experienced by students living in urban environments. One participant
shared that with her friends and family members she self-describes her responsibility to her students as being the “one person who demonstrates what positive and caring relationships look like”. Exposure to challenging curriculum, demonstrating positive/caring relationships or showing students how to effectively resolve disputes with minimal adult assistance were how the participants defined the individual responsibility they felt as a new teacher in an urban public school.

**Rising Above.** All 8 of the participants openly discussed that they entered the teaching profession with full knowledge of the challenges they would face educating students in urban public schools. Some of those challenges were defined as: limited instructional resources, waning parent involvement, children demonstrating aggressive behaviors, the need to work 10-12 hours a day, outdated structures unable to sustain the organization and district leaders who had lost touch of the needs of students to concentrate on collecting relevant data. However, all participants in this study indicated that they chose to “rise above” these challenges they faced as a new teacher in an urban public school because they anticipated support from their principal. Several of the teachers commented that their principal only entered their classroom twice a year to complete formal observations or would not respond when student aggression escalated to a degree of throwing chairs and making physical contact—which was more than they were able to manage with the limited number of “tools in their toolbox.”

**Respect me as a person first.** Themes four and five invoked the most emotion from the participants. Two participants shared examples of how their principals responded to physical illnesses they experienced during the school year. One participant had to miss a significant amount of time from work and as her principal called her throughout the recovery process not to
talk about lesson plans; but to ask how she was progressing and healing. The same teacher reflected about the time she spent after school standing outside of the principal’s office talking about the challenges of beginning a new career, making new friends in a city she did not grow up in and how the principal listened and tried to guide her to resources. Another participant had a similar experience with principal and commented that as a result of the care his principal demonstrated during an ailment; this made him want to “work harder and do whatever was needed.” While giving different examples, all participants overwhelmingly expressed the value of principals to demonstrate respect and concern for them as person. The teachers participating in this research value the duality in principals having respect for “who they are” and respect for “what they do.”

**Relationships matter.** Similar to the previous theme, the fifth theme was expressed by all participants and illustrated how the principal-teacher relationship impacts new teacher engagement. One participant explained how he and the principal had to “make adjustments” in how they interacted and communicated with one another. They both needed to take several steps back and reflect on the similarities they shared while working towards the same goal of improving student achievement. Teachers also offered that before professional relationships could improve and strengthen, principals needed to take time build and strengthen personal relationships with their new teachers. When principals invest time to build personal relationships with new teachers, according to the participants, it improves their commitment to the school’s vision and compels them to work harder to meet the goals and initiatives established by district office. All eight of the participants discussed that they had built relationships with other members of the administrative team (Assistant Principal and Grade Level Leaders); however, they still wanted a positive relationship with the principal. An example of how principal-teacher
relationships impact new teacher engagement was revealed in the decision of one participant to resign from her school after just two years and obtained a position with another school:

I had to leave, there were too many examples of my principal not appreciating me or connecting with me on a personal level—and working in this kind of school is very personal.”

**Reality Check.** The reality for the participants in this study was that data drives all of the decisions that are made by their principals. For example, several participants offered that principals hold more meetings to discuss data than to discuss the concerns dismal levels of parent participation, increase in aggressive student behavior or the rising rates of mental health issues experienced by new teachers. The reality check these teachers discussed was summarized as follows: data driven results are the only results that are important. Fifty percent of the participants expressed that their principal would not be supported by district leaders if they implemented servant leadership practice because focusing on the needs of the teachers could be misinterpreted as not being concerned about improving data. Consequently, those participants also concluded that the “reality” they have experienced is principals are not allowed or encouraged to implement servant leadership practices and in fact; would be penalized by district leaders for trying because the emphasis would not be placed on improving data.

**Conclusion**

Chapter Four discussed the analysis and findings obtained through two semi-structured interviews with eight new elementary school teachers employed in Baltimore City Public Schools. During the process of data analysis, five major themes were identified: *Reaching back & Responsibility, Rise above, Respect me as a person first, Relationships Matter and Reality check.* The participants were not afraid to use personal examples and stories which enabled the
researcher to gain the in-depth understanding needed to answer the research question: *How does principal servant leadership impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?* While participants provided thoughtful responses, the researcher repeatedly probed during the interview and asked them to share additional anecdotes which were added to the responses. These five themes emerged from the responses received through the two in-depth interviews and from the extensive date analysis process using the method of double hermeneutics. To this end, the stories, personal thoughts and reflections shared by the participants contributed to a set of rich data which served as the foundation for the use of double hermeneutics throughout the data analysis process. The researcher chose this method of data analysis as it offered, according to Creswell (2012), a valid method of allowing the participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and “make sense” of those experiences as the researcher “made sense” of what the answered they shared. As a result, the findings obtained in this research have provided me with an in-depth understanding of how principal servant leadership impacts new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

In Chapter 5, the researcher further examined the themes which emerged in chapter 4 to determine how these findings support the previous literature that was reviewed. In addition, Chapter 5 will also discuss the significance of the findings obtained from this research and the implications for principals and district administrators leading urban public schools.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings and Conclusion

Using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, this qualitative research was conducted to obtain an in depth understanding of how principal servant leadership impacts new teacher engagement in urban public schools. This chapter begins with a summary and discussion of the findings and how they contribute to Greenleaf’s (1977) construct of servant leadership. The chapter then discusses the significance of the findings, the limitations of the study, implications for future research and the conclusion.

Summary of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to answer the research question: *How does principal servant leadership impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?* Using an interpretative phenomenological approach methodology, eight new teachers currently employed in Baltimore City Public Schools participated in two semi-structured interviews and willingly accepted the opportunity to shed light on their personal accounts with principal servant leadership and how it impacts decisions to remain engaged as teacher in an urban public school. All participants self-identified as having completed at least one and no more than five years teaching in an urban public school on the elementary level. In addition, the participants were interviewed at a location of their choice (7 at their school and one at a local eatery) and within the first few minutes of the interview; easily engaged and demonstrated comfort with the process of sharing with the researcher. None of the participants communicated feelings of discomfort with the interview process or with any of the interview questions. In addition to answering the questions asked; participants offered examples, stories and personal accounts of how their “lived
experiences”. Greenleaf’s (1977) theory of Servant Leadership served as the framework which shaped this study and proved to be and allowed the researcher to “give voice” to how new teachers experienced principal servant leadership and engagement in urban public schools. Similar to my beginning my work as a scholar practitioner, and adds value to the recommendations for practice, was the fact that none of the participants were familiar with the term “servant leadership” prior to participating in this research. Perhaps this lack of familiarity with Greenleaf’s (1977) construct is attributed to the fact that it was originally intended for use by those leading within a corporate or business setting. Unfortunately, strategies and approaches which have been proven successful in corporate environments have not been utilized by those leading public schools; and certainly not urban public schools. Lunenburg (2010) found that Peters & Waterman (2006) and Senge (2006) suggested school administrators should spend a greater amount of their time to ensure that the human capital (employees) in their schools are given significant attention. This new way of embracing school leadership is far different from school leaders who put emphasis on managing the multitude of tasks associated with leading urban public schools. In short, school leaders are often so burdened with managing tasks, that there is little time spent implementing leadership styles which focus on supporting and developing the most valuable resource in the building—teachers.

**Significance**

The data collected is significant in that it provides principals leading urban public schools with an in depth understanding of how servant leadership impacts new teacher engagement. The literature repeatedly discussed the challenges of retaining new teachers in urban public schools and the findings of this research support the use of servant leadership practices to improve
engagement. As a result, when principals leading urban public schools took time to implement servant leadership traits with their new teachers (followers) as evidenced in their ability to develop personal and professional respect for their new teachers; a desire to remain at the assigned school and in the profession was overwhelmingly evident. The participants expressed their desire to “do whatever was necessary” and voiced their commitment to “complete whatever the principal needed” for principals utilizing servant leadership practices. Spears (2000) defined ten characteristics of a servant leader: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of the people and building community.

While several of the participants interviewed were not aware of the Greenleaf’s (1977) construct, once provided the definition, they openly reflected how principals using the theoretical framework impacted their experiences with engagement as a new teacher in an urban public school. When participants defined their principal as a servant leader; they provided examples of working above and beyond their professional expectations, expressed no desire to transfer to another school and did not consider leaving the profession of teaching in urban public schools. Conversely, when participants worked at schools where they did not define their principal as a servant leader, they provided personal accounts and examples of minimal instructional support, lack of professional relationship and little personal connection. The experiences working principals who did not demonstrate servant leadership practices overwhelmingly impacted decisions involving engagement more than any other factor as evidenced in decisions to transfer to other schools within the district and impacted thoughts of leaving the profession of teaching altogether.
All participants in this study made purposeful decisions to teach in urban public schools. As such, the participants were well versed in their understanding of the context of urban public schools and the challenges which exist in these learning environments. These participants overwhelmingly expressed the following: a strong desire to work for a principal who practices servant leadership or a strong commitment to continue their employment as a teacher in an urban public school where they define the principal as a servant leader. Each conclusion answers the research question and illustrates that principal servant leadership has a significant impact on new teacher engagement in urban public schools. These participants were clear: the challenging student behaviors, long work hours, limited instructional resources, overcrowded classes or limited (if at all) parent involvement were not primary factors which impacted decisions of engagement for new teachers in urban public schools. Principals practicing servant leadership had a significant impact on new teacher engagement; when servant leadership practices were missing new teachers disengaged from their professional responsibilities and sought opportunities to teach in other schools.

**Study Limitations**

After completing this research, there were several limitations identified: time, number of participants, location and lack of quantitative data. The researcher recognizes the value of conducting this study over a longer period of time. A longitudinal approach to this research would provide the opportunity for data analysis to examine the experiences of new teachers after completion of their first, third and fifth years for example. The researcher could then compare the data obtained over several years and provide a more much in depth analysis of this phenomenon. Additionally, the number of participants is identified as a limitation. While IPA
research encourages a small number of participants in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of how the participants experience the phenomenon studied, it also provides limits to the applicability of the findings across large numbers of new teachers in urban public schools. All of the participants were new teachers who were employed in the same urban public school system. The researcher’s decision to examine the experiences of new teachers who were all employed in Baltimore City Public Schools is also a limitation of this research which could influence principals leading urban public schools across the country, to question the applicability of the findings for the urban schools they lead. Finally, the researcher understands the value of presenting the findings using quantitative data. Many principals leading urban public schools lack time to read professional literature and scholarly work due the demands of school leadership. To this end, conducting quantitative data in a “data-driven” environment would allow principals leading urban public schools an opportunity to absorb apply the findings.

**Recommendations**

This research was conducted to “give voice” to the participants and to understand how principal servant leadership impacted new teacher engagement in urban public schools. Hearing the voices of new teachers and sharing those voices with principals and district leaders in urban school districts is vital when developing strategies to increase engagements of new teachers employed in urban public schools. To this end, the researcher recommends this information be disseminated in three separate capacities: increasing the awareness and knowledge of servant leadership through policy implementation and professional development with district leaders, professional development for current principals and professional development for aspiring principals.
The first phase of recommendations consists of increasing awareness for district leaders, principals and teachers more aware of servant leadership practices. The data repeatedly indicated that teachers were not aware of servant leadership practices or of the construct prior to their participation in this research. Arguably, this lack of knowledge could indicate the lack of utilization and implementation by principals leading elementary schools in Baltimore City. Upon examination of the curriculum covered by graduate programs in education from colleges and universities in the Baltimore metropolitan area (specifically Johns Hopkins and Loyola University), the researcher found courses which explore leadership theories and practices in education were offered. However, a description of one of the foundational leadership courses in the graduate program at Johns Hopkins states: “AD 683 examines the leadership theory, concepts, and philosophy for effective school leadership with special emphasis placed on student acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and application of the Professional Standards for School Leaders and the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework. Concepts such as visionary leadership, instructional leadership, equity and ethics in leadership, change leadership and the development of the individual school leader.” While a copy of syllabus was not provided; the description of the course mentioned several key concepts and did not include servant leadership. Therefore, the recommendation to increase knowledge of servant leadership practices includes graduate programs preparing those to lead urban public schools, teach in urban public schools and developing policy for those attending urban public schools is essential. Once current and aspiring leaders increase their knowledge and understanding of servant leadership; an increase in its implementation could follow.

To increase knowledge of servant leadership practices throughout Baltimore City Public Schools, the researcher further recommends that district leaders develop policy which
implements the integration of servant leadership practices by principals leading under performing schools with a teacher turnover rate of greater than 10%. As urban public schools attempt to close the existing achievement gaps, developing policies which implement servant leadership practices can increase new teacher engagement by targeting the five themes which were previously identified and discussed. When district leaders adopt a policy where principals integrate servant leadership practices at the school level, urban public schools will experience new teachers deciding to remain at their assigned school and continue to remain dedicated to remaining in the profession and closing the achievement gap. Additionally, district leaders are recommended to participate in a professional development seminar where the researcher shares the findings of this study, introduces servant leadership construct and discusses the lived experiences of the participants. Included in this professional development seminar would be opportunities for district leaders to learn how servant leadership benefits the productivity of organizations. The goal of this phase of professional development would be for district leadership to increase their understanding of servant leadership enough to endorse the implementation of policies which integrate these practices for principals leading urban public schools.

In the second phase, the researcher recommends professional development for current principals with two or more years’ of data indicating 10% of new teachers requesting transfers or have transferred to another school. The researcher will share the findings from this study with those principals meeting the criteria and provide a more extensive examination and methods of implementation of servant leadership practices through the Urban Principal Servant Leadership Institute (UPSLI). The overarching goal of the UPSLI will be to increase both knowledge and implementation of servant leadership practices by illustrating its benefits of organizational
performance through improving new teacher engagement in urban public schools. Principals participating in the UPSLI would be required to attend bi-weekly seminars and monthly mentoring/coaching for these practitioners to learn effective methods of becoming servant leaders. Coaching for this group of principals is essential as current data exists which shows challenges around new teacher engagement. Therefore, giving support to principals who are experiencing challenges with new teacher engagement as they begin their role will serve two purposes: 1) district leaders will show support for principals implementing servant leadership practices and 2) principals will receive opportunities for guided, safe practice around how to develop servant leadership skills.

Upon completion of the UPSLI, principals will be able answer the research questions posed in chapter 1: How does principal servant leadership influence new teacher engagement in urban public schools and How do new teachers in urban public schools experience support from the principal? As a result of completing the UPSLI, the targeted school leaders will be equipped with tools to lead schools where new teacher engagement in increased and resulting in a more productive organization where the goal of increased student achievement is actualized. When challenges of leading urban public schools arise, these new principals will have a group of professional coaches/mentors who can help them to effectively address the challenges without negatively impacting new teacher engagement.

The third phase of the recommendations consist of series of professional development seminars for aspiring principals embedded into the assessment and recruitment process for those desiring to lead within Baltimore City Public Schools. This recommendation for practice will answer the secondary research questions: How do urban public school systems support
principals’ use of servant leadership practices and is servant leadership a viable option for the urban education milieu?

Currently, district leaders require aspiring principals to respond to a set of questions in a leadership inventory assessment. When candidates complete the inventory, they are required to choose a leadership style (based on a set of character traits) and develop an essay describing why the leadership style was chosen and to identify how that chose leadership style would impact student achievement. Upon close review, the researcher noted that of the seven possible leadership styles listed in the inventory; servant leadership was not among the options. To this end, the professional development seminar would include an introduction to the construct of servant leadership, the findings of this research and video conversations (identity protected) of willing participants as they share their experiences working for principals who utilized/did not utilize servant leadership practices. These aspiring leaders will be provided time to engage and reflect on servant leadership practices and to design a Servant Leadership Practices Plan (SLPP) detailing how they would utilize the construct to improve new teacher engagement. This recommendation for practice will answer the secondary research questions: How do urban public school systems support principals’ use of servant leadership practices and is servant leadership a viable option for the urban education milieu?

With the findings obtained from this study, aspiring leaders will obtain a deeper understanding of how servant leadership practices can impact the overall productivity of their school. Once aspiring leaders are hired as principals, the SLPP they developed would become an action plan to guide leadership coaching for the first five years of their role as a principal leading an urban public school. Implementing the three phases of recommendations would increase
awareness, knowledge and practices of servant leaders for principals leading urban public schools and therefore, allow the integration of the construct to urban schools across the country experiencing similar challenges as those identified in the City of Baltimore.

Finally, the researcher recommends that additional longitudinal studies be conducted to examine how principal servant leadership impacts new teachers and experienced teachers across in urban public middle and high schools. This information would provide a comprehensive understanding of how the framework can apply to all levels of urban public schools throughout the city of Baltimore and in urban areas across the United States.

**Implications for future research**

During the process of data analysis, the researcher began to identify several possibilities to build on these findings. Future research to examine principal servant leadership and teacher engagement in urban public schools might include:

1. How do Principals understand the impact of servant leadership on new teacher engagement in urban public schools?

2. How does principal servant leadership impact engagement of *seasoned* teachers in urban public schools?

3. What role does principal servant leadership have on new high school teachers in urban public schools?

4. How do servant leadership practices of district leaders impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?

5. How does principal servant leadership impact teachers aspiring to become principals in urban public schools?
Conclusion

After completing this study, there were two significant conclusions which spoke directly to new teacher engagement in urban public schools: (1) when principals (leaders) of urban public schools demonstrate that they are concerned about the needs of their new teachers (followers); those new teachers remain engaged to teaching at those schools and (2) new teachers working in urban public schools desire the support of their principal over additional money, more instructional resources, newer classrooms or increased parental involvement.

The voice of the teachers working in urban public schools has been often overlooked at best, and significantly misunderstood. This research gave voice to a group of teachers who represent an integral part of the solution in urban education. While writing the final chapter of this research, one of the participants, Sarah sent an email to the researcher with the following message:

“Hi Stephanie I moved to a new school this year, actually a turnaround school. My principal posted his personal vision and in it stated how he is a servant leader. Immediately I thought of you and the impact this has on staff. I’m so excited for this school year. I am ecstatic to be working with my principal and my assistant principal. I have never felt more at home than I do here! I also feel comfortable to and not complacent. It’s great! Thank you for interviewing me it helped me tremendously in making my decision and the leap of faith.” This teacher signed the email: Learning Today, Leading Tomorrow Sarah

While the findings of this research overwhelmingly identified how principal servant leadership impacts new teacher engagement in urban public schools; the words written by this new teacher echo what Greenleaf (1977) espoused in his servant leadership construct; when leaders (principals) care about their followers (teachers); in turn the followers (teachers) will remain committed to the goals of the organization (urban public school). In the mid 1960’s activist, scholar and children’s advocate Marian Wright Edelman commenced on what continues to be her life’s journey of advocating for the removal of social injustices experienced by millions
of children living in urban environments. While Edelman is an undisputed advocate for the rights of all children; her passion and commitment to those attending urban public schools is both warranted and understood. According to Edelman (1989) education is one of six factors which have significant impact on the level of success a child experiences. Undeniably, two of the most important contributors to the educational success of students according to Edelman are principals and teachers. The research of Gloria Ladson-Billings (2000) categorized the social and cultural experience of African Americans as “unique”. Similarly, the educational experience of students attending urban public schools is equally as unique. To support this “unique” experience requires an equally “unique” group of teachers who can remain engaged in the profession or at their assigned urban public school long enough to successfully educate these learners and position them to obtain the level of success Edelman (1989) so passionately advocates for.

Principals leading urban public schools are tasked with addressing many challenges and this often leaves very little time to explore the influence of leadership style on the engagement of new teachers. Daily professional demands often prevent principals from researching and implementing a leadership style that would reduce the 30% of new teachers who exit the profession between years one and three, or the 50% who exit between years one and five (Liu & Johnson, 2006). While principals have a primary goal to increase academic achievement of their students; (Horng, Klasik & Loeb, 2010 and Marks & Printy, 2008) in urban public schools it is equally as important for these leaders to focus on the engagement of new teachers who will remain in their schools and provide the necessary instruction to increase student achievement.

There is no doubt that a loss of teachers is equivalent to a loss of valuable learning (Brown & Wynn, 2009) and in urban public schools, this loss can often become a daily
occurrence. Many well-intentioned and dedicated principals leading urban public schools; lack the perspective of new teachers when implementing leadership practices that can reduce the staggering number (Liu & Johnson, 2006) of new teachers from leaving the profession. This study will provide that perspective and will utilize servant leadership as the theoretical framework to examine principal leadership style and its influence on the phenomenon of new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

The literature which discussed leadership style of principals in urban public schools was exhaustive in relationship to increasing student achievement. However, additional investigation is needed to examine how servant leadership influences the engagement of new teachers in urban public schools. This study contributed to the knowledge which exists and examined engagement of new teachers in urban public schools. Understanding how the influence of the leadership style of principals on new teacher engagement in urban public schools is an invaluable component in improving student achievement and ensuring students are college and career ready while receiving an education from dedicated educators who feel valued, respected by their leader.

Studies which examine two of the most important contributors Edelman identified (principals and teachers) in the educational success of children living in urban environments were noticeably diminished in the literature. As a result of spending close to 25 years teaching and leading urban public schools, my knowledge and involvement serve as both a framework and a motivation for having conducted this research. Having witnessed countless new teachers leave urban public schools within the first few years of their career and having spent numerous hours as a school leader who listened to the distressed voices of a once passionate group of educators begin the conference with “Ms. Dennis, I am leaving City Schools”. It is clear that urban public schools present with a unique set of challenges that the principal cannot change
(violence in the neighborhood, drug-addicted parents and families with meager resources trying to survive (just to name a few). However, principals leading urban public schools can impact new teacher engagement when servant leadership practices are utilized and when they do, the results are simple: new teachers remain at their assigned schools and in the urban public school system longer and therefore, are able to do what many of them are so passionate about doing: teaching in urban public schools.

Greenleaf’s (1977) leadership construct is simplistic; when leaders demonstrate care about their followers; organizational productivity and commitment increases. Principals utilizing servant leadership practices can set the foundation for significant and life changing improvements for those teaching in urban public schools. The literature discussing the positive affects organizations and corporations experience as a result of integrating servant leadership practices is expansive. Researchers, Hadley and Weninger (2007) cite servant leader expert Marcel Schwantes who asks: “How can I be a servant and a leader?” as a central question which often challenges those who seek to expand their leadership practices. These scholars offered the findings of Schwantes, expert in the field of servant leadership practices and concluded “you cannot lead without serving others.” This researcher found that while the majority of the literature reviewed examined servant leadership within the private sector businesses and organizations, those leading urban public schools could also benefit the utilization of servant leadership practices. While public schools are not for-profit entities, they experience challenges around engagement to an equally, if not greater degree. Why is it that the findings of servant leadership research is not applied to those leading urban public schools? Principals leading these complex and intricate organizations are tasked with one of the most missions: using the least amount of resources to close the largest gaps in education achievement. The research of
Greenleaf (1977) and numerous scholars have been successfully applied to those leading businesses and organizations and this research supports the application for principals leading urban public schools.

The findings obtained in this study answered the research question: *How does principal servant leadership impact new teacher engagement in urban public schools?* and provided school leaders with a value set of leadership practices which can be a significant factor to combat the challenge of new teachers prematurely exiting the profession. Servant leadership practices improve two challenges which negatively impact student achievement in urban public schools: leader/follower relationships and organizational productivity. Why is it that Greenleaf’s (1977) construct of servant leadership not being taught to principals who are leading some of our most challenging schools?

It’s long overdue.
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Appendix A

Transcriber Confidentiality Statement in a Research Study

Northeastern University, College of Professional Studies
Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis
Title: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to Examine Principal Servant Leadership Style on New Teacher Engagement in Urban Public Schools from a Teacher’s Perspective

I am asking you (name) to take part in a research study. The research collected will be one-on-one interviews. Every interview will be audio recorded using the VoiceMemos application on the Student Researcher’s Apple iPad and iPhone (two separate devices are being used solely for backup in case of error) to capture accuracy in recording the responses. The use of a recording device is justified in this study because the details of thought and language are used by the participants are critical to data analysis.

I am responsible to transcribe the audio recordings to ensure accurate reporting of the information provided. You will not discuss any item on the tape with anyone other than the researcher. No one’s name will be asked or revealed during the individual interviews. The audio recordings will be stored in locked files before and after being transcribed. Audio recordings will be destroyed within 2 weeks of completing the transcriptions.

Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?
Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis (Student Researcher) 7 Golden Hill Court Catonsville, MD 21228
(c)443-909-0090 – dennis.st@husky.neu.edu
Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons (Principal Investigator), Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115 K.Clemons@neu.edu

Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?
Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis (Student Researcher) 7 Golden Hill Court Catonsville, MD 21228
(c)443-909-0090 – dennis.st@husky.neu.edu
Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons (Principal Investigator), Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115 K.Clemons@neu.edu

__________________________________ ___________________
Signature of person agreeing to take part Date
__________________________________ ___________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix B

Call for Participants

Are you a certified new teacher general education teacher (year 1-5) at the elementary level in the state of Maryland currently teaching in an urban public school? Please consider participating in this study to learn more about leadership and new teacher engagement.

The student researcher is conducting a study designed to examine how principal servant leadership style influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

Potential new teacher participants must hold Maryland teacher certification and have completed a minimum of one and a maximum of three years of teaching in an urban public school.

The study consists of two interviews, which may be conducted either by phone, Skype®, or in person. The first interview focuses on the participant’s experience as a new teacher in an urban public school the transition process (approximately 60-90 minutes); the second interview will allow the participant to reflect upon principal leadership style and engagement based on the first interview, and provide additional detail or reflection (approximately 60 minutes).

Participants who complete both interviews will receive a crisp one dollar bill as a gesture of appreciation.

If you or someone you know would like to participate in this study or learn more, please email dennis.st@husky.neu.edu or call 443-909-0090. Selection for the study is not guaranteed, but will be determined during a brief 5-10 minute intake call.

Confidentiality is guaranteed, and participants’ names or school names will never be shared with others or used in the published results.

This study is conducted by Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis, an EdD doctoral candidate at Northeastern University. This study has been approved by Northeastern University’s Institutional Review Board for research ethics (IRB# 12-12-27).
Letter to Participants

March, 2017

Dear Teacher,

I am a student at Northeastern University where I am in the process of completing my doctoral degree in Organizational Leadership. The focus of my doctoral thesis is A Teacher’s Perspective of the Influence of Principal Servant Leadership on New Teacher Engagement in Urban Public Schools and I am writing to know if you are interested in participating in this research.

This research study is being conducted from the perspective of new teachers to examine the influence of principal servant leadership on new teacher engagement in urban public schools. If you decide to participate, you will be expected to answer questions to share your perspective of the leadership style of your principal and how, based on your opinion, it influences engagement of new teachers. As a willing participant, you will be expected to complete two interviews, each lasting about one hour using a device, I will provide, to record your responses. Your participation is voluntary and you can decide to withdraw at any time during the interview and the data you share will also be withdrawn.

As a participant, any information that could identify you will be kept in strict confidence and will be destroyed once the study has concluded. If you agree to participate in this study, however, you also give me permission to use direct quotes you provide—but your name will be withheld from any quotes. Once the results are analyzed, they will become part of the dissertation which will be published.

If you are interested in learning more, I can be reached at 443-9090 or via email at dennis.st@husky.neu.edu

Yours Truly,

Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis
Doctoral Candidate
Northeastern University
College of Professional Studies
Letter to Principal

March 10, 2017

Dear Principal

Baltimore City Public Schools

I am a current student attending Northeastern University and pursuing my doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership. As a part of my research study, I will conduct interviews with teachers who possess at least one year and not more than five years of classroom experience in an urban public school. I am recruiting participants and would like permission to distribute a “Call for Participants” letter to your staff. If any of your current staff meet the criteria and are selected to participate in this research, I am seeking permission to conduct the interviews in your school.

The face-to-face interviews will be held within regularly scheduled hours that the building is open and will not cause any additional work for your staff members.

If you require any additional information which would help you to make a favorable decision, feel free to call me at 443-909-0090 or email me at dennis.st@husky.neu.edu

Yours Truly,
Stephanie D. Nelson-Dennis
Doctoral Candidate
Northeastern University
College of Professional Studies
Appendix C

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Northeastern University, Department of Education
Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Kristal Moore Clemons (Principal Investigator), Stephanie Dennis (Student Researcher)
Title of Project: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to Examine Principal Servant Leadership Style on New Teacher Engagement in Urban Public Schools

Request to Participate in Research
We would like to invite you to take part in a research project because you have completed at least one and no more than three years teaching in an urban public school.

Why is this research being conducted? The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of principal leadership style on engagement of new teachers in urban public schools.

You must be at least 18 years old to be in this research project.

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you participate in two interviews (conducted by Stephanie Nelson-Dennis) about your experience as a new teacher in an urban public school. The study will require two interviews; the first will take place at your current school and will take about sixty to ninety minutes. The second interview will be conducted in person, via phone or Skype®, and will take approximately one hour.

Risks or Discomfort for participating in this study is minimal. However, you can discontinue your participation at any time during the interview and you can refuse to answer any of the questions posed to you during the interviews.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. However, your answers will assist principals leading urban public schools towards a deeper understanding of how servant leadership style influences new teacher engagement and consequently, their decisions to continue teaching or to leave the profession altogether.

Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. Only the researchers will know that you participated in this study. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project.
Will I be paid to participate in this study? No, upon completion of both interviews you will receive a $25 gift card (Barnes & Noble or Amazon) as a gesture of appreciation for participating in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Stephanie Nelson-Dennis via phone at 443-909-0090, or by Email: dennis.st@husky.neu.edu, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Kristol Moore-Clemons at Northeastern University, Boston, MA, Email: K.Clemons@neu.edu, the Principal Investigator.

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 960 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617.373-4588, Email: n.regina@neu.edu. You may call anonymously if you wish.

You may keep this copy for your records in the event you need to review this information again. Thank you.
Stephanie Nelson-Dennis

I agree to participate in this research.

___________________________________                      _____________________
Signature of person agreeing to participate                         Date

____________________________________
Printed name of person above

___________________________________                      _____________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant and obtained consent from the person listed above                         Date

____________________________________
Printed name of the person above
Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interviewee: ________________________________________________
Interviewer: Stephanie Nelson
Date: ____________
Location of Interview: ________________________________________

INTRODUCTION

Part 1: Introductory Question Objectives (5-7 minutes)
• Build rapport
• Describe the study
• Answer any questions
• Review and sign IRB informed consent form

Introductory Protocol

Intake Call
You have been chosen to speak to me today because you volunteered and was identified as a new teacher who has completed at least one and no more than three years teaching in an urban public school and has significant information to share about your experience and perceptions of principal servant leadership and how it influences new teacher engagement. Your responses are important, as such, I would like your permission to record this interview to ensure accuracy in what you convey. In addition, I will also take detailed notes of your responses during the interview. To protect your identity, I can assure you all responses you offer will remain confidential and I will only use a pseudonym when providing direct quotes. As the student conducting this researcher, only I (and possibly a professional transcriptionist) will have access to the audio files. All information obtained during the interview will be destroyed immediately after the interview is transcribed.

In order to ensure human subjects’ requirements at the university, you must sign the form I emailed to you. This document states the following: (1) all information you share will be kept confidential, (2) your participation in this research study is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time you feel discomfort, and (3) we do intend to inflict expressing interest in this study. My name is Stephanie Nelson-Dennis, and I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University. This research is being conducted as a requirement in fulfilling my doctoral thesis project. This study is entitled: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to Examine the Influence of Principal Servant Leadership Style on New Teacher Engagement in Urban Public Schools.

There are a few personal reasons I am interested in researching this topic: First because I have served as a school leader in urban public schools and have had numerous new teachers ask me to share my leadership experience with other principals. This research will provide valuable information which will be utilized to equip urban school leaders with a deep understanding of how leadership style influences engagement of the new teachers in their building to continue their career as a teacher in an urban public school.
You are being asked to participate in two interviews which will focus on your experience as a new teacher in an urban public school. Like this intake call, I will conduct each interview by asking you a specific set of questions. However, you can contribute any additional information and/or ask questions as needed to accurately share your story. Each interview will last between 60-90 minutes and will be scheduled within one month of each other. In the first interview, my focus will be to gather information around topics which emerged from the literature review: the context or urban schools, new teacher experiences, principal-teacher relationships, leadership theory and servant leadership. During the second interview I will ask additional questions to follow up on the responses you provided in the first interview and you will have an opportunity to share information that you previously excluded. There is no remuneration for participating in this study, as an expression of gratitude, you will receive a crisp one dollar bill to remind you of your contribution.

Now, I’d like to ask you just a few criteria-based questions, to determine if you qualify as a participant, and if so, I’ll give you a more detailed explanation as to the scope of this project. At that point, if you’re interested in proceeding, we can schedule the first and second interview date/time.

• Can you confirm that you hold a professional teaching certification in the state of Maryland?
• Can you provide the name of the urban public school that you are currently employed in the state of Maryland?
• Can you confirm that you have completed at least one year of teaching but no more than three years of teaching?

Thank you. Based on the responses given, you meet all of the necessary criteria to participate in this study.

This is a very brief overview of the study. Do you have any questions in regards to the research itself? With that being said, are you interested in proceeding as a participant in this study?

Great. Thank you so much. What I’d like to do now is set up the times for us to do the two interviews. Considering your location, I think it is best that we do it (by phone, Skype®, in person)—do you agree? Great, Thank you.

Both interviews need to take place within a 1 month period of each other. As I mentioned, the first interview will last a maximum of 60 minutes and the second one should only take about 1 hour. What times work for you?

Thank you. I’m going to email you an electronic copy of Consent Form, which tells you a bit more about the study and answers some common questions people often have in regards to research. I ask that you please read it over before the first interview. If you have any questions or concerns, you are of course free to contact me. We will review the Consent Form together at the beginning of the interview, giving you another chance to ask any questions. If you then decide to continue with the interview, you will just have to give verbal consent at that time. Do you have any questions?

Thank you. I look forward to our first interview on ___. [If by phone/Skype®] What is best number to reach you on? Thank you once again.
Interview #1

Part 1: Introductory Protocol
Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today and to participate in this study. You have been identified as someone who meets the criteria of being a new teacher in an urban public school in Maryland who has completed one year of teaching but not more than three years of teaching.

This research project focuses on the experience of new teachers in urban public schools. Through this study, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of how servant leadership style of principals in urban public schools influence new teacher engagement.

Your responses are important and I want to make sure I capture everything you say. I would like to audio tape our conversation today. I will be taking written notes during the interview. Only I, and possibly a professional transcriptionist, will have access to the audio files. If a transcriptionist is used, that person will have signed a signed confidentiality statement and will also only be provided with recording labeled by pseudonym, meaning they will never even know your name, to maintain confidentiality. The audio files will be destroyed within two weeks after they have been transcribed. I can assure you that all responses will be confidential and only pseudonyms will be used when quoting from the transcripts. Only your pseudonym will be attached to the transcript.

I would like to begin recording this session now, is that alright with you? OK, the audio recording has begun.

To meet our human subjects’ requirements at the university, participants have to read and verbally agree to the Consent Form that I sent you. I’d like to go over this form with you now. The Consent Form for this study, titled “The Impact of Servant Leadership on New Teacher
Engagement in Urban Public Schools,” states that all participants must be certified to teach in the state of Maryland, and that they have completed at least one year of teaching and no more than three years of teaching in an urban public school. You are being asked to participate in two interviews focused around your experience as a new teacher in an urban public school. There are minimal risks or discomforts to you for taking part in this study, and there are also no direct benefits to you for participating in the study. Your part in this study will be handled in a confidential manner. As part of this process your school administrator was asked for permission for me to engage in this study within your school district. Your privacy will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms for you and your school district. Only I, as the researcher, will know your identity. Any reports or publications based on this research will only use pseudonyms, and will not identify you or any other participant as being part of this project. The decision to participate in this research project is up to you. You do not have to participate and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may withdraw at any time. If you have any questions about this study, contact information for me as well as the Principal Investigator is listed, and contact information is also listed for the IRB Coordinator of Human Subject Research Protection at Northeastern University should you have any other questions about your rights in this research (and you can call that person confidentially, if you wish).

Do you have any additional questions or concerns about the interview process or this form? Do you give your verbal consent? Great, thank you.

The first interview will be completed today and is planned to last between 60-90 minutes. The second interview will be held 1 month from now and will last approximately 60 minutes. Today’s interview will cover a set of questions the researcher have developed in order to gain a deeper understanding of how principal servant leadership influences engagement of new teachers in urban public schools. The questions will cover the following categories: professional experience in an urban public school, your experiences as a new teacher, principal-teacher relationships, leadership theory and servant leadership.

During the second interview, which will occur one month from now, you will be asked to reflect and expand on your experience with engagement as a new teacher in an urban public school.

I may need to ask you to complete your answers and move ahead to make sure all of my questions are asked and answered. Do you have any questions?

Part 2: Interview Introduction

This research study is designed to obtain an in-depth understanding of how principal servant leadership influences new teacher engagement in urban public schools.

The approach to this qualitative study will be first to explore a participant’s background and teaching experiences through a set of focused questions. To accomplish this, today’s interview will cover categories which emerged through the literature review to guide the questioning.

The second and final interview will cover your reflection on your first three years of teaching in an urban public school and will occur one month from now.
Part 3: Questioning
I’ll begin this interview by asking you to respond to questions in regards to your experience regarding engagement as a new teacher in an urban public school. In this first interview the questions will cover the following five categories: the context of urban public schools, your experience as a new teacher, principal-teacher relationships, leadership and servant leadership. This should take about one hour.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>How long have you worked in an urban public school?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Why did you decide to teach in an urban public school?</td>
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<td>What subject/grade do you teach?</td>
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<td><strong>Context of Urban Schools</strong></td>
<td>What do you find most rewarding/most challenging as a new teacher in an urban public school?</td>
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<td>Discuss your experience with parent involvement in an urban public school</td>
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<td>Describe your experience with student behavior and disciplinary incidents in urban public schools</td>
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<td><strong>Experience of New Teachers</strong></td>
<td>Describe your experience with the recruitment and hiring process</td>
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<td>Discuss the factors that influence your level of job satisfaction</td>
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<td>Describe the type of support you receive as a new teacher</td>
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<td><strong>Principal-Teacher Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Discuss the principal-teacher relationships you have experienced as a new teacher</td>
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<td>Have you considered leaving your role as a teacher in an urban public school?</td>
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<td>How has principal-teacher relationships influenced your decisions to remain/leave?</td>
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What do you consider as important elements which need to exist in relationship between principal-teachers? How has the principal-teacher relationship influenced your decisions around remaining in or leaving your role?

Leadership
Describe the leadership style which you consider effective
Discuss the traits you consider important for principals leading urban public schools

Servant Leadership
Discuss your experience with leaders, followers and service
Are you familiar with servant leadership style?

If No – interviewer give definition offered by Greenleaf (1977) If Yes, Explain your understanding of servant leadership style

Discuss how principals in urban public schools can use servant leadership style with new teachers

Based on your experience with district offices/central office leaders describe how you think they would react to principals who use servant leadership style

Part 4: Wrap-up

That concludes the questions for today’s interview. Before we wrap up, do you have any questions?

I want to confirm the time for the next/final interview: ___

Thank you so much for your participation, and I will call you for the final interview on ___.

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Interview # 2

Reflect on what you know of servant leadership style and your engagement as a new teacher

Part 1: Introductory Protocol

Today’s interview will allow us to follow up on questions from the first interview. Similar to last time, I will be audio recording this interview. Are we ready to begin?

Part 2: Questioning

1) During our previous discussion, you talked about your experience as a new teacher in an urban public school. Do you have any additional thoughts you would like to share?
2) Over the past month, has the leadership style of your principal changed? Explain
3) Since our interview last month, has your level of engagement at your assigned school changed? Explain
4) Following the interview last month, what experiences have you had with principal servant leadership?

Part 3: Wrap-up

Thank you, that concludes the interview questions for this final interview.

If I find that I need to ask any follow-up questions, for clarification purposes, would it be alright if I were to contact you? Great. Thank you. Let me confirm your email address and your cell number in the event that I need to reach you.

Sometime over the next month, I will email you a copy of the transcripts and my initial interpretations of both interviews. If you chose, you can review the information, and you will have one week to provide me with any feedback, alteration, or corrections. Can you please confirm the email address you would like for me to email the transcripts to?

Also, please let me know where you would like me to mail the expression of appreciation I will send: Great, I’ll be able to send two weeks after the transcripts have been reviewed. And once this thesis study is complete, which will most likely be 3-6 months from now, would you like to receive an electronic copy of the document?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study! Your experiences and insights have been extremely valuable.