

FILLING THE VOID: EXPLORING PREDICTORS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN  
BEGINNING TEACHER RETENTION

by

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## ABSTRACT

EUGENIA B. HOPPER. Filling the void: Exploring predictors of African American beginning teacher retention. (Under the direction of DR. PAUL FITCHETT)

African American teachers make up only about 7% of teachers in the United States, while African American students make up 16% of the public school population. Unfortunately, African American teachers leave teaching at almost a 60% higher rate when compared to other teacher demographics. Past efforts to recruit African American teachers did not include a focus on retaining teachers and very little quantitative research exists that places African American teachers as the focal point. Therefore, the purpose of this non-experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal study was to explore professional characteristics and workplace perceptions that are associated with African American teacher retention. The results present aspects of African American teachers' professional characteristics which are not focal points in current teacher retention literature. Specifically, this study conveys the school contexts, certification pathways, and mobility rates of a group of African American teachers within their first five years of teaching. In this study, African American female teachers were less likely to intend to stay in teaching, compared to African American male teachers and administrative support was significantly associated with African American teachers' intent to stay in teaching.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BTLS: Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study

CROT: Critical Race Organizational Theory

CRT: Critical Race Theory

NCES: National Center of Education Statistics

SASS: Schools and Staffing Survey

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is known that teacher quality impacts the academic success of students (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Consequently, systemic changes in public schools have caused many teachers to leave the profession. African American teachers specifically make up a small percentage of the general public school teacher population and leave the profession at a higher rate than other races of teachers. This movement away from the classroom and within the teacher workforce (i.e., moving from school to school) is commonly referred to as teacher mobility. Teacher mobility has economic and academic consequences for public schools. In 2012-13, 8% of teachers chose to leave teaching according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2016). Within this timeframe, 10% of African American teachers left teaching (NCES, 2016). There are also teachers who choose to move from one school assignment to another, as well as teachers who transition from traditional public school positions to charter or private schools. Each dynamic of teacher movement (leaving the profession or moving locations) costs districts and tax-payers money. Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007), in a study of five school districts, estimated costs associated with teacher turnover to “between \$76 and \$128 million per year” (p. 89). There is also a cost in student achievement when teacher turnover rates are high. Continuous exposure to experienced and qualified teachers over time can have a positive impact on student learning (Barnes et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). This concept is referred to as “returns to teaching

experience” (Kraft & Papay, 2014, p. 476), indicating that as teachers become more effective, their students experience better instruction and increased achievement, further supporting the argument that determining ways to retain teachers is a priority.

### **Statement of the Problem**

African American students are 16% of the traditional public school population in the United States (NCES, 2015). Regrettably, African American teachers make up only 6.8% of teachers in the United States (NCES, 2011). The rate at which African American teachers leave teaching is 60% higher than other teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

The urgency to retain African American teachers specifically is growing extensively as the population of African American students in public schools continues to increase. The widening disproportionality between teachers of color and students of color in public schools is also limiting the number of racially congruent role models and advocates visible to students in the public school setting. Villegas and Irvine (2002) convey the importance of African American students interacting with teachers who look like them, which conveys a message or counter-narrative that African Americans can operate in places of authority and have power in society. Hill-Jackson (2017) asserts the presence of African American teachers in the workforce serves not only to provide racially congruent role models for African American students and diversity in the teacher workforce in general but advocates for diversity as a “moral imperative” (p. 27). Hill-Jackson (2017) emphasizes the importance of embracing diversity to promote cross-cultural understanding and mutually beneficial interactions to enhance a global society.

There is also evidence of academic gains when African American students are racially paired with African American teachers (Dee, 2004, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Villegas and Irvine (2010) found African American teachers are more likely to (a) set high expectations for students, (b) work to build relationships with their students, (c) equip students with ways to confront discrimination, and (d) use culturally relevant pedagogy to support students in and out of the classroom. These practices, as well as their limited representation in the field, have caused districts to specifically recruit African American teachers, as well as other teachers of color to enter the teaching profession.

Unfortunately, retaining teachers that have been recruited is another dilemma altogether. Many factors can influence teachers' career decisions. Teacher's workplace perceptions, how they perceive their work environment, does have an impact on their decision to stay in their school assignment (Ladd, 2009). Specifically, teachers' perceptions of working conditions have been linked to their desire to stay in a school assignment. Teacher working conditions include support from administrators, curriculum and instructional support, and teacher influence on the day-to-day decisions in their classroom, also called teacher autonomy (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

### **Significance of the Problem**

African American teachers' likelihood to advocate culturally and pursue social justice for their students suggests a community-orientation toward the education process. Kohi and Pizarro (2016) refer to the "relational accountability" (p. 75) that teachers of color may exhibit, especially when they have pre-determined notions toward teaching for social justice. This pre-disposition to be community-minded and focused on building

relationships to meet the needs of the whole child and not just academics, compared to success in terms of individual advancement, causes African American teachers to perceive their work environments differently from White teachers. These perceptual differences influence teacher mobility decisions, and thereby the longevity of the African American teacher workforce. Yet little research is available that specifically focuses on describing the mobility patterns of African American beginning teachers over time. This study used a large-scale database (National Center of Education Statistics' Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study) to examine African American beginning teachers' perceptions of their working conditions. The researcher explored how these perceptions influence their teacher mobility decisions over time.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore professional characteristics and workplace perceptions that are associated with African American teacher retention in order to inform ways to support them professionally. Typically, teacher retention is discussed in terms of mobility which refers to whether teachers choose to stay in their current school assignment (stayers), choose to move to another teaching assignment locally or in another district (movers), or choose to completely leave the teaching profession (leavers) (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). For the purpose of this study, the researcher only explored the mobility of stayers and leavers. The research questions for this study were as follows:

RQ 1. What are the professional characteristics of African American teachers?

RQ 2. What are the mobility patterns of African American teachers?

RQ 3. To what extent do African American beginning teachers' professional characteristics predict teacher mobility?

The researcher found that unanticipated aspects of the African American teachers' professional characteristics were revealed from the data. A large percentage of the African American teachers in this study taught in suburban areas (when nationally representative weights have been applied). The teachers taught in school contexts where 42% of the teaching staff identified as a racial/ethnic minority and 72% of the student population were students of a racial/ethnic minority. Secondary teachers chose English Language Arts (African American female teachers) and Mathematics (African American male teachers) as their subject areas of choice most often and 35% of the African American teachers in the sample were alternatively certified.

### **Research Design**

The Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) over the course of five years (2007-2008 to 2011-2012 school years), was used as the data source in this quantitative research study. A non-experimental research design was used. Descriptive statistics and logistic regression allowed for cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Typically, teacher retention studies focus more broadly on working conditions and teacher characteristics. At times, the mobility and professional characteristics of teachers of color are explored, but they are usually limited to yet another characteristic or demographic related to teacher identity. Very few studies consider African American



teachers as the focal point. This study seeks to descriptively give voice to this unique population within the U. S. public school teacher workforce. Therefore, the conceptual framework used for this study will involve Organizational Theory (Ingersoll, 1991) and Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Organizational theory has been used as a framework to conceptualize the dynamics of professional relationships and operating systems of school/work environments (Ingersoll, 2001). These day-to-day dynamics influence teacher instructional and career decisions, as well as dictate the roles teachers enact within the school community. Functioning as a void, there is little literature that positions the African American teacher experience as its focal point, as well as reveals the perspectives of African American beginning teachers. Therefore, critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998) will be used to inspect the organizational dynamics present for African American beginning teacher success and guide the research investigation.

Organizational theory has at its roots, some of the work of Max Weber, a social theorist in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Weber emphasized the impact of economics, power, law, and politics on society (Morrison, 1995; Weber, 1968). He broached the term bureaucracy to describe social, systemic attempts to maintain order and perpetuate social justice. A bureaucracy within the confines of Weber's work is made up of complex administrative systems, which determine the functions necessary within society and how these functions should be executed. Schools within a society manifest as vehicles for bureaucratic reproduction. The bureaucracy conveys the ideas of the ruling, dominate class and benefits those decision-makers in capitalist ways. The product of a high

functioning bureaucratic hierarchy is legal domination, which propagates the ideas of authoritative landowners through social and legal policies (Weber, 1968).

Weber's notions were extended in conflict theory that recognizes schools as places that perpetuate and indoctrinate the culture of the dominant group in society to maintain their current beliefs and viewpoints (Lauen & Tyson, 2009). Over time, those theories that stressed the impact of structures within society on education were juxtaposed with theories that focused on the impact of agency on educational outcomes. One such argument, expressed by Haberman (2007), illuminates the dysfunction of public schools, especially urban schools. He emphasizes the ways in which access to a quality education, lack of advocacy and voice, and absence of opportunities for social mobility are inherent in the bureaucratic structure of large urban school districts. This systemic bureaucracy maintains an assortment of benefactors (those in the larger society which profit from urban school failure) and a continuous cohort of families whose education is tied to the urban school (Haberman, 2007). Descriptively, the tension within education between the emphasis on systemic structure and the human element produced the concept of schools as "loosely coupled systems" (Weick, 1976), influenced by internal and external forces.

Building upon this work, Ingersoll (2001) applied the concept of bureaucracy, with regards to the functions of an organization, to the hierarchies present in schools. Bureaucracy, in this sense, refers to the policies and procedures put into place to maintain accountability within the structure of schools. He details the level of control teachers are afforded in schools, as well as the systemic influence of administrators, school district

personnel, community stakeholders, lawmakers, and federal agencies on the decisions made in schools. Ingersoll concludes that the level of control related to tasks expected to complete by a member of an organization, namely teachers in this case, contributes to workplace perceptions and overall performance of the organization. Conflict within the organization can also negatively impact decisions to remain within the organization. Consequently, lack of control or conflict contributes to the choices to leave the organization, which is evident in teacher retention rates (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) argued that examining the structure of schools using organizational theory and considering the amount of control available for teachers to enact in their classrooms were important factors related to teacher turnover. Ingersoll resolved that teachers' interactions with principals, perceptions of instructional support, and the amount of professional autonomy given (collectively considered working conditions) influenced their perceptions of the workplace. These working conditions are a byproduct of the hierarchical relationships that exist between teachers, their peers, and administrators in a school context. Ingersoll (2001) emphasizes the bureaucratic nature of the character, organization, and conditions of schools.

Like Weber, Bell (1995) alludes to the preeminence of power and law in society. Yet he centralizes the influence of race in the day-to-day happenings that occur in the United States through Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a theoretical framework that critiques American society and culture by exploring the intersectionality between race, law, and power (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT operates under the premise that racism is embedded in American society. CRT is also critical of issues related to inequities in

education and the impact of civil rights legislation on the White and Black experience. Storytelling is often used in CRT as a way to give voice to marginalized members of society and provide a context for reflecting critically about an experience. A similar, reflectively critical viewpoint will be used in the approach to this study. The researcher will use the variables chosen to descriptively uncover the realities of African American beginning teachers' professional characteristics and their impact on African American beginning teachers' mobility.

Critical race theory is based upon five themes. CRT (1) asserts race and racism are undercurrent fixtures in American society, (2) challenges the ideas of dominant society, (3) situates social justice as a priority, (4) celebrates knowledge gained from life experiences, and (5) advocates for use of multiple, concurrent methodologies (Pérez & Solorzano, 2015). These ideas collectively point to the influence of race, power, and law on society, including education, and exists in the background of the systems that dictate our day-to-day norms (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Through these five themes, CRT challenges the dominant narrative that suppresses and devalues the accumulated knowledge of people of color (Pérez & Solorzano, 2015). Instead, it affirms a counter story, the experiences and perspectives of people of color, while encouraging social justice as a means to counteract the prominence and intersectionality of race and racism embedded in American systems. An interdisciplinary approach is embraced in CRT to capture the extent of discriminatory practices and to arrive at solutions that positively influence social change.

In the 1970s, Chester Pierce introduced the concept of microaggressions (everyday acts of racism) that people of color, including African Americans, experience in social interactions (Pérez & Solorzano, 2015). CRT has been used to expand this idea to encompass the systemic ways in which people of color repeatedly experience racism. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) interjected the influence of race and property and their impact on inequities in education. They explained how racism permeates American society and is evident in the execution of Civic Rights law, efforts to assume color-blindness, and the ways in which property location and accumulation have been used to continue education disparities throughout history (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) further applied the intersectionality of power, law, and race to education, using CRT, as she alluded to the role of racism in perpetuating systemic curricular exclusionary practices.

The school, like other systems in the United States, is vulnerable to racial microaggressions that impact the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers of color who participate in that organization day after day. Therefore organizational theory, paired with CRT, will be used as a conceptual framework for examining the workplace perceptions and professional mobility decisions of African American beginning teachers.

In this study, the researcher investigated the extent to which African American beginning teachers are influenced by the organizational structures they enter into as beginning teachers (drawing on organizational theory), critically considering the impact of race, laws/policies, and power structures (CRT) on their mobility decisions. This viewpoint is referred to as Critical Race Organizational Theory (CROT). Figure 1 is a

visual representation of the elements of CROT. This diagram illustrates how the undercurrents of race, power, and law/policy act as salient forces within the conditions of the school organization, character of the school organization, and school organization performance. Collectively, these six elements apply unseen pressure to teachers and influence how teachers perceive their work environment combined with their predisposed pedagogical beliefs. These external and internal factors contribute to a teacher's intention to stay in teaching and later result in observed behaviors of staying, leaving, moving, or returning to a teaching assignment. CROT will be used to explore the working conditions of beginning African American teachers within the context of the organizational structure of schools using the lens of critical race theory. Operating from the perspective of CROT will assist the researcher with determining variables that depict the uniqueness of the professional characteristics and impact the mobility decisions of African American beginning teachers. Presuming that African American teachers perceive their work environments the same as White teachers, or choosing not to consider their demographic independently, neglects the distinctive experiences of African American teachers and masks contributions and concerns of a population of teachers that has shrunk from 7.9% in 2003-2004 to 6.8% in 2011-2012 (NCES, 2011).

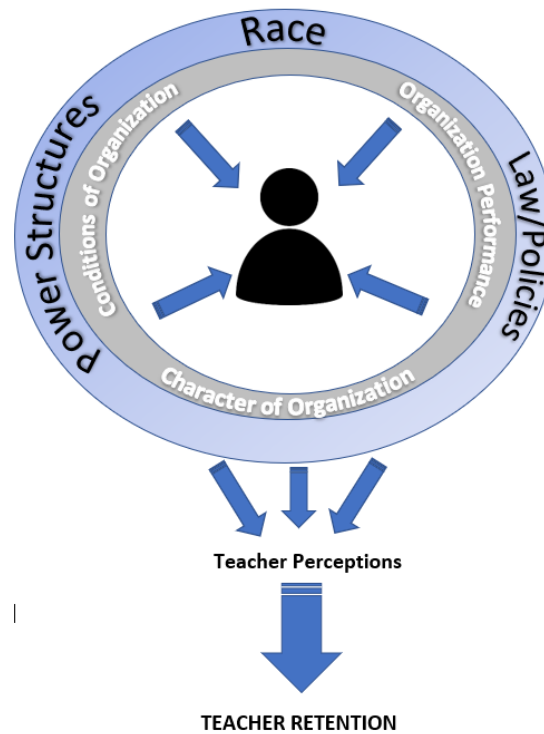


Figure 1. Critical Race Organizational Theory Diagram. This figure illustrates the elements of Critical Race Organizational Theory (CROT).

### Study Overview

Thus far, the researcher has introduced, stated, and illuminated the significance of the problem: retaining African American beginning teachers. Also, an overview of the study's research design and the conceptual framework grounding the study has been presented. A definition of terms specific to this study will follow. Chapter 2 highlights relevant literature, while Chapter 3 relays the specifics of the study's methodology. Chapter 4 communicates the results of the study and chapter 5 discusses the results in the context of the literature.

### **Definition of Terms**

Alternative certification program: a teacher licensure program which allows a participant to acquire a standard teaching license or teaching certificate without completing a traditional four or five year university-based program (Humphry & Wechsler, 2007)

Autonomy: A component of teacher professional authority or influence

African American/Black teacher: African/American (as a personal racial/ethnic identifier or as indicated on the NCES Schools and Staffing Survey) full-time teacher

African American/Black beginning teacher: African American (as a personal racial/ethnic identifier or as indicated on the NCES Schools and Staffing Survey) full-time teacher who is currently in their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching

Beginning teacher: Any full-time teacher that is currently in their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching

Early career teacher: Teachers who participated in the 2007-08 SASS and indicated they did not begin teaching before the 2003-04 school year. At the time of the survey, they would have zero to five years of teaching experience

Leavers: Teachers who choose to completely leave the teaching profession

Mobility: Refers collectively to a teacher's decision to move, stay, leave, or return to a teaching assignment from one school year to the next.



Movers: Teachers who choose to move to another teaching assignment locally or in another district

People of color: People who identify with a racial/ethnic group other than Caucasian/White

Professional characteristics: Term which collectively refers to a teacher's credentials and academic pathway to acquiring a teaching license, demographics of the school to which a teacher is assigned, and workplace perceptions of professional support

Returners: Teachers who were part of the original 2007-08 cohort of teachers who chose to return to a full-time teaching assignment after leaving the profession previously

Stayers: Teachers who choose to stay in their current school assignment

Teacher mobility: Collective term that refers to teachers' decisions to be a mover, leaver, or stayer; encompasses teacher attrition, teacher retention, and teacher turnover

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines research concerning the overall U. S. public school teacher workforce, their mobility, and teacher working conditions. Special supports are generally put into place to help beginning teachers meet the needs of their students and establish routines for the day-to-day expectations of teaching. These supports will be explored, followed by historical and biographical data specific to African American teachers as they are the focus of this study.

The emphasis in the past has been on recruiting African American teachers to help balance the demographics of the teacher profession to match the demographics of the student population. The current diminishing representation of African American teachers warrants efforts to shift the focus to strategies designed to retain African American teachers as well (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Characteristically, the literature shows that a positive relationship with school leadership (Boyd et al., 2011; Ladd, 2009; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011; Weiss, 1999) and autonomy are conditions for teachers to stay in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fitchett, Lineback, McCarthy, & Lambert, 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011). In a general sense, this is accurate but there is not evidence that these are the only criteria that affect African American teachers' mobility decisions. More specifically, what characteristics are common to African American teachers that motivate them to stay in the classroom?

This study will consider historical contexts, the unique perspectives African American teachers bring to the classroom, and use Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey (BTLS) and Schools and Staffing (SASS) data to determine factors that may relate to African American beginning teachers' choices to remain as classroom teachers.

### **The Teacher Workforce**

As of 2011, 76.3% of the teacher workforce was made up women and 23.7% were men. This type of demographic skewedness continues with 81.9% of the U.S. teaching population identifying as White (NCES, 2011). Comparatively, while the majority of the U. S. teacher workforce are White women, only about 50% of students in public schools identify as White, leaving about half of the U. S. student population racially incongruent with their teachers.

Many of these teachers are experienced, with over 50% of the public school teacher population having more than 10 years of experience, and 21.3% of teachers having more than 20 years of experience. In essence the “freshman” class of teachers which make up only 9% (teachers with three or fewer years of full-time experience) of teachers in 2011 (NCES, 2011), will not be able to fill the void of the approximately 20% percent of teachers who are near the end of their teaching tenure (teachers with more than 20 years of experience). Keeping a large number of teachers denotes a high teacher retention rate, while losing a large amount of the teaching staff represents a low rate of teacher retention. A void in teacher retention has been created because a substantial number of teachers leave before their fifth year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2001). For instance, 23% of teachers who entered the teacher workforce in the 2007-2008 school

year as full-time teachers were no longer part of the workforce five years later (Gray & Taie, 2015). The teacher retention rate described is not uncommon across years.

According to teacher retention research, three key working conditions affect teacher retention rates. School leadership, instructional support, and teacher's professional authority (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fitchett, et al., 2016; Ingersoll & May, 2011) have been recorded as elements of the teacher workplace that impact teachers' decision to stay at a school (stayers), move to a different school to teach (movers), or leave the teaching profession completely (leavers). Collectively, the decisions that teachers make to stay, move, or leave their current teaching assignment are referred to as teacher mobility. Specifically, the propensity for teachers to modify their professional path by leaving teaching is commonly referred to as teacher attrition.

### **Teacher Mobility**

Teacher attrition is a topic that weighs heavily on the minds of many educators and administrators. Considering the need for quality teacher stability in urban schools, changes are needed to obtain and retain qualified educators during a time when retention is a concern (U.S. Department of Education Regional Advisory Committee, 2011). Urban schools particularly are subjected to high turnover rates that can be detrimental to student success rates (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2002). High attrition rates for beginning teachers (teachers with less than 5 years of experience) creates a constant pattern of staff instability that hampers student achievement and program stability at under-resourced schools (Gangon & Mattingly, 2012; Waddell, 2010).

The wearisome process of hiring and replacing beginning teachers who leave before they have mastered the ability to create a successful learning culture for their students consumes an excessive amount of human and financial capital. Reiterated by Ingersoll (2001), urban and rural schools affected by poverty are frequently staffed with inequitable concentrations of under-prepared, inexperienced teachers who are left to labor on their own to meet the needs of their students. This seclusion has a disturbing effect on many new teachers who feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face. As these teachers leave, a mass of problems face the new, and often inexperienced, teachers who take their place. It is fitting that additional inquiry and resolutions are sought and brought to light in the troubling times of teacher retention, particularly in under-resourced schools. In agreement with Nieto (2003), reasons for retention rather than attrition are a priority, with particular emphasis on considering why teachers stay versus why teachers leave the profession. To that end, Darling-Hammond (2003) describes factors that impact teacher attrition such as working conditions, lack of mentor support, and lack of preparation.

### **Teacher Working Conditions**

#### **Administrator support**

In several studies, it has been found that administrator support influences teachers' desire to remain in their current teaching assignment (Boyd et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ladd, 2009; Weiss, 1999). Administrative support can include providing instructional materials/resources, professional development, affirmation that commends staff for professional successes, positive interactions with students and staff, and building collaborative instructional communities (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty,

2003). Administrators set the tone of the school culture and make decisions about resource allocation and instructional support for teachers. Teachers' perceptions of their workplace environment are going to be influenced by the amount of professional support provided, mandated curriculum decisions, and feedback from teacher evaluations, all factors included in the realm of principal discretion. Specifically, Campoli & Conrad-Popova (2017) found that administrative support impacted African American female teachers' mobility decisions. School discipline practices, school routines and procedures, as well as communication, can also impact a teacher's decision to remain in a teaching assignment. These decisions are also regulated by school administrators.

### **Instructional Support**

Instructional support is also an element of consideration for teachers as they make career decisions from year to year. Support can be described as within-school and outside of school supports (Fitchett, et al., 2016). Within- school supports (Fitchett et al., 2016) are provided on the school level and negotiated by the principal, usually using school staff to share strategies that have been implemented in a teacher's classroom or based upon information gathered from an outside source and shared with fellow colleagues. Outside of school supports (Fitchett et al., 2016) could involve a secondary source hired to provide professional development experiences for teachers or teachers would attend a professional development activity outside of the school, like a conference or web-based course individually or with a group of teachers.

Regardless of the mode of instruction (within school or outside of school), Guskey (2002), Birman, Desimone, Porter, and Garet (2000), and Desimone (2011) all

present what their studies reveal as essential elements of professional development. For professional development to permanently and positively impact instructional practices, it is beneficial to avoid coercing teachers into implementing programs and practices.

Instead, professional development leaders should allot time to guide teachers. For teachers to see the positive attributes of new instructional models, the environment in which they implement ideas must be supportive so that teachers will be inclined to fully implement the ideas. Also, steps can be taken by the professional development leader to uncover with teachers some of the positive benefits from the teachers' openness to try something new. Guskey (2002) also references the gradual nature of progress towards changing teaching practice and stresses the importance of providing teachers with feedback and follow-up support if teachers are expected to embrace instructional changes beyond the designated training time of the professional development.

### **Teacher Stress and Autonomy**

Not being appropriately supported or given the opportunity to make creative, customized instructional decisions within the classroom can lead to teacher stress. Pearson & Moomaw (2005) found a relationship between teacher stress and autonomy. Teacher autonomy is a component of teacher professional authority (Ingersoll, 1997), another dynamic of teacher working conditions. Autonomy is the extent to which teachers believe that they have control over classroom decisions (Fitchett et al., 2016). Teacher autonomy serves as an intrinsic motivator for teachers and is related to teachers' perceptions of teaching as profession (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005), compared to viewing the occupation as a job or skilled work. Pearson & Moomaw (2005) used the Teacher

Autonomy Scale to explore teachers' perceived stress levels in the areas of curriculum autonomy and general teaching autonomy. The results of the study also linked empowerment and professionalism to less perceived job stress. Overall, teacher autonomy is a commodity of leverage when motivating teachers to stay in the profession.

Lambert, McCarthy, Fitchett, Lineback, and Reiser (2015) found that teachers' perception of stress impacts their intentions to stay or leave the classroom. Using the Classroom Appraisal of Resources and Demands (CARD), based upon the transactional stress theory, Lambert et al. (2015) determined that if teachers' perceived demands outweighed their perceived resources, they were more prone to mobility. Using the 2000 and 2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), Lambert et al. (2015) determined that elementary teachers who felt resourced were more likely to respond that they would return to teaching or retrospectively become a teacher again, while teachers who perceived their circumstances as more demanded than resourced were less likely to indicate that they would return to teaching or choose to become a teacher again.

The concept of resources and demands affecting teachers' desire to remain in the teaching profession can be extended to the concept of supply and demand in the teacher workforce. Traditionally, when teacher mobility is considered, the economic concept of supply and demand is visited. In this theoretical explanation, the competitive benefits offered to prospective teachers is dependent upon the number of positions available for teachers to fill (demand) and the number of teachers applying for those positions (supply) (Guarnino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). This framework suggests that the available options for compensation, which can include salary, bonuses, health benefits, and/or



sense of fulfillment, can determine how “attractive” (Guarnino et al., 2006, p. 178) a teaching position is for those on the job market. Just as being more resourced as a teacher is recorded to bring less stress and more likelihood to remain in teaching, more demand (accompanied by more economic compensation) can increase the likelihood that a teacher chooses to accept a teaching position or stay in teaching. The ebb and flow of supply and demand influences teacher recruitment agendas and economic decisions by policymakers. As teacher salary and compensation policies change, teachers often re-evaluate their current working conditions and decide if changing their teaching assignment is optimal for them. These mobility decisions can affect teacher quality and shift the workforce to reflect the levels of education and years of experience that are valued as evidence on the teacher pay scale.

### **Beginning Teacher Support**

The responsibilities of being a full-time teacher can be overwhelming, which is reflected in the number of teachers who choose to leave within their first five years in the profession. Often, beginning teachers are given special support structures to help them to be successful, just as most professions have on-boarding procedures. These support structures often come in the form of a mentor or enrollment in an induction program once they begin their first year of teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). An induction program can be characterized as a form of instructional support that partners new teachers with experienced staff to support them with classroom management, content questions, curriculum planning, and various other logistical responsibilities that come along with being a full-time teacher. These programs can vary across school contexts and can be

defined as narrowly as one meeting as a new teacher begins the school year or be extended as far as multiple meetings over a period of years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Beginning teachers are often encouraged to form professional relationships and partner with other beginning and experienced teachers in their buildings to share the workload as they transition from pre-service preparation to full-time facilitator of instruction. Research has shown that these types of programs are beneficial to new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) and help them to adapt to the pressures of teaching.

Mentoring involves a more intimate relationship between two teachers (experienced and novice) (Spooner-Lane, 2017). In this type of partnership an experienced teacher is available to plan, observe, and guide the judgement decisions of a new teacher, generally showing the new teacher the “ropes.” Sometimes the mentor works when available, and in other instances, mentoring is a full-time position and the mentor works with several new teachers. Whether a mentor who is serving in a part-time capacity is compensated with a stipend also varies according to school district policies and funding availability, which can have an impact on the commitment of the mentor teacher when a new teacher’s need for support may be at an inconvenient time. Generally, mentor support is organized within induction programs. Consequently, the literature related to teacher mentoring seldom differentiates between mentor programs, which only focus on the first one or two years of teaching, and those which go beyond induction to provide continued support to teachers (Long et al., 2012). Beginning teachers commonly have some level of support from an experienced teacher, but the intensity of that support varies (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

African American beginning teachers are the focus of this study. The general working conditions and supports for beginning and experienced teachers, which aid them in daily instruction and influence mobility decisions, have been discussed. Next, research that explores the unique experiences of African American teachers will be detailed.

### **Teacher Preparation Pathway**

Teachers generally choose two pathways to become classroom teachers. A universal definition for alternative certification is not consistently agreed upon, but Humphry & Wechsler (2007) concisely defined alternative certification as “programs or licensing routes that allow persons to enter the teaching profession by earning a standard license or teacher certificate without completing a traditional 4- or 5-year university-based program” (p. 485). This route may appear favorable for individuals changing careers or for school districts wishing to quickly fill teacher positions. Alternatively certified teachers are more likely to feel less prepared than traditionally certified teachers, teach in schools with large populations of racially diverse students (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Redding & Smith, 2016), and have a limited amount of experience with instructional methods used to teach content to students and practice instructing students (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002, Lambeth & Lashley, 2012; Redding & Smith, 2016). These factors contribute to the tendency of alternatively certified teachers to leave teaching at a higher rate when compared to traditionally certified teachers (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010). The literature indicates a higher percentage of teachers of color who are alternatively certified, although there is evidence that retention rate trends for teachers of color have increased when the

alternative certification program attended specifically recruited and/or supported teachers of color (Achinstein et al., 2010).

## **African American Teachers**

### **Historical Context**

A historical context serves as a foundation for understanding the evolution of the African American teacher in American public schools and the influence of race, law, and power on this evolution. Ultimately, the goal is to navigate data that portray the perceptions of African American beginning teachers to uncover strategies and support mechanisms to counteract the systemic microaggressions that might persuade new African American teachers to leave the teaching profession.

The nature and stability of teaching for the African American teacher has been threatened since the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954 (Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, 1954). The role of the African American educator was transformed as school desegregation took place in the United States. Although it was hoped that eliminating segregation would cause the opportunities for African American children to grow exponentially, the politics, fear, and prejudice of the times only encouraged policy-makers to solidify the wall that had been created to maintain social class status that had been perpetuated thus far in history. Therefore, African American students were allowed into White schools but the teachers and administrators who had nurtured Black students' character and advocated for them academically were not allowed to continue in their former roles, therefore losing their voices as educational authorities (Milner & Howard, 2004; Tillman, 2004). Interviews by Milner & Howard (2004) revealed that teacher re-

assignment and job security based upon teacher color pigmentation and demotion were consequences of desegregation.

Those teachers and administrators who were able to acquire a position at a White school were often demoted. For example, a former principal would be assigned as an assistant principal to assume a discipline role dealing with African American students. In addition to being demoted, educators from former all-Black schools were also treated disrespectfully by White students, staff members, and parents (Milner & Howard, 2004). The voices of African American teachers were stifled during these experiences and the attainable leadership role capacity for Black educators witnessed by African American students in the desegregated White schools was augmented (Tillman, 2004). Concurrently with the benefits of desegregation, “unselfing” (Wilson & Seagall, 2001, p. 41) occurred when the Black community no longer had the same degree of influence on the education of Black students as a result of how Black educators were treated. African American students saw less of others like themselves in the education environment, which weakened the connections between the school community and the Black community. Black teachers were forced out of the profession as schools added Black students to their school buildings but simultaneously rejected incorporating Black teachers as staff members. Previously treated admirably as members of the Black community, Black educators were often disrespected by White teachers and White students in this new environment. As Black educators were fired and a small number displaced to White schools, formally segregated Black schools were closed, which caused more Black teachers to leave the profession. Pre-desegregation Black teachers made up 100% of the

teacher workforce for Black students. After integration, the number of teachers diminished to 191,000 in 1987 (8.2% of the teacher workforce). In 1990 there were 212,000 Black teachers (8.3% of the teacher workforce), 228,000 in 1999 (7.6% of the teacher workforce) and 257,000 in 2003 (7.9% of the teacher workforce) (NCES, 2011).

Today, the field of education is filled with examples that solidify the impact of how desegregation was executed on the African American community. The strides made through desegregation to improve educational equity and provide better educational opportunities for Black children left in their wake a diminishing workforce of Black educators. It is important that the perceptions and working conditions of these teachers are considered to encourage them to stay within the profession.

### **Contemporary African American Teaching Context**

African American teachers make up 6.8% of the teacher workforce (NCES, 2011), while African American children make up about 16% of the student population (NCES, 2016). The discrepancy between the number of African American teachers and the amount of African American children in public school systems around the United States creates a cultural divide between student and teacher. The current lack of African American teachers in the workforce is a symptom of the necessity to find other means of making a living prompted by the events following the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, along with opportunities for employment in other professions stimulated by the Civil Rights Movement. Over time, this absence phenomenon prompted young, African American professionals to be drawn to alternative careers (Milner, Delale-O'Connor, Murray, & Farinde, 2016), along with increased opportunities to pursue a variety of

positions in science, business, healthcare, etc. Some of this lure was financial, but it also reflected that a shift in how education was perceived as a profession by African American youth and young adults.

Today, the small percentage of African Americans who choose to serve as teachers accept assignments that are mostly in urban environments (Achinstein et al., 2010). These schools often suffer from large amounts of teacher mobility. Very few studies focus specifically on African American teachers, which means that further research is needed to uncover the experiences and perceptions specific to African American beginning teachers.

African American teachers can find themselves as the only or one of a few teachers of color. This occurrence has been referred to as racial tokenism. In a qualitative study, Kelly (2007) found participants used a “civil rights ideology” (p. 231) to cope with being a token Black teacher amongst all White staffs of teachers. This study positively frames the experiences of teachers as the only or one of a few teachers of color at schools that had minimal diversity in the student population as well. Teachers credited working condition familiarity and desire to be there for the few Black students that they encountered as reasons for staying in their teaching assignments.

Comparatively, African American teachers often choose school contexts racially congruent to themselves (Achinstein et al., 2010) and perceive teaching as an opportunity to give back to their communities (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). African American teachers also see teaching as a means to create social mobility for students (Hambacher, Acosta, Bondy, & Ross, 2016), and/or a chance to empower students to pursue social justice.

African American teachers also serve as advocates and “cultural brokers” (Villegas & Irvine, 2010, p. 180) for students of color. These characteristics also provide a foundation for culturally relevant teaching. Culturally relevant teaching is an approach to teaching that focuses on what students bring to the classroom from their culture and learned experiences as a foundation for the skills and mindsets that they need to be successful (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Past efforts to address the disproportionality of African American teachers to the number of African American students in public schools have focused on recruiting African American teachers. This study seeks to identify the extent to which public school workplace structures impact the early career experiences of African American teachers differently than their White counterparts as it relates to teacher mobility. Qualitative studies have given voice to the beginning African American teacher experience revealing differences in how African American teachers are treated with disciplinary expectations, academic assignments, and professional development support (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2011). African American teachers find themselves serving as disciplinarian on the school level, without support structures or compensation (Griffin & Tackie, 2016), and are not encouraged to teach higher-level courses or provide instruction for students functioning at a high level. They also often lack professional development that would broaden their instructional skills. These experiences allude to organizational microaggressions within the school environment.



### **Uniqueness of African American Teachers**

A comprehensive literature review conducted by Villegas and Irvine (2010) explored studies that were targeted at increasing the supply of teachers of color. They contended that teachers of color are important to the workforce because they serve as role models for all students, have the capacity to produce positive environmental and academic outcomes for students of color, and are more likely to remain in urban schools with a high minority student population (Villegas & Irvine, 2010, p. 176). The readings related to teachers of color as role models suggest that having access to teachers of color would improve the self-worth, increase motivation, and decrease feelings of alienation for students of color.

Villegas and Irvine (2010) suggest that when Black teachers use culturally relevant teaching practices infused with critical challenges to racism, relate to students by building caring relationships influenced by high academic and behavioral expectations, and work to intercede on behalf of their students using a cultural lens, they are bringing distinctive characteristics to the classroom. The comprehensive literature review performed by Villegas & Irvine (2010) also reveals the voices of Black teachers. Within the literature, teacher candidates of color indicated that improving the lives (personal and educational) of students of color was key to their choice of joining the teacher profession. In order to embrace the opportunity to “give back” (Dixson & Dingus, 2008), Black teachers bring care, a propensity to mentor students, and high expectations to their classrooms (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). These aspects of teaching students bolster the pedagogic training implemented by Black teachers.

## Care

One of the components of care that comes to life in the classroom of female African American teachers is the concept of “other-mothering.” As an “other-mother,” the teacher is characterized as “engaged in cultural traditions of shared mothering responsibilities, with attention to the collective well-being” (Dixson & Dingus, 2008, p. 810). In this sense, African American female teachers take on roles with their students as they would with their own children. The teacher communicates the ways in which they are invested in the success of the students. The students, in turn, often rise to the standards of behavior and academic expectations set by the teacher with an implied understanding that the teacher will do whatever is necessary to support and scaffold the process of academic or behavioral learning that needs to take place. “With cultural roots in a West African tradition, other-mothering is displayed in how African American teachers described their familial relationships with students in terms of ‘taking ownership’ of and ‘responsibility for their students’” (Ford & Sassi, 2014, p. 62).

This foundational relationship of trust positions African American female teachers to act as warm demanders of their students. Warm demanders (Hambacher, Acosta, Bondy, & Ross, 2016; Ford & Sassi, 2014) simultaneously hold students responsible for and correct inappropriate behaviors (academic or behavioral) without degrading the students’ sense of worth or status in the classroom. As a warm demander, a teacher can consistently hold students to pre-established standards of achievement by interacting with students using firm discipline practices that are reflective of the mutual culture they share with their students (Ford & Sassi, 2014).

Similar to the idea of “other-mother,” is the concept of “otherfathering” (Lynn, 2006). This combination of “tough love, discipline, and caring” (Lynn, 2006, p. 2517) is characterized as an archetype of mentoring that is the result of an underlying assumption for the need of male role models in the African American community and the perceived willingness of the African American male teacher to fulfill the role of “father” for his students. Although Brockenbrough (2012) cautions the unbridled expectation of “otherfathering” without considering the harsh realities of possible resentment, anger, and other negative emotions associated with this role that teachers are not generally trained to handle, “otherfathering” is a unique asset for African American male teachers that successfully navigate that space.

### **High Expectations**

Black teachers, along with a sense of care, bring high expectations for African American students to the classroom. High expectations can be a byproduct of using culturally relevant pedagogy (Morrison, Robbins, & Rose, 2008). The use of culturally relevant pedagogy involves student academic success, students developing and maintaining cultural competence, and fostering a critical awareness in students that challenges the current societal mandates (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 160). Morrison, Robbins, and Rose (2008) posited five themes that were evident in the classrooms that successfully implemented culturally relevant pedagogy related to high expectations. They found that 1) using the strategies of modeling, scaffolding, and clarifying when accessing challenging curriculum, 2) making the most of students’ strengths and prior knowledge to launch learning, 3) internalizing responsibility for student success and making

corresponding investments in their success, 4) creating and nurturing cooperative environments, and 5) consistently implementing high behavior expectations (Roberts, 2010) contributed to the teachers' depictions of culturally relevant teaching. These support strategies allowed students to have positive first encounters with concepts and established familiar routines which allowed students to have expectations within the learning environment and know what was expected of them behaviorally and academically, which can ultimately contribute to academic success.

### **Mentoring students**

Mentoring is a tool that can be used to reassure students that they are learning in a supportive environment that honors the strengths and weaknesses of all students. A mentor can be defined as "someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person; a trusted counselor or guide; tutor, or coach" (Mentor, 2016). The term trust in the definition implies a positive relationship that is genuine. This type of relationship also positions a mentor to act in a caring, trustworthy way as an advocate or cultural broker, just as Black teachers are compelled to do (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The younger person is seen as an individual, not a stereotype or measured by the previous experiences of the mentor. Every mentee has the opportunity to prove themselves based upon a standard of performance in the discipline or content area. Weaknesses are nurtured until a level of success is reached and are not used as a scapegoat for the mentor to move their energies to an easier recipient. There is also an implied commitment to the individual, not a process. As a mentor, teachers serve as a visual representation of the behaviors that should be modeled by their students and have

the opportunity to reinforce those expectations (social or academic) through interactions with students. Students experience academic and social perceptions of others through a myriad of senses (what they see, hear, and feel). They may even get a “taste” of how the perceptions of others can dictate their world.

It is important to teachers as mentors that they are aware of the messages they are sending and personalize the learning experience for each student. This involves not lowering the expectation for the student, if adjustments are needed to meet the student’s needs to extend or remediate a conceptual understanding.

Black female teachers also use “political clarity” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Hambacher et al., 2016; Roberts, 2010) as part of their pedagogy, which contributes to their role as mentor. Political clarity inherently leads to illuminating elements of social justice as one of its outcomes. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) explains how the propensity for teachers to see systemic injustices as social as well as educational concerns can create the opportunity for them to be aware of the dynamics of power present in the classroom and their responsibility to dispute the stereotypes enacted on students by society (p. 77). In this way, an African American teacher will admonish students to view the world critically as a means of uplifting the community (Hambacher et al., 2016) and exhibit “a willingness to unmask hidden faces of racism by exposing and unveiling White privilege and its effects in its various permutations” (Roberts, 2010, p.458). Students are equipped with skills to be successful outside of the classroom and an awareness of how societal perceptions can influence their reality, which can be beneficial for minority as well as majority students.

### **Factors for African American Teacher Success**

The literature does include some elements that African American teachers have voiced would help them to be more successful as classroom teachers. The majority of this literature is based on qualitative studies. In terms of working conditions that would positively impact African American female teachers, Farinde, Allen, and Lewis (2016) found that administrative support, salary increases over time, and professional advancement impacted their desire to stay in the K-12 classroom. Through their interviews, the teachers expressed the need to feel valued by their administration and that harsh work environments contributed to their desires to change school assignments. As teachers acquired more years of experience, they indicated a perception of less financial security and a need to find other means of social class mobility. This idea manifested itself as a reason to no longer teach in a classroom. Finally, over time teachers also felt a desire to advance within the field. Many participants considered leaving the classroom in order to fulfill their desire for career advancement.

Research also suggests that Black teachers create a “politics of survival,” meaning that they “created a system through which they survived and in some cases thrived often not because of the scaffolding or environment they were given but rather in spite of the environment they were given to grow in” (Williams & Johnson, 2011, p. 193). In a qualitative study, beginning Black teachers communicated in group interviews that their classroom felt as though it had become a ““dumping ground” (Williams & Johnson, 2011, p. 196) for hard to handle students as the school year progressed. Veteran teachers would complain about particular students that would then be placed in the Black beginning

teacher's classroom, creating a heavier workload for them. They also "noted instances where school leadership's punitive or 'gotcha' approaches warranted the need for them to be on defense in order to protect their career" (Williams & Johnson, 2011, p. 94).

Surprisingly, these Black beginning teachers displayed a sense of pride for their resilience despite the challenges they may have faced with administrators, peers, parents, and students over the course of their first year of teaching.

Williams & Johnson (2011) convey the importance of administrators being fair and equitable with procedures, policies, and personnel within the school building. Working with teachers as colleagues to solve challenges that arrive is linked to teacher satisfaction with their school administrators. Finally, to address these concerns, administrators need support with cultural communication patterns that may cause Black beginning teachers to disengage.

As part of another qualitative study, Griffin & Tackie (2016) reported the experiences of 150 Black teachers from around the United States. The study revealed that academic validation and opportunities for professional growth would help them to perceive their working environments more favorable. Findings indicate that African American teachers benefit from mentor groups that create cultural spaces to discuss racism and social justice issues; instill professional environments that provide affirmation; foster a place to create a positive "self-definition;" bolster a counter-narrative to questions to competence; and stimulate camaraderie among school staff members (Dingus, 2008).

As described above, qualitative studies have given voice to the African American beginning teacher experience revealing differences in how African American teachers are treated with disciplinary expectations, academic assignments, and professional development support (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2011). There is not a plethora of quantitative research on how African American teachers perceive their working conditions and how those perceptions influence their career decisions. Many teachers who choose to leave teaching do so by their fifth year of teaching (Ingersoll, 2001), therefore this quantitative study will focus on the professional characteristics, workplace perceptions, and mobility of African American teachers to highlight ways to influence the professional trajectories of this population of teachers.



### CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine the professional characteristics and mobility trends of African American beginning teachers in the United States over five years. In this chapter, variables relevant to this study are detailed. The quantitative methods used to implement this study are listed. The sample, survey materials, and procedures are described. The rationale for each statistical data analysis technique are described according to each of the three research questions. A positionality statement, limitations, and conclusion are included.

The first five years of teaching were chosen as the focus for this study in response to the trend that involves new teachers choosing to leave teaching within the first five years of their careers (Ingersoll, 2001). Therefore, a longitudinal survey design that follows a panel of participants will be used. Exploring the perceptions and experiences of African American teachers is often studied qualitatively. The small number of African American teachers in the current workforce in proportion to the number of White teachers makes producing a large sample difficult. Also, as a small proportion of the general teaching population, African American teachers are often considered within the statistical analysis of a larger study, instead of the direct focus of the study, therefore revealing a void in the literature. Despite these population size challenges, this study is comprised of a nationally representative sample sufficient for the purpose of the study.

The goal of this study is to discover any trends that exist in relation to how African American teachers perceive their working conditions and identify any factors that influence the mobility of African American teachers over time. Findings were used to inform professional support structures that could contribute to African American teacher success and retention in the classroom.

The variables used in this study as teacher professional characteristics were items associated with pre-service certification, mentorship, and level of teaching. Pre-service certification in this study depicts any of the training specific to the teaching field that teachers experience prior to having the responsibilities of a full-time teacher. Mentoring denotes a collegial relationship between a novice teacher and an experienced teacher. Mentoring is used in school districts as an individual instructional support or as part of an induction program designed to help teachers transition from their certification duties to the responsibilities of a full-time teacher. A portion of the analysis explored any differences in the mobility of teachers, based upon their grade level assignments (elementary, middle, or high school). Subject area focus was considered for middle and high school teachers. Workplace perceptions were defined according to what research has found about teacher working conditions. Administrative support, teacher preparedness, and teacher autonomy or influence in classrooms have been found to influence teacher mobility. Therefore, items from the BTLS and SASS were aggregated to create scales to represent each of those three elements. Items related to teachers' perceptions of administrator respect for teachers, treatment of students and teachers, and support for teacher professional development are collapsed into the category of administrative

support. Teacher preparedness is based upon teachers' depictions of how prepared they were to manage instruction and student behavior in their classroom. Autonomy refers to a teacher's perceived influence on the classroom dynamics (instructionally and behaviorally). Collectively, these variables provided insight into what does and does not influence the mobility decisions of the teachers in the five-year cohort in the data sample examined for this study.

### **Dependent Variables**

*Teacher mobility.* This is a variable that identifies whether a respondent who participated in the 2007-2008 SASS (which is the first wave of the BTLS) was teaching in the same school as the previous school year. Designated as teacher status (w2sttus), the variable was recreated for each wave of the BTLS in order to classify teachers as stayers, leavers, movers, or returners each year the survey was administered. For statistical analysis, responses were coded as stayer=1 (stayers) and w2movleav=0 (movers and leavers combined). Exploring the dynamics of movers and returners individually, introduced based on the mobility of teachers beyond wave 2 of the study, are beyond the scope of this study.

*Intention to remain.* This is a variable that identifies how long teachers intend to remain in teaching. Teachers chose between eight answer choices: (1) as long as I am able, (2) until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job, (3) until I am eligible for retirement benefits from a previous job, (4) until I am eligible for Social Security benefits, (5) until a specific life event occurs (e.g., parenthood, marriage), (6) until a more desirable job opportunity comes along, (7) definitely plan to leave as soon as I can, and

(8) undecided at this time. For statistical analysis, responses were coded as intention to remain=1 and all others=0.

### **Independent Variables**

The independent variables used for this study are broadly categorized as professional characteristics. This study delineates professional characteristics as encompassing of workplace perceptions of structural support given to teachers, credentials or academic pathways taken to become a teacher, and teacher demographics. Each of these three components of professional characteristics are described below. Workplace perceptions consists of three separate scales or variables (administrative support, teacher autonomy, and teacher preparedness). As a component of professional characteristics, teacher credentials consider certification pathways and grade level teaching assignment. The demographics explored in this study were gender, age, and teaching assignment location or urbanicity. The scales reflected factors identified in the teacher mobility literature as being impactful. A description of what each variable measures and how it is organized in the study is included. The scales combined multiple, related items from a wave of the BTLS. Items related to each of the three components (workplace perceptions, teacher credentials, and teacher demographics), as well as the subsequent scales created are available in the Appendix.

*1) Demographics* in this study are investigated as the variables: gender, age, and teacher assignment location.

*a. Gender.* This is a variable that measures whether a respondent identifies as a male or female on the 2007-2008 SASS.

- b. *Age*. This is a variable that measures the age of the respondent as recorded on the 2007-2008 SASS. The variable `w1age_t` was created by the formula: `sum(2007,-w1t0360)`.
- c. *Urbanicity (teaching assignment location)*. This variable identifies the teaching context of the teacher's sampled by geographic location. Respondents designate their teaching assignment location as a city, suburb, town, or rural area. It is noted in the literature that teacher assignment location can impact mobility (Achinstein et al., 2010; Renzulli, Parrott, & Beattie, 2011). Also noted, location of schools and property values impact the resources available for staff and students within a school, possibly impacting teacher perceptions and the character, condition, and outcomes of the school (Haberman, 2007; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).
- d. *Percentage of Minority Teachers in School Assignment*. This variable indicates the percentage of teachers at a respondent's school who were of a racial/ethnic minority. Research suggests teacher job satisfaction and school commitment can be impacted by the racial composition of students and staff within a school (Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999).
- e. *Percentage of Minority Students in School Assignment*. This variable indicates the percentage of students enrolled at a

respondent's school who were of a racial/ethnic minority.

Research indicates that racial congruence between teacher and student can positively impact teacher job satisfaction (Fairchild et al., 2012).

1) *Teacher Credentials* in this study are investigated as the variables: certification pathway and grade level.

- a. *Certification Pathway*. This is a variable that measures whether a respondent who participated in the 2007-2008 SASS entered teaching from an alternative certification program. This item had two answer choices: yes or no.
- b. *Grade level*. This is a variable that identifies the main teaching assignment of a respondent who participated in the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). This item required respondents to choose the field from which they taught the most classes. There are 12 categories: Early Childhood/General Elementary; Special Education; Arts and Music; English and Language Arts; ESL or Bilingual Education; Foreign Languages; Health or Physical Education; Mathematics; Natural Sciences; Social Sciences; Vocational, Career, or Technical Education; and All Others.

c. *Program Type*. This variable identifies the type of school program for which a teacher was assigned. Teachers were given four options: regular education program, special program emphasis, career/technical/vocational education, and alternative education program. Each type of program may have different teacher support mechanisms, making it a variable of interest.

2) *Workplace Perceptions* are investigated in this study as administrative support, mentor support, teacher autonomy, and teacher preparedness.

a. *Administrative Support*. Administrative support is a working condition that is noted in the literature to impact teacher mobility (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011; Waters et al., 2003). This is a variable that measures the respondent's perceptions of the support they receive from their building administrators. It is organized as a scale made up of five items related to teacher perceptions of administrator's behaviors. Each item is in a Likert format with four answer options from the 2007-2008 SASS: (1) strongly agree, (2) somewhat agree, (3) somewhat disagree, and (4) strongly disagree.

b. *Instructional Support*. *Instructional support* is a working condition that is noted in the literature to impact teacher

mobility (Guarino, Santibáñez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For this study, instructional support is addressed based upon respondents' interaction with a mentor. The item chosen to indicate access to a mentor asked if the teacher experienced supportive interactions with a mentor over time. There were two answer choices: yes and no.

- c. *Teacher Autonomy (Control)*. Teacher autonomy is a working condition that is noted in the literature to impact teacher mobility (Achinstein et al., 2010; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Renzulli et al., 2011). This is a variable that measures the respondent's perceptions of the amount of teacher control they experience in their teaching context. It is organized as a scale made up of six items related to planning and teaching. Each item is in a Likert format with four answer options from the 2007-2008 SASS: (1) no control, (2) minor control, (3) moderate control, and (4) a great deal of control.
- d. *Teacher Preparedness is noted to impact teacher mobility* (Darling-Hammond, 2003). This is a variable that measures the respondent's perceptions of their preparedness as a first year teacher. It is organized as a scale made up of six items



related to teacher perceptions of their preparation for the classroom. Each item is in a Likert format with four answer options from the 2007-2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS): (1) not at all prepared, (2) somewhat prepared, (3) well prepared, and (4) very well prepared.

### **Sample**

The SASS (wave 1), TFS (wave 2), and BTLS (waves 3-5) were used for this study. Each sample was based upon the sampling frame used for the SASS. The sampling frame for schools that were chosen to participate in the SASS was based upon the 2005-06 Common Core of Data (CCD). This sampling frame for public and private schools produced a stratified probability proportional to size sample (Tourkin, S., Thomas, T., Swaim, N., Cox, S., Parmer, R., Jackson, B., Cole, C., and Zhang, B., 2010). Sampled schools provided a list of teachers through the Teacher Listing Form that was used to select the participants. No more than 20 teachers were chosen from a sampled school, averaging three to eight teachers per school (Tourkin, et al., 2010).

To compensate for school selection probability, nonresponses, and oversampling, statistical weights are applied to individual responses within the data set. A maximum of four sets of weights are used for each wave of the data. Eighty-eight replicate weights within the data set allow for each respondent's data to serve as a representation of the entire U. S. public school teacher population. These weights produce standard errors for estimating.

## **Materials**

The use of a questionnaire allows the researcher to get multiple snapshots of a large number of beginning teachers' perceptions of their work environment over an expansive geographic area (the entire United States). The questionnaire chosen for this study is made up of structured, Likert-type and semantic differential items in order to attain the respondents' perceptions of work environment, as well as their attitudes towards the support that they received.

Beginning teacher was defined in this study as a full-time teacher that has been teaching for less than five years (beginning their teaching career during or after the 2003-2004 school year). First year teachers, who all experienced their first year of teaching in the 2007-2008 school year, were targeted as the original population of this study and those participants continued as a cohort for the subsequent years of data collection. The K-12 public school teachers selected for participation represent the United States K-12 public school workforce based upon statistical formulated weights within the National Center for Educational Statistics' (NCES) Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data set.

The comprehensive data collected by the SASS national survey was trimmed to only include full-time K-12 public school (not including charter school teachers) first-year teachers. The responses of African American teachers will be the demographic foci for this study. The researcher explored the professional characteristics, workplace perceptions, and mobility trends of African American teachers to inform professional development decisions that may influence the retention rate of African American teachers that currently make up 6.8% of all teachers nationwide (NCES, 2011).

### **Procedures**

To investigate the professional characteristics, workplace perceptions, and mobility trends of African American beginning teachers, I examined the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS). The BTLS was administered by the Census Bureau across the United States. The data was distributed by the NCES. There were three waves that document five years of recorded data for the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS). Wave one was comprised of the 2007-08 SASS. The SASS was comprised of five types of questionnaires (district, principal, school, teacher, and school library media center), although the responses to the teacher questionnaire are the only data used for this study. The 2007-08 SASS was delivered by mail and follow up was executed by telephone and field contact. Wave two was administered as the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) in 2008-09 and wave three consists of the data collected each year from the 2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 questionnaires. The TFS was dispensed online, although some respondents were issued a paper copy upon request or as attempt to encourage participation. Wave three of the BTLS was only administered online. Waves one, two, and three were given to the same cohort of approximately 2000 teachers. The first year each participant received the survey if they were a beginning teacher that year. After that year, teachers were administered a current teacher survey or a former teacher survey, contingent upon their current professional status. The Census Bureau did find that some respondents incorrectly indicated themselves as beginning teachers during the data collection process, and those cases were removed from the data set.

Several consistency edits which investigated participant responses, including any patterns that developed statistically related to variables or data files, took place to verify instrument validity. Variables within distributions were also compared to previous survey results for reliability (Graham, Parmer, Chambers, Tourkin, & Lyter, 2011).

### **Data Analysis**

To detail the analytical procedures for each research question, I have listed each research question separately. Each research question is accompanied by a description of the corresponding variables, along with how each variable will be operationalized. The statistical test used to retrieve the answer from the data is also specified.

**RQ 1. What are the professional characteristics of African American teachers?** To answer the first research question, professional characteristics (credentials, demographics, and workplace perceptions) were the researchers' focus. Data from the SASS and the first wave of the BTLS were used to answer research question one. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were collected and displayed in the form of contingency tables for the variables specified for credentials (age, gender, certification pathway, and grade level/subject) and teacher assignment demographic information (urbanicity, school level, school program type, percentage of racial/ethnic minority teachers at the school assignment and percentage of racial/ethnic minority students at the school assignment). The definition of workplace perceptions was operationalized by clustering items from the questionnaire. Items on a 4-point Likert scale which relate to professional characteristics, specifically administrative support, teacher autonomy

(teacher influence or control over classroom decisions), and teacher preparedness were clustered together to form three independent variables.

**RQ 2. What are the mobility patterns of African American teachers?** Mobility is defined based upon teachers' decisions to stay in their current school assignment, their choice to move to another school assignment, or resolve to leave the teaching profession. This study focuses only on the mobility of African American teachers who taught from the 2007-2008 school year until the 2011-2012 school years. Whether teachers chose to stay or leave (mobility) was the dependent variable. Demographic information from wave one (SASS) and teacher status from waves two through five (TFS and BTLS) were used to answer research question two. Teachers designated by the teacher final status variable as movers and leavers were combined to make a new variable entitled w2movleav, therefore becoming a variable with two levels (leave or stay). The researcher displayed the frequency of African American beginning teachers who chose to stay or leave teaching in a contingency table according to gender, school level, mentorship, and alternative certification pathway. Next, chi-square analysis was used to determine how likely any observed differences happened by chance or were significantly different.

To further explore African American beginning teacher mobility patterns, independent t-tests were performed to determine any significant differences between stayers' and leavers' recorded perceptions on the administrative support and teacher control scales.

**RQ 3. To what extent do African American beginning teachers' professional characteristics predict teacher mobility?** This research question explores the impact of

professional characteristics and workplace comparisons on beginning African American teachers' mobility. Demographic data from wave one (SASS) and teacher perception and status data from wave 2 (TFS) was used to answer research question three. Logistic regression was used because there are multiple, categorical independent variables in this study. There was also two categorical, dependent variables (teacher mobility and intention to stay) that were dichotomous (teachers stay or leave and intend to stay or leave), making logistic regression an appropriate statistical analysis to identify the extent to which the independent variables influenced the dependent variables (whether beginning teachers stay/leave the teaching profession or intend to stay/leave) (Huck, 2000). The independent variables considered for this research question were gender, urbanicity, mentorship, grade level/subject, alternative certification pathway, percentage minority teacher at school assignment, percentage minority student assignment, as well as the administrative support, teacher autonomy, and teacher preparedness scales. These variables allowed the researcher to evaluate the probability of the respondent being grouped as a leaver or stayer based on the specified independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The sample size of first year teachers was too small to render enough statistical power (n=110 unweighted, n=11,090 weighted) for the logistic regression analysis. Therefore, a logistic regression using data from the SASS was performed with teacher's intention to stay in teaching as the dependent variable. Early career teacher, because of its larger sample size (n=2,180 unweighted, n=243,520 weighted) was used as a proxy

variable to explore whether teacher career status would significantly contribute to the researcher's model.

### **Reliability of Variables**

Three scales were created from individual variables that measured aspects of specific domains within the TFS (Wave 2 of the BTLS). The Administrative Support scale was made up of five items. Respondents indicated if they (1) strongly agreed, (2) somewhat agreed, (3) somewhat disagreed, or (4) strongly disagreed with statements on the survey. These items were reverse coded and grouped into a scale based upon the means of the individual items. Z-scores were also created to aid in researcher comparison and interpretation. The resulting scale had an adequate Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.768. A Teacher Autonomy scale was created from six items. Teachers specified whether they felt they had (1) no control, (2) minor control, (3) moderate control, or (4) a great deal of control in their classroom. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.576. This reliability coefficient is lower than desired, but the established literature verifies that this teacher control is an important measure to include when discussing teacher retention. As a third scale, Teacher Preparedness combined six questions from the survey. The new teachers responded that they were (1) not at all prepared, (2) somewhat prepared, (3) well prepared, or (4) very well prepared for teaching. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.839, well above the expectation of 0.70. Z-scores were also created for the Teacher Autonomy and the Teacher Preparedness scales.

### **Research Positionality**

I am an African American female with 11 years of classroom experience in an urban, public school district. I also served as an instructional coach for four years within that same school system. My teacher and personal experiences guide my variable selection choices and influence the lens of the conceptual framework used for this study. My research knowledge and observations in the teaching field over the course of the last 15 years fuel my interest in retaining teachers, especially African American beginning teachers.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, this study served to highlight the perspectives of African American beginning teachers in a quantitative study, which is a void in the current literature. Oftentimes, African American perceptions are considered as a covariate of a larger study but not the focus of a quantitative study. Filtering the responses of African American beginning teachers through a lens that considers the racial differences, impact of legislation, and power dynamics inherent in the organizational structures of schools is also absent from quantitative literature. This study seeks to produce a counter-narrative which communicates the positive aspects that African American teachers bring to the classroom, while emphasizing the need to increase retention efforts to produce longevity for the African American teacher workforce.



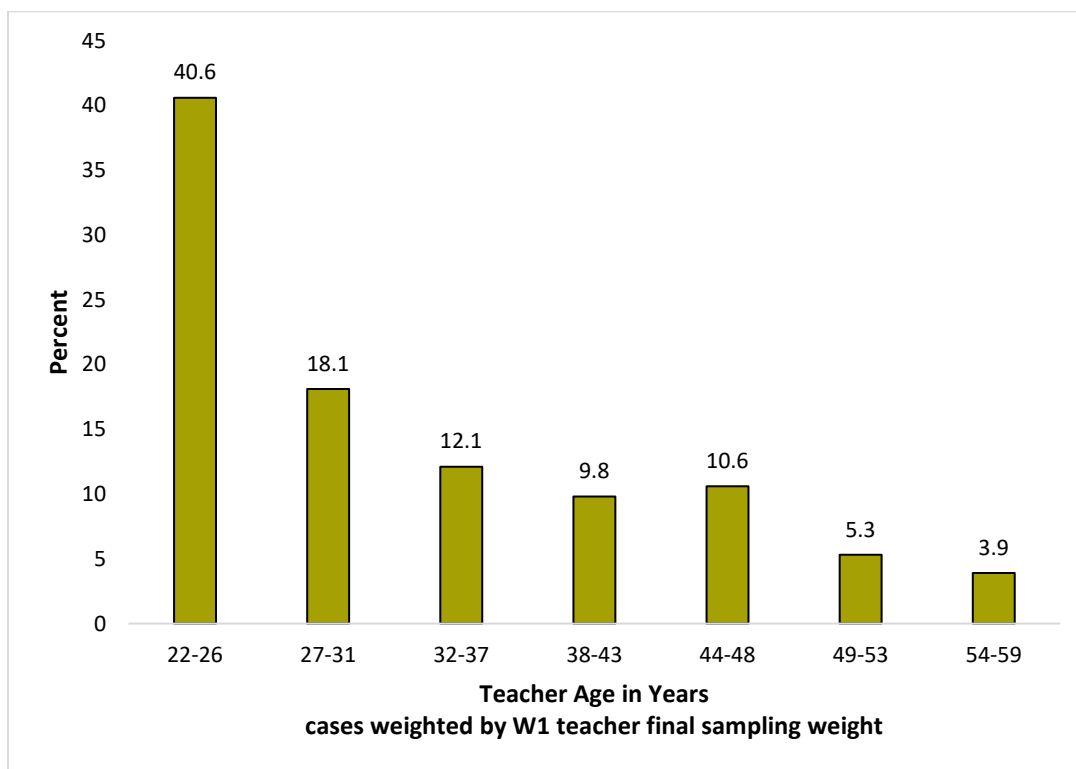
## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

To comprehensively describe the African American teachers represented within this study and adequately answer the research questions, the variables were considered for beginning teachers who completed the SASS survey with 0 to 5 years of teaching experience (consistent with the aforementioned range designated, by definition, for beginning teacher). The beginning teacher demographic was divided into two subcategories: early career beginning teacher (early career teacher) and first year beginning teacher (first year or new beginning teacher). Early career teacher refers to all teachers who began teaching during or after the 2003-2004 school year. First year/new teachers began their teaching career during the 2007-2008 school year. Comparing these two categories of African American teachers allowed the researcher to capture the professional characteristics and workplace perceptions of new or first year teachers, as well as those teachers with early career status. Below, personal and school level demographic information is presented for both comparison groups, as well as the results of the statistical analyses performed by the researcher which are organized according to research question. Data reported is weighted to reflect a nationally representative sample, relative to the total population of teachers surveyed.

**Research Question One: What are the demographics and professional characteristics of African American teachers?**

**Gender**

On average, the sample of new teachers in this study were 32.57 years of age as indicated by the frequency graph in Figure 2. The mean age of early career African American teachers was 36.95 years old for male teachers and 32.25 years old for female teachers. Female teachers made up 79.6% of the sample, while 20.4% were male teachers. The mean age for the first year female cohort of teachers was 31.40, while male teachers in this cohort were, on average, 34.95 years of age. In the first year cohort, 67.1% were female African American teachers and 32.9% were African American male teachers.



*Figure 2.* African American first year teacher ages.

### **Percentage of Minority Teacher and Student Population Teaching Assignments**

As illustrated in Table 1, African American early career teachers indicated that the average percentage of teachers in their school who were a racial/ethnic minority was 42.08% (SD=29.28). When first year teachers were extracted from the larger sample, the average percentage of teachers who were a racial/ethnic minority was 39.23% (SD=30.83). The average percentage of students taught by African American early career teachers who were of a racial/ethnic minority was 77.63 (SD=26.91). On average, first year African American teachers taught in schools where 71.58% of the students (SD=28.678) were of a racial/ethnic minority. The means are slightly different when you consider gender. On average, African American male early career teachers worked in schools where 79.75% of students in a school were a racial/ethnic minority. Where African American female teachers taught, 77.09% of students were a racial/ethnic minority. Similarly, for first year male African American teachers, 78.94% of students in a school were a racial/ethnic minority. For African American female first year teachers, 67.99% of students were a racial/ethnic minority. This was considerably less than the larger population of early career African American female teachers.

Table 1

## African American First Year and Early Career Teacher Demographics by Gender

	Sample Percentage		Mean Age		% Minority Teachers in School		% Minority Students Enrollment	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
New Teachers	32.9	67.1	34.95	31.4	39.22	39.23	78.94	67.99
Early Career Teachers	20.4	79.6	36.95	32.25	38.19	43.07	79.75	77.09

**Certification Pathway**

Teachers come to the classroom from several pathways. Generally, these pathways are classified as traditional or alternative certification (Humphry & Wechsler, 2007). Alternative certification program for this study was defined as “a program that was designed to expedite the transition of no-teachers to a teaching career, for example, a state, district, or university alternative certification program,” based upon the SASS 2007-08 survey (Cox, Chambers, Parmer, Jackson, Dial, Strizek, Wang, and Kaiser, 2017, p. 5). The SASS survey indicated that 46.1% of early career African American teachers were alternatively certified, while 53.9% came to teaching through traditional pathways (see Table 2). Comparatively, 34.6% of African American first year teachers were alternatively certified while 65.4% were not alternatively certified. More African American early career female teachers were traditionally certified (41.8%), when compared to African American male teachers (12.0%). The majority of African American teachers came to teaching through a traditional route, although nearly one-half of all

African American early career teachers were a product of an alternative route. The number of alternatively certified African American teachers in the first year sample was a little over a third of the respondents.

### **Teaching Assignment Location (Urbanicity)**

Urbanicity of teaching assignment was considered by the researcher using a variable which categorized school assignments into city, suburb, town, or rural (see Table 2). The majority of African American early career teachers had teaching assignments in the suburbs (42%), just as 41.7% of all African American first-year teachers sampled were assigned to a school in the suburbs. A suburb in the SASS survey was defined as a “territory outside a principle city” (Cox, Chambers, Parmer, Jackson, Dial, Strizek, Wang, and Kaiser, 2017, p. 17). Town was defined as a “territory inside an urban cluster” (Cox, Chambers, Parmer, Jackson, Dial, Strizek, Wang, and Kaiser, 2017, p. O-17). The rest of the total African American early career teacher population represented in the sample was concentrated in the city (29.1%), although the rural areas (20.3%) and towns (8.5%) did have small populations of African American teachers. Of those African American first year teachers, 27.9% taught schools in the city, while only 22.5% taught in rural schools and 7.9% in towns. Suburban schools described the teaching assignments of 46.3% of first year African American male teachers. They also taught in the city (33.8%), in rural areas (16%), and 3.9% in towns. African American first year female teacher assignments were distributed as 39.4% (suburb), 25.7% (rural), 25% (city), and 9.8% (town).

### **School Program Type**

School program type was also a variable of interest. Respondents selected regular, special program emphasis, special education, career/technical vocational education or alternative to describe their school's type of program (see Table 2). The majority of African American teachers taught in regular education programs (90.1%). Of first year African American teachers, 89.4% indicated that their school had a regular program. Only 5.2% of first year African American teachers taught at a school with a special program emphasis, 3.1% taught in alternative education setting, and less than 1% taught in career/technical vocational education or special education school. African American teachers made up 12.8% of full-time, public school teachers who taught in an alternative education program, which is more than their representation in regular programs (7.5%) and less than their representation in assignments with a special program emphasis (24.5%). African American males made up 17.2% of all male teachers who work in alternative education settings, while 9.5% of female teachers who teach in alternative education settings are African American female. There were no teachers with assignments in special education or career/technical vocational education programs in the sample of African American female teachers in the first-year teacher cohort.

### **School Level**

School level was divided into four categories from which respondents were to choose (primary, middle, high, or combined) to describe their school assignment. As outlined in Table 2, African American early career teachers in the sample were most represented as primary school teachers (41.9%), while middle school was the second

choice (30.1%). For first year African American teachers, high school (35.1%) was chosen most often and a similar representation existed in primary (31.3%). Middle school teachers made up 28.2% of first year African American teachers and combined school designations made up 5.4% of African American first year teacher school assignments. When school level was considered by gender, 38% of African American first year male teachers worked in high school assignments. As a close second, 35.8% of first year male teachers taught middle school. Primary school teaching was chosen considerably less by African American first year males, making up 18.2% of the African American teaching population. First year African American female teachers also preferred high school teaching (33.6% of the African American teaching population), yet African American female teachers chose primary teaching most often (37.7%). Collectively, high school was the grade-band most preferred by African American first year teachers. In order to delve into the subject area preferences of African American teachers, school assignment subject/grade levels were investigated.

Table 2

## African American First Year and Early Career Teacher Demographics

	First Year Teachers  (n=11,220)  %	Early Career Teachers  (n=20,500)  %
Variable		
<i>Alternative certification program</i>		
Yes (alternative cert.)	34.6	46.1
No (traditional cert.)	65.4	53.9

<i>Collapsed urban-centric school locale code</i>			
	City	27.9	29.1
	Suburb	41.7	42.0
	Town	7.9	8.5
	Rural	22.5	20.3
<i>Program type of school</i>			
	Regular	89.4	90.1
	Special program emphasis	6.8	5.2
	Special Education	0.1	0.2
	Career/Technical/Vocational Education	0.6	1.3
	Alternative	3.2	3.1
<i>Four-category school level (primary/middle/high/combined)</i>			
	Primary	31.3	41.9
	Middle	28.2	30.1
	High	35.1	21.8
	Combined	5.4	6.2

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements. Frequency counts are weighted, relative to the total population surveyed, to achieve a nationally representative sample.

### **Teaching Assignment Subject/Grade Level**

Respondents were asked to designate the subject/grade level of their teaching assignment by choosing from thirteen choices (see Figures 3 to Figures 8). The teaching



assignments discussed in this section are presented by percentage of designation, based only on the categories chosen most and least often.

Most early-career teachers were assigned to Early Childhood or Elementary positions (26.6%). Special Education teacher (21.3%) was the next most frequent assignment. English Language Arts (14.7%) and Mathematics (12.8%) were the highest concentration of content area teachers. The teaching assignments chosen least often were Natural Science (6.5%) and Vocational, Career, or Technical Education (3.8%). Consequently, neither early career teachers nor those surveyed from the first year BTLS sample were ESL or Bilingual teachers.

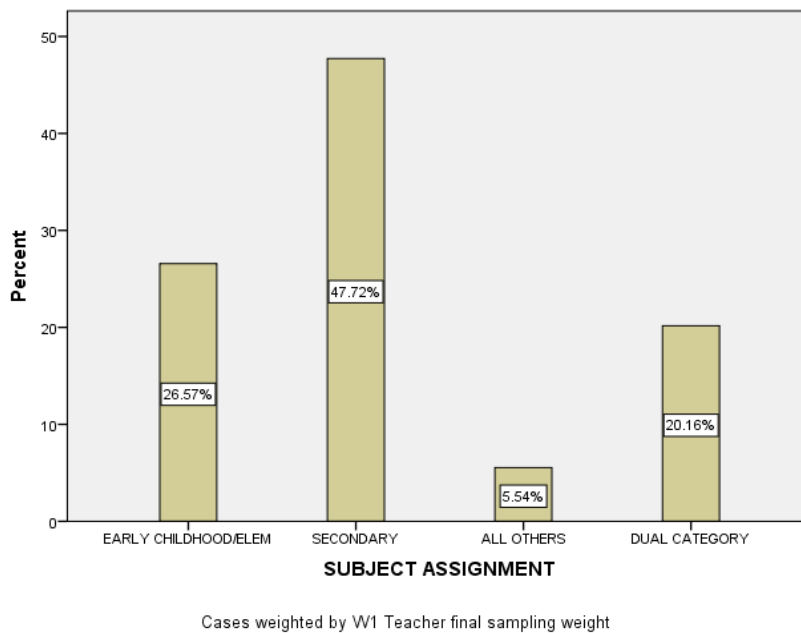
Early career male teachers chose Early Childhood or Elementary (26%), Special Education (15.3%), and Mathematics (14.2%) as their top three teaching options. Vocational, Career, or Technical Education (10.2%), Natural Science (6.2%), Social Sciences (5.6%) were the next most popular subject areas chosen by African American male early career teachers. Less popular than the mathematics, science, and technical subject areas, English Language Arts was only taught by 4% of African American early career teachers.

Early career female teachers had the same top preferences of Early Childhood or Elementary (26.8%) and Special Education (22.8%), but English Language Arts (17.4%) was their most preferred content area. Mathematics (12.4%), Natural Science (6.6%), Social Sciences (1.2%), and Vocational, Career, or Technical Education (2.2%) were taught by African American early career females less than males. Of these choices, the natural sciences had the least gap between male and female African American early

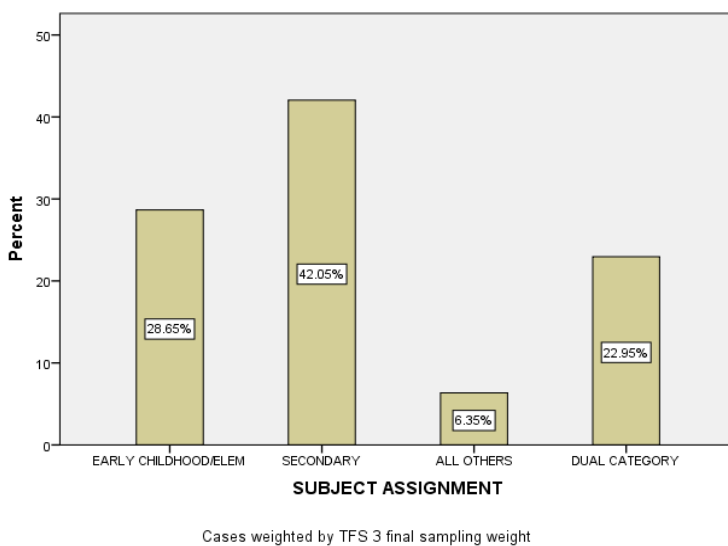
career preferences. Collectively, the teachers surveyed by first year teachers preferred Early Childhood or Elementary as a teaching assignment most often at 26.6%. English Language Arts (18.9%), Mathematics (11.2%), and Special Education (10.6%) were consecutively, the next in frequency.

Early Childhood or General Elementary teachers made up the largest percentage of first-year African American male teachers at 27.5%. Mathematics (14.3%) and Vocational, Career, or Technical Education (12.3%) made up the second and third teaching assignments represented for male teachers in the first-year teacher sample. Social Science teaching assignments (2.7%) made the smallest percentage of male teachers represented in the first-year teacher sample.

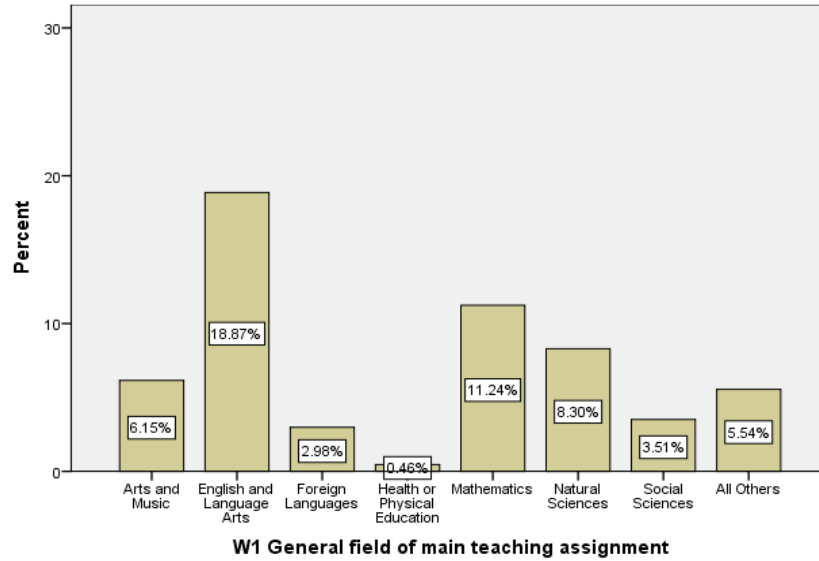
First year female teachers surveyed taught Early Childhood or Elementary (26.1%) and Special Education (11.1%), and English Language Arts (24.4%) as their top choices, although English Language Arts was more preferred than Special Education with the first-year female teachers. Only 9.8% of female teachers in the first-year sample chose Mathematics teaching assignments and 2.6%, Vocational, Career, or Technical Education. Social Sciences were chosen by 3.9% of African American female teachers, which is higher than for African American male teachers within the first-year sample. Of the subject areas represented, Foreign Languages (2.0%) and Health or Physical Education (0.7%) were the least represented. Overall, the least represented teaching assignments, beyond ESL or Bilingual Education, for the 2007-08 sample were Health or PE (0.5%) and Foreign Languages (3%).



*Figure 3.* Frequency of African American new teachers' teaching assignment is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.

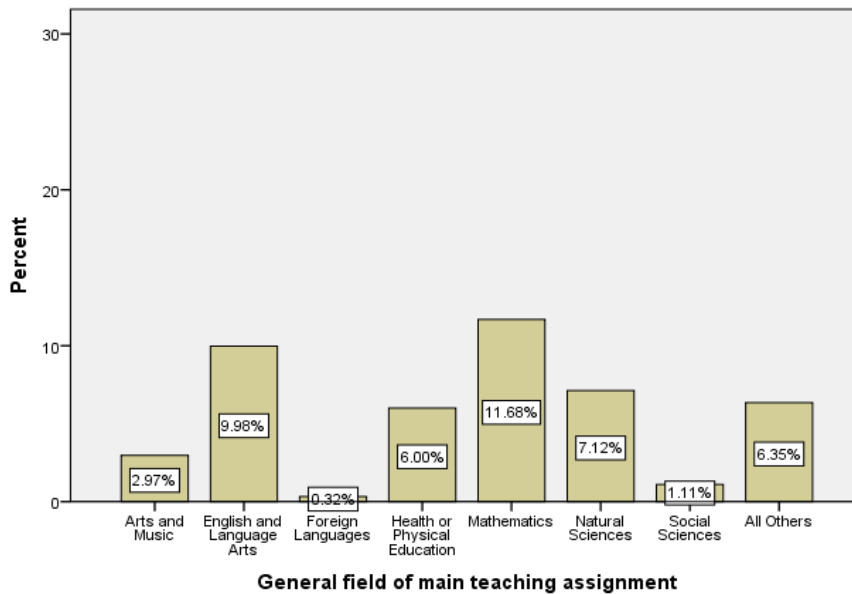


*Figure 4.* Frequency of African American early career teachers' teaching assignment is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.



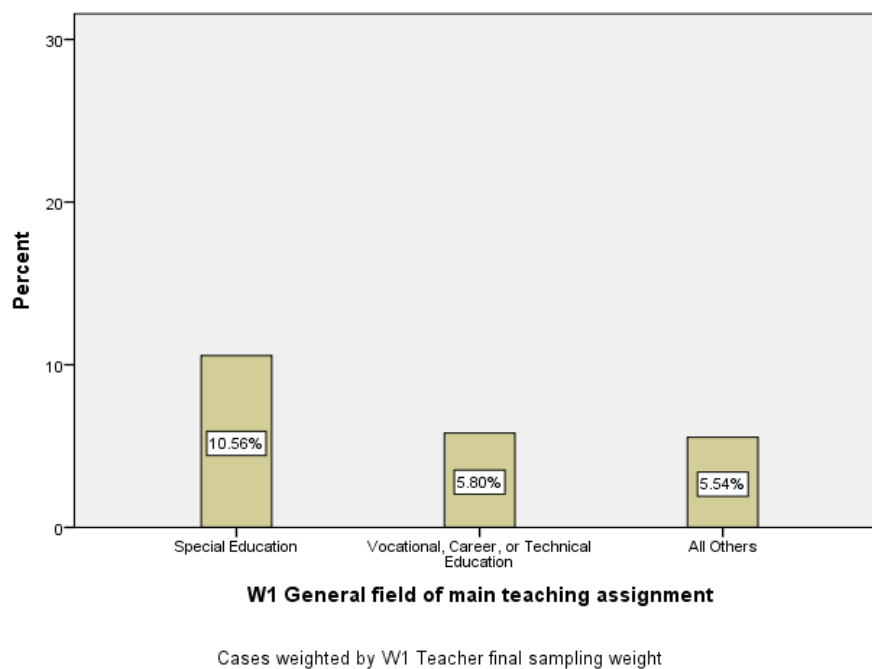
Cases weighted by W1 Teacher final sampling weight

*Figure 5.* Frequency of secondary subject area teaching assignments of new African American teachers is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.

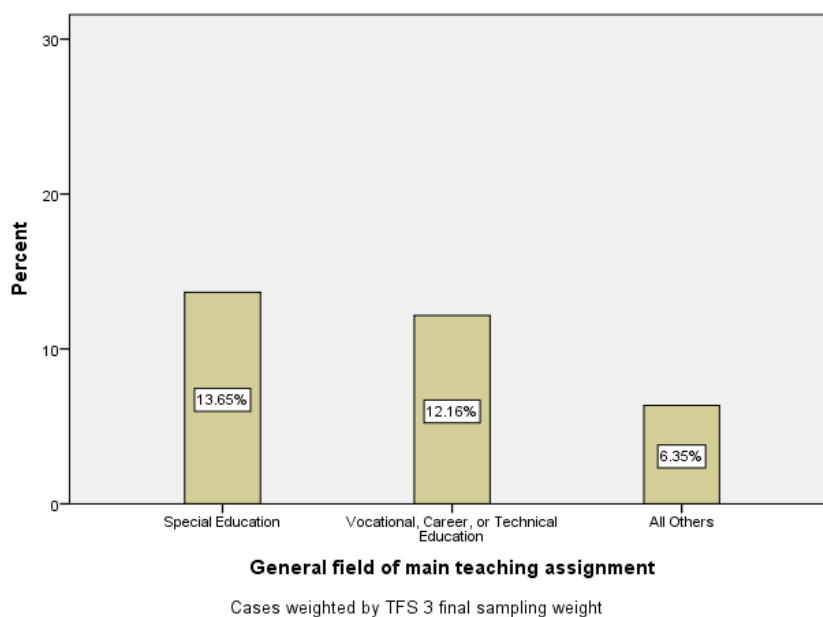


Cases weighted by TFS 3 final sampling weight

*Figure 6.* Frequency of secondary subject area teaching assignments of early career African American teachers is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.



*Figure 7.* Frequency of African American first year teachers' special area teaching assignment is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.



*Figure 8.* Frequency of African American early career teachers' special area teaching assignment is indicated in the chart in the form of percentages.

## **Workplace Perceptions**

Workplace perceptions were measured in terms of teacher preparedness, teacher control, and administrative support. Scales were created by combining 6 questions related to teacher preparedness and teacher control, while 5 questions were used to create the Administrative Support scale. Participants responded to items on a Likert-type scale for each scale. The Teacher Preparedness scale responses included the option choices of: (1) not at all prepared, (2) somewhat prepared, (3) well prepared, and (4) very well prepared. The Teacher Control scale had answer choices of: (1) no control, (2) minor control, (3) moderate control, and (4) a great deal of control, as its options. Responses on the Administrative Support scale was recoded: (1) strongly disagree strongly agree (2) somewhat disagree, (3) somewhat agree, and (4) strongly agree. First-year teachers and early career teachers had similar responses (see Table 3), yet the first-year teachers reported perceptions of administrative support and teacher preparedness more favorably than early career teachers. Early career teachers reported mean ratings on the Teacher Control scale ranging from 2.44 to 3.68, while first-year teachers' mean ratings ranged from 2.06 to 3.67. This is consistent with prior research that teachers tend to perceive less support from administrators as they progress in their career and generally communicate more levels of control as they become more seasoned teachers. Overall, both groups of teachers felt moderately prepared, reporting on average, 2.5 or more on each category on a Likert-type scale from one to four.

Table 3

## Mean Workplace Perceptions of Beginning and Early Career Teachers

	First Year Teachers	Early Career Teachers
<i>Teacher Preparedness Scale</i>		
W1 1st yr - class management	3.03	2.56
W1 1st yr - instructional methods	2.91	2.49
W1 1st yr - subject matter	3.12	3.08
W1 1st yr – computers	2.68	2.68
W1 1st yr - assess students	3.02	2.56
W1 1st yr - select materials	2.68	2.57
<i>Teacher Classroom Control Scale</i>		
W1 Control - select textbooks	2.06	2.44
W1 Control - select content	2.34	2.63
W1 Control - select techniques	3.67	3.68
W1 Control - grading students	3.52	3.67
W1 Control – discipline	3.36	3.42
W1 Control – homework	3.67	3.62

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<i>Administrative Support Scale</i>		
W1 Agree - supportive admin	3.68	3.40
W1 Agree - principal enforces rules	3.59	3.26
W1 Agree - teachers enforce rules	3.10	3.00
W1 Agree - principal communication	3.68	3.37
W1 Agree - staff recognized	3.36	3.16

---

The BTLS allows for a unique view of the mobility patterns of African American public school teachers. Below, the mobility patterns of African American teachers are summarized for the five waves of the BTLS, based upon the professional characteristics and workplace perceptions explored in the first research question. Over the course of the five-year survey data collection, the number of respondents decreased drastically due to panel attrition. Respondents also chose to not respond to several questions which detailed the nature of their decisions to leave teaching, manifesting as variables with varying amounts of missing data. As criteria, the variables highlighted below collected information about the sample of teachers, which complemented the descriptive statistics from research question one and had the least amount of missing data. Mobility was examined based upon a teacher's classification as a stayer, mover, leaver, or returner. Exploring a teacher's reason for moving or the destination of movers (other professions, leadership promotions, other schools within the district, within the state but out of the district, out of state, etc.) was beyond the scope of this study.



### **Research Question Two: What are the mobility patterns of African American teachers?**

Nearly half of early career teachers can be classified as leavers when leavers and movers are collapsed as a category as the researcher alluded to in Chapter 3 (see Table 4). The amount of first-year teachers reported as leaving was not nearly as substantial. Female early career teachers, however, represented a much larger percentage of leavers (see Table 5) when compared to male teachers of the same cohort.

For the first-year cohort, there were almost twice as many male leavers (61.7%) as female leavers (38.3%) in wave 2 (see Table 5). When movers were coupled with the leavers category because of their economic and onboarding impact, the category comprised 28.5% of the sample. In wave 3, the returner category was introduced. These teachers left the profession and returned later. This category only makes up 2.5% of African American teachers in wave 3. Throughout all 5 waves (see Table 6), the returners did not comprise more than 5% of the sample and were not the focus in this study. The combined leaver category continued to grow (with an increase in movers) in wave 3, making up 35.4% of African American teachers. This pattern continued in wave 4 but the increase is due to a rise in those leaving teaching from 15.5% to 25.1%. Finally, in wave 5, a slight decrease was noted as the percentage of leavers and movers make up less of the sample. In all five waves, stayers out-number the categories, yet their level of dominance in the sample decreases after wave 2. This trend indicated that after teachers' second year of teaching, position movement was observed more often. Table 5 and Table 7 illustrate stayers and leavers by gender and according to participation in an induction program. A higher percentage of female teachers left in both first year and early career

samples. There were more combined leavers that did not participate in an induction program, than did. Of the teachers that stayed, 46% did participate in an induction program. Participating in an induction program did not deter teachers from leaving, but most of those who stayed did participate in an induction program and most of those who were combined leavers did not. Thus, giving further insight into how gender and induction are associated with African American teacher mobility patterns.

Table 4

Percentage Early Career and BTLS Leavers, Stayers, & Returners Wave 2 (Weighted Frequencies in Parentheses)

	Disaggregated Leavers		Total Combined Leavers	Total Stayers
New Teachers	Movers	Leavers		
	12.1 (1,320)	16.4 (1,790)	28.5 (3,110)	71.5 (7,790)
Early Career Teachers	14.2	12	26.2	73.8
	(12,300)	(10,400)	(22,700)	(63,800)

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements.

Table 5

Percentage Early Career and BTLS Wave 2 Leavers & Stayers by Gender  
(Weighted Frequencies in Parentheses)

	Total Combined Leavers		Total Stayers	
	M	F	M	F
New Teachers	12.5%	16.0%	16.6%	54.9%
	(1,360)	(1,740)	(1,800)	(5,990)
Early Career Teachers	10.2%	16.0%	3.7%	70.0%
	(8,850)	(13,850)	(3,217)	(60,600)

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements.

Table 6

Percentage Leavers and Stayers by Wave from BTLS (Weighted Frequencies in Parentheses)

	Total Combined Leavers	Total Stayers
Wave 2 (2008-09)	28.5 (3,110)	71.5 (7,790)
Wave 3 (2009-10)	35.4 (3,860)	62.0 (6,760)
Wave 4 (2010-11)	40.7 (4,430)	59.1 (6,440)
Wave 5 (2011-12)	34.9 (3,810)	60.2 (6,550)

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements.

Table 7

Percentage of Early Career Teachers Who Participated in an Induction Program (Weighted Frequencies in Parenthesis)

	Total Combined Leavers		Total Stayers	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Early Career Teachers	10.4%	15.8%	46.1%	27.6%
	(8,990)	(13,700)	(39,910)	(23,900)

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements.

### **Research Question Three: To what extent do African American beginning teacher's professional characteristics predict teacher mobility?**

Independent *t*-tests were performed in STATA to determine if there were significant differences in teacher perception scales between leavers and stayers. Standardized mean scores representing responses on the administrative support and teacher control scales for early career African American teachers who stayed in teaching from year one to year two of the survey administration were compared to the perceptions of African American teachers who moved or left teaching for each scale.

The skewness and kurtosis for each variable was less than 2, establishing that the variable distributions were close enough to a normal distribution to use an independent samples *t*-test (see Table 8). Teacher control and administrative support were standardized using z-scores. Teacher control was not significant ( $M=-0.01$ ,  $SD=1.07$ ,  $N=130$  unweighted) according to their perception scale scores. The confidence interval around the differences between the groups were -0.12 to 1.26. Administrative support

was significant. ( $M=-0.13$ ,  $SD=1.09$ ,  $N=130$  unweighted) based upon their perception scores. The 95% confidence intervals for administrative support were .00 to 1.48.

Table 8

T-tests Comparing Leavers and Stayers

Variable	M	SD	t	P	Confidence Interval	
Admin. Support	-0.13	1.09	1.98	0.05	0.00	1.48
Tch. Class Control	-0.01	1.07	1.65	0.10	-0.12	1.26

Chi-square tests were performed (see Table 9) to determine any significant differences between gender and alternative certification for African American beginning teachers. Teacher status was based upon survey responses to the TFS (wave 2 of the BTLS). Neither, gender, nor alternative certification were statistically significant. There was not a statistical difference between leavers and stayers based upon their gender and alternative certification pathway.

Table 9

Chi-Square Test Comparing the Differences Between Teacher Mobility and Gender and Alternative Certification

Variable	%	SD	Chi-Square	df	p
Female	65	0.48	2.75	87.00	0.35
Alternative Cert.	43	0.50	0.24	87.00	0.75

### **Beginning Teacher Logistic Regression**

A nationally representative sample of African American beginning teachers completed the National Center for Educational Statistics' (NCES) Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). To answer the research question, the researcher performed binary logistic regression to determine if a teacher's choice to stay in their teaching assignment could be predicted from their responses to survey questions related to (a) gender, (b) school level taught, (c) certification pathway, (d) access to mentor, (e) percentage minority teachers in school assignment, (f) percentage of minority students in school assignment, (g) administrative support scale score, (h) teacher control scale, and (i) a teacher preparedness scale score.

Prior to running the major analysis, all variables were examined for accuracy of data entry, outliers, missing values, normality of distribution and other assumptions of binary logistic regression modeling. There were approximately a total of 11,000 African American teachers (when nationally representative weights have been applied to the data) as participants. Less than 4% of the data for the variables used to answer the research question were missing. Missing data from the Administrative Support Scale was replaced by using mean substitution. Cases were excluded through listwise deletion when data was missing. All values for all variables were within acceptable ranges suggesting that there were no data entry errors. Multicollinearity is not a concern, because tolerance of each variable was greater than 0.10 and the variance inflation factors was less than 10 (see Table 10). A direct logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the likelihood that teachers would choose to stay in their teaching assignment (called a STAYER) or

leave their teaching assignment (called a LEAVER)—coded 1=stay (STAYER) in teaching assignment and 0=not stay (LEAVER) in teaching assignment. Ten predictors were used for the study: gender (1=female, 0=male), school level taught (1=high school, 0=not high school), certification pathway (1=alternative certification, 0=not alternative certification), access to mentor (1=provided a mentor, 0=not provided a mentor), percentage minority teachers in school assignment, percentage of minority students in school assignment, administrative support scale score (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.768), teacher control (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.576), and a teacher preparedness scale score (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.839). Analysis was performed using STATA.

The formula for the full model focused on beginning teachers' responses to the SASS (the first wave of the BTLS) and TFS (the second wave of the BTLS), used the formula:

$$\text{Log } \pi_i / (1 - \pi_i) = \log O_i = \alpha + \beta_{\text{mentor}} X_{\text{mentor}} + \beta_{\text{female}} X_{\text{female}} + \beta_{\text{high school}} X_{\text{high school}} + \beta_{\text{city}} X_{\text{city}} + \beta_{\text{alternative certification}} X_{\text{alternative certification}} + \beta_{\% \text{ minority teachers}} X_{\% \text{ minority teachers}} + \beta_{\% \text{ minority students}} X_{\% \text{ minority students}} + \beta_{\text{teacher preparedness}} X_{\text{teacher preparedness}} + \beta_{\text{administrative support}} X_{\text{administrative support}} + \beta_{\text{teacher control}} X_{\text{teacher control}} + e$$

$\text{Log } O_i$  denotes the odds of a teacher's status at the end of the school year. The constant coefficient is represented as  $\alpha$ , with the independent variables denoted by  $X$  and their coefficients as  $\beta$ . The error term was  $e$ .

A test of the full model with all ten predictors against a constant-only model was not statistically reliable,  $\chi^2(77, N=11,090)=0.20, p=0.995$  (see Table 11). The model was not statistically significant. Neither were any of the variables which made up the model, for beginning teacher sample which were part of a small un-weighted sample. The results

produced inflated standard errors due to design effect, making it difficult to find statistical significance.

Table 10

African American Beginning Teacher Logistic Regression Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Collinearity	Statistics
				Tolerance	VIF
STAY	130	0.57	0.50		
HS	130	0.53	0.50	0.86	1.16
FEMALE	130	0.65	0.48	0.85	1.17
ALTCERT	130	0.43	0.50	0.76	1.32
MENTOR	130	0.84	0.37	0.87	1.15
CITY	130	0.33	0.47	0.91	1.10
ZTCHERPREPARED	110	-0.03	1.03	0.77	1.30
ZTEACHERCNTRL	110	-0.01	1.07	0.85	1.17
ZADMINSUPPT	110	-0.13	1.09	0.79	1.27
W1MINTCH	130	46.48	31.99	0.56	1.78
W1MINENR	130	76.12	27.56	0.53	1.90

*Note.* Sample sizes were rounded to the nearest 10 because of NCES disclosure requirements.



Table 11

African American Beginning Teacher Professional Characteristic Variables in the Model

Predictor	$\beta$	Std. Err.	Odds Ratio	t	p-value	Confidence Interval of Odds Ratio	
HS	0.56	3.48	1.76	0.28	0.78	0.03	90.71
FEMALE	1.36	9.79	3.89	0.54	0.59	0.03	583.55
ALTCERT	-0.58	1.81	0.56	-0.18	0.86	0.00	344.86
MENTOR	1.50	17.70	4.50	0.38	0.70	0.00	11337.73
CITY	1.44	17.44	4.24	0.35	0.73	0.00	15356.48
ZTCHERPREPARED	-0.24	0.83	0.78	-0.23	0.82	0.10	6.38
ZTEACHERCNTRL	0.70	2.24	2.02	0.63	0.53	0.22	18.40
ZADMINSUPPT	0.74	3.51	2.10	0.44	0.66	0.08	58.46
W1MINTCH	0.00	0.06	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.88	1.14
W1MINENR	0.00	0.08	1.00	0.05	0.96	0.86	1.17
constant	-1.48	1.49	0.23	-0.23	0.82	0.00	104900.5

### Early Career as Proxy Variable Logistic Regression

Low sample size, which garnered no statistically significant results combined with high standard error measurements led the researcher to consider the variables in the model for all African American teachers, with early career teacher as a proxy variable within the model. Using the early career variable increased the sample size of teachers entered into the model. The early career teacher variable was created from the SASS so

observed mobility is not applicable. In the SASS (wave 1 of the BTLS), intention to stay in teaching gives an indication of mobility.

Logistic regression was used to determine if a teacher's intention to remain (dependent variable) in teaching could be predicted from their responses to survey questions related to (a) gender, (b) school level taught, (c) certification pathway, (d) percentage minority teachers in school assignment, (e) percentage of minority students in school assignment, (f) administrative support scale score, and (g) teacher control scale. A new variable was created to define teacher's intention to remain in teaching assignment. Intention to stay had eight answer choice options in the SASS survey. The researcher dichotomized the variable by coding intention to stay as – 1=as long as I am able and 0=all other options.

Prior to running the major analysis, all variables were examined for accuracy of data entry, outliers, missing values, normality of distribution and other assumptions of binary logistic regression modeling. There were approximately a total of 2,180 (unweighted) and 243,520 African American teachers (when nationally representative weights have been applied to the data) as participants. None of the data for the variables used to answer the research question were missing. Multicollinearity was not a concern, because tolerance of each variable was greater than 0.10 and the variance inflation factors was less than 10 (see Table 12). STATA was used to perform a direct logistic regression analysis was performed to determine the likelihood that teachers' intention to remain in teaching (REMAIN) or intention to leave their teaching assignment—coded 1=stay (REMAIN) in teaching assignment and 0=not remain in teaching assignment. Nine

predictor variables were used: gender (1=female, 0=male), school level taught (1=high school, 0=not high school), certification pathway (1=alternative certification, 0=not alternative certification), percentage minority teachers in school assignment, percentage of minority students in school assignment, administrative support scale score (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.831), and teacher control (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.581).

The logistic regression equation used was:

$$\text{Log } \pi_i / (1 - \pi_i) = \log O_i = \alpha + \beta_{\text{female}} X_{\text{female}} + \beta_{\text{high school}} X_{\text{high school}} + \beta_{\text{city}} X_{\text{city}} + \beta_{\text{alternative certification}} X_{\text{alternative certification}} + \beta_{\% \text{ minority teachers}} X_{\% \text{ minority teachers}} + \beta_{\% \text{ minority students}} X_{\% \text{ minority students}} + \beta_{\text{administrative support}} X_{\text{administrative support}} + \beta_{\text{teacher control}} X_{\text{teacher control}} + e$$

$\text{Log } O_i$  denotes the odds of an African American teacher's intentions to remain in their current teaching assignment based on their response on the SASS survey. Each independent variable is represented as  $X$  and  $b$  was its corresponding coefficients, with  $e$  as the error term.

A test of the full model with all nine predictors against a constant-only model was statistically reliable,  $\chi^2(87, N=243,520)=4.17, p<.001$  (see Table 13), indicating that the predictors reliably distinguished between whether a teacher intended to stay in or not stay in their teaching assignment.

Gender (1=female, 0=male) and administrative support all associated with teacher's intention to stay in their teaching assignment. Administrative support increased the odds of the teacher intending to stay in their school assignment, while being female decreased the odds of staying. Employing a .05 significance, each of these predictors had a significant effect on the model (see Table13).

For each standard deviation increase in administrative support scale score, the odds of a teacher intending to stay increased by 1.39 times. Meaning that an African American teacher is 39% more likely to intend to stay in teaching for every standard deviation increase in their administrative support scale score. These results speak to the predictive power of administrative support in association with teacher retention, previously noted in literature.

Female African American teachers in this sample were 46% less likely to intend to stay in teaching than male teachers. The odds of intending to stay in teaching were lower for African American female teachers in this sample than African American male teachers.

Table 12

Early Career Proxy Variable Logistic Regression Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
HS	2,180	0.52	0.50	0.93	1.08
FEMALE	2,180	0.47	0.50	0.95	1.05
ALTCERT	2,180	0.71	0.46	0.88	1.13
CITY	2,180	0.30	0.46	0.89	1.12
ZTEACHERCNTRL	2,180	0.29	0.45	0.91	1.09
ZADMINSUPPT	2,180	0.08	1.01	0.92	1.09
MINTCH	2,180	0.03	1.04	0.64	1.55
MINENR	2,180	46.43	31.00	0.60	1.67
EARLYCAREER	2,180	0.43	0.50	0.90	1.12

Table 13

## Early Career Proxy Variable Logistic Regression Analysis

Predictor	$\beta$	Std. Err.	Odds Ratio	t	p-value	Confidence Interval of Odds Ratio	
HS	-0.03	0.16	0.97	-0.19	0.85	0.71	1.32
FEMALE	-0.61	0.17	0.54	-3.70	0.00	0.39	0.75
ALTCERT	-0.08	0.19	0.92	-0.41	0.68	0.63	1.35
CITY	0.27	0.19	1.31	1.42	0.16	0.90	1.92
ZTEACHERCNTRL	0.08	0.10	1.08	0.82	0.42	0.89	1.32
ZADMINSUPPT	0.33	0.09	1.39	3.55	0.001	1.16	1.67
MINTCH	0.00	0.00	1.00	-0.15	0.88	0.99	1.01
MINENR	0.01	0.00	1.01	1.69	0.10	1.00	1.02
EARLYCAREER	0.21	0.23	1.23	0.88	0.38	0.77	1.96
Constant	-0.10	0.33	0.90	-0.31	0.76	0.47	1.72

**Summary**

These results presented above reveal associations between teacher characteristics, workplace perceptions, and school demographic information and African American teacher mobility patterns. Surprisingly, a large percentage of teachers serve in suburban contexts. A large portion (about a third) of African American teachers choose to leave their teaching assignment despite their teacher certification pathway experience after their first year of teaching. Similar movement was evident in this sample for the remaining four years of the cohort, peaking from year four to five. The results of this study confirm and intensify the need to delve further into the ways in which African American teacher mobility can be decreased.

In this chapter, the results of each research question have been detailed. The results describe where African American teachers are teaching, what subjects they are teaching, the demographics of their school contexts, explored the teacher preparation path of this sample of teachers, and summarized their workplace perceptions. The mobility patterns of African American teachers were described based upon gender, induction program participation, and other demographic information. A model which successfully predicted teachers' intentions to stay in teaching was also presented which indicated that gender (female) and perception of administrative support were associated with teacher's intentions to stay in their current teaching assignment. The following chapter will delve into a discussion of the results within the context of current literature and explore implications for African American beginning teacher support, preparation, and policy.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

What follows is a discussion of the results reported in chapter four within the context of the literature available concerning African American teachers. Implications for future and current teachers, administrators, policy-makers, and colleges/universities are given based upon the research questions below:

RQ 1. What are the professional characteristics of African American teachers?

RQ 2. What are the mobility patterns of African American teachers?

RQ 3. To what extent do African American beginning teachers' professional characteristics predict teacher mobility?

Recommendations are also provided which build upon the results and corresponding discussion. Within critical race theory, the intersections of race, power, and law/policy are often explored through the counter-narratives of African Americans (Pérez & Solorzano, 2015). This discussion will offer a counter-narrative within the teacher workforce literature detailing descriptive characteristics establishing the attributes of the African American teachers in the sample, where these teachers teach, their mobility patterns, and indicators associated with their intentions to stay in their current teaching assignments.

### **Research Question One**

Analysis of demographic information targeted at answering research question one produced five relevant findings. These findings underscore aspects of the beginning and

early career African American teachers' 1) urbanicity, 2) subject area specialties, 3) certification pathways, 4) average percentage of racial/ethnic minority teachers at their school, and the 5) average percentage of racial/ethnic minority students at their school.

Literature posits that African American teachers are represented largely in urban schools (Achinstein et al., 2010). The sample of African American beginning teachers from the 2007-2008 SASS do not follow this trend. With nationally representative weights applied, the results from this study indicated that 40% of African American beginning teachers work in suburban school contexts. These findings could indicate a shift is needed in where we look for African American beginning teachers. As indicated by Achinstein et al. (2010), African American teachers are more likely to remain in urban contexts. This sample may be an indication that in reality many African American teachers are beginning their careers in school contexts contrary to this preference, hence the trends in recurrent mobility. Further investigation into the school contexts in which these teachers received their schooling would be needed to test whether these teachers' school assignments mirror their past school experiences as indicated by Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2005).

Further investigation of African American teachers' retention in suburban environments would be needed to uncover outputs of teachers' perceptions of their working conditions beyond what has been surveyed in research within urban contexts. Assuming that exploring only urban contexts to acquire pertinent information about African American teachers may be syphoning information related to retaining African American teachers. Only considering urban contexts may also serve to suppress the



nature of microaggressions on the African American teacher experience. School contexts with few African American teachers could be associated with a different amount of microaggressions than school contexts where over 50% of the school staff or student body are racially congruent to them. This is an area that would require further research to determine the ways in which African American teachers might perceive school contexts differently in relation to microaggressions.

The mean age of the African American beginning teachers in this sample was 33. The average of all other teachers was 29. Since roughly a third (34.6%) of African American teachers are alternatively certified, this statistic could be an indication that a portion of the African American teacher workforce is beginning their teaching career at a later age than other teachers. This may play a role in how they perceive their working conditions, making it an element of interest when considering future study into retaining African American teachers. Alternatively certified teachers often lack the amount of pre-service classroom experience than traditionally certified teachers are exposed to in their pre-service clinical assignments (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002, Lambeth & Lashley, 2012; Redding & Smith, 2016). When determining professional support mechanisms, it should be considered that about a third of African American beginning teachers start their careers with less opportunities for pre-service classroom interactions. This statistic has implications for instruction and the ways in which African American teachers establish professional norms for themselves, although literature supports that African American teachers often serve as sources of classroom management leadership in schools (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2011).

Villegas & Irvine (2010) convey that the motivation for African American teachers to choose the teaching profession is sometimes grounded in their willingness to positively impact their communities and provide positive examples for students. Kohli & Pizzaro (2016) posits that at times this desire can be rooted in an inclination to promote social justice. Ironically, the path to teacher certification for African American teachers can be fraught with salient obstacles. For instance, African American teachers who begin their school careers in urban schools with high percentages of under-certified teachers and poor organizational structures, enter college with an academic opportunity deficit themselves. Along the path to entrance into teacher education programs, African American teachers face another hinderance in the form of standardized professional exams (Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006; Petchauer, 2012). Although many students of color pass these gateway exams on their first attempt, navigating the tests of basic reading, writing, and math skills, which inherently show cultural bias and can have different outcomes for test-takers of different races (Petchauer, 2012), can be psychologically and financing taxing for African American and other students of color. Some students of color battle test anxiety which may be linked to stereotype threat, inefficient test-taking skills, and access to content which were not overcome in their previous school experiences (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006). Not gaining entrance into teacher preparation programs can alienate, disregard, and dismiss candidates who are motivated to teach. The issues of test-taking anxiety and performance obstacles may present themselves again as African American teachers work to pass other professional exams as they end teacher preparation programs and begin the

process to achieve teacher licensure. After completing a degree program, if former teacher candidates persevere with a different major, these students could choose to enter the teaching field through alternative certification, along with their peers who plan to enter teaching as a second career, which also have standardized test expectations for licensure. Thus, the standardized tests impact traditional, as well as alternatively certified African American teachers. Over time, cutoff requirements for teacher preparation programs have become more stringent in attempts for universities to appear to be raising the bar of their candidates, although evidence does not support a link between the changes in score cutoff requirements to future teacher performance. Changing these criteria, does serve to eliminate more potential teachers of color based on the barriers previously discussed.

The results of this study denote that most African American teachers (male and female) teach in elementary schools. The next most frequent teaching assignments are in the subject areas of Mathematics for African American male teachers and English Language Arts for African American female teachers. Lynn (2006) notes that teachers tend to choose to teach in schools which mirror their previous school experiences. Those experiences may also be associated with their choices for subject area specialty. If those experiences shape their career choices, the results may have implications beyond the field of education.

Also, research which explores whether African American teachers have sufficient support mechanisms in place to motivate them to remain in teaching at their current school assignments by subject area may be beneficial. Targeting and designing support

by subject area could allow administrators and policy makers to reach a large proportion of African American teachers at once, as well as institute innovative supports which could benefit all teachers.

Figure 1.2 indicates the distribution of teacher ages from the new African American teacher sample in this study. This data suggests that perhaps these teachers are entering their teaching careers as a “later career” option. The work experiences which these teachers accumulate before their tenure as classroom teachers may reinforce their uniqueness, justifying professional supports which are also unique compared to those needed by teachers who enter teaching through a traditional route. Further research is needed into the intersections between age, later career entrance into the teacher profession, and alternative certification on the new teacher experience.

Another consideration involves colleges and university education departments who are tasked with recruiting and preparing pre-service teachers. How are these recruiting mechanisms missing candidates that are attending those universities, yet not committing to teaching during their undergraduate studies? Qualitative investigation into the paths taken by these teachers may shed light on initiatives which colleges and universities can use to reach this population of teachers who possess the desire to enter the profession yet remain hidden on university campuses.

According to school level data accumulated for the teachers as part of the SASS, African American teachers are teaching in schools where approximately 40% of the teachers are racial/ethnic minorities and approximately 70% of the student population are racial/ethnic minority students. Since the majority of African American teachers are

teaching in suburban contexts, this speaks to the change in diversity within public schools in the United States (NCES, 2016).

Cultural congruence studies have suggested that African American teachers often choose to teach in schools when students are a racial match to themselves (Achinstein et al., 2010). Other studies point to academic gains African American students experience when racial pairing exists (Dee, 2004, 2005; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The results from this study confirm that the African American teachers in this sample teach at schools whose enrollment is predominately students who are a racial/ethnic minority. More diversity allows for more opportunity for racial/ethnic minority teachers and students to experience the benefits of racial pairing. Schools with high numbers of racial/ethnically diverse students living in poverty often have organizational dynamics within the school which are associated with “unsupportive working conditions” (Achinstein, et al., 2010, p.73). If African American teachers are concentrated in schools with organizational deficits, their intention to stay and ultimate retention is at risk. This raises the question: How can we preserve the benefits of racial pairing without sacrificing the professional supports needed for African American teachers to be motivated to stay in their school assignments? Further research is needed to explore what type of professional supports or elements within the school organizational climate are helping African American teachers to achieve the positive results of racial pairing.

At the same time that African American teachers are serving in schools with on average 70% ethnic/racial minority students, the workforce at those schools is only comprised of 40% ethnic/minority teachers. A larger number of students at those schools

are benefiting from racial parity dynamics, the cultural competence of their African American teachers, and advocacy often displayed by African American teachers, yet those teachers are not the majority and may be serving as disciplinarians (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2011) and educating their colleagues on sustaining cultural relationships with students (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). Kohli & Pizarro (2016) refers to the “relational accountability” (p. 75) that may motivate African American teachers to remain in the classroom. Consequently, a question emerges: In schools where African American teachers are a minority at on average 40%, in what ways can administrators and faculty peers contribute to these types of professional relationships which could strengthen the ties of African American teachers to the school organization in which they teach? Lightening the burden or the ways in which African American teachers perceive being taxed (Griffin & Tackie, 2016) could be key to increasing retention rates.

### **Research Question Two**

A look at the mobility patterns of beginning African American teachers resulted in three main findings: 1) after the first year of teaching 16.4% of African American teachers left the profession, 2) around 30% of teachers were mobile each year, over the course of the five years of the study, and 3) the greatest percentage of teachers left their teaching assignments between the fourth and fifth years of teaching.

Over the course of the five years of survey results, at least 30% of teachers were mobile each year. At least 15-25% of teachers left teaching and at least 10- 20% moved to a different school assignment each year. The cost associated with teacher mobility

(Barnes et al., 2007) makes this an area for future investigation. School districts and on the local level, schools are investing time, efforts, and monetary resources into supporting beginning African American teachers and not receiving a return on those investments. Further research into areas of support not addressed that should be, as well as facets of the organizational structure of the schools that are contributing to these mobility patterns require the attention of school administrators and policy makers who see the need for a stable teacher workforce.

According to the data, in the 2007-2008 school year almost one-sixth (16.4%) of African American teachers left teaching after their first year. This finding exposes the degree of urgency surrounding African American teacher retention, compared to about 33% of the general workforce of teachers who leave within their first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, L. (2003).

Mobility was highest for African American beginning teachers between their fourth and fifth year of teaching in the 2010-2011 school year. After committing to grow in their craft for four years, 41% of teachers left or moved between years four and five. Although the first year of teaching is pivotal for many teachers, for those who chose to stay, another hurdle appears to materialize around year four. Additional study is needed to explore to what extent leaving at this juncture is monetary, associated with career advancement, career fatigue-related and/or personal.

Each of the three findings related to mobility in this study sound an alarm for the schools served by African American teachers. These schools have on average 70% ethnic/racial minority students. Unfortunately, these students are impacted most by an

unstable African American teacher workforce. The inexperience and instability of the teacher workforce contributes to the opportunity gap (Darling-Hammond, 2010) which already exists. Therefore, additional research is needed beyond the qualitative studies centered around African American teachers' perceptions of their interactions with administrators and faculty (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Williams & Johnson, 2016). This research would focus on how African American teachers perceive their work environments within their first five years of teaching, providing more insight into how teachers can be supported best each year in the context of today's assessment-driven and accountability-focused climate.

### **Research Question Three**

The model proposed by the researcher included nine indicators which were collectively associated with predicting participants' intentions to stay in teaching. The logistic regression performed garnered two statistically significant results. Intention to stay in teaching has been linked to teachers' mobility decisions (Tickle et al., 2011). Weiss (1999) and Boyd et al., (2009) linked administrative support to teacher intention to stay in teaching. Administrative support resulted in a 39% increase in the odds of intending to stay in their school assignment. Being a female African American teacher was associated with an in a 46% decrease in the odds of not intending to stay in their current teaching assignment.

As evidenced in this study, several past studies point to teachers' perceptions regarding administrator support and leadership being associated with how favorably teachers perceive their work environment (Boyd, et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2003;



Ingersoll & May, 2011; Tickle et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2003). Brown & Wynn (2009) found that administrators who invested in relationships with teachers, which included allocating time, resources, and a willingness to build capacity with new teachers aided in teacher retention. More specifically, being aware of challenges experienced by new teachers, being proactive to the needs of new teachers, and committing to growth for the entire school as a unit (themselves, students, and teachers) were behaviors evident for administrators who were able to retain teachers at a higher rate than their peers (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Further investigation into behaviors displayed by administrators which retain African American teachers, especially African American women, at a high rate would reveal if these behaviors can counteract the microaggressions experienced, as well as the systemic organizational structures embedded in schools which may be contributing to high rates of turnover for African American teachers.

Since the majority of the African American teacher workforce in this sample was made up of female teachers (67%), compared to 33% being male teachers, there are serious implications for the sustainability of the African American teacher workforce. If the majority of the population of teachers continues to dwindle consistently, the loss may become unrecoverable. In the past, focus has been put upon recruiting and retaining African American male teachers (Lewis & Toldson, 2013). This study supports recent literature (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016; Farinde-Wu, Allen, & Lewis, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Fitchett, 2018) that a similar emphasis is needed to examine ways to support and retain African American female teachers. The finding that positive perceptions of administrative support were associated with intentions to stay in teaching presents an

opportunity to capitalize upon which may improve African American teacher retention, including the retention of African American women.

### **Summary**

In summary, the discussion above identified descriptive characteristics of African American teachers in the sample, as well as indicators which are associated with their retention. These findings provide an opportunity to strategically strengthen the African American teacher workforce. African American teachers bring diversity and, oftentimes, cultural competence to the classroom. This which allows them to build relationships, serve as advocates, and function as models for students (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). To ensure that these assets remain in the classroom, it is important to be mindful of their positive contributions in the classroom in an increasingly diverse society. For their presence to remain, it is necessary to acknowledge African American teachers as an instrumental part of the fabric of schools and put supports in place to begin mending the void which was created when schools were desegregated.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

Below are four recommendations which are presented by the researcher which are supported by the results and discussion communicated in this study.

#### **School-level/Recommendations for Teacher Practice**

*Recommendation One. Give time, resources, and “voice” to African American teachers in the school building.* Building level administrators and those training administrators should be aware of the unique needs of teachers who are entering the

profession as later career teachers and/or are alternatively certified. In order to foster support, administrators are encouraged to:

- Coach teachers and build relationships with them to help them informally pinpoint areas of professional interest and improvement (such as gifted education or integrating content) without penalizing teachers on evaluations. Allow teachers to observe other successful teachers on topics of their choice to help with pre-service experience deficits that may exist because of alternative certification.
- Support integrations of social justice and culturally sustaining pedagogy in lessons through the purchase of relevant curriculum materials and professional development offerings. For teachers who are motivated by “giving back” to students and their communities, being supported in efforts to incorporate social justice and the use of culturally sustaining pedagogy could improve engagement and motivation for students and teachers alike.
- Support teachers with classroom management deficits through professional development and coaching. Be sure all leadership positions are documented and accredited to evaluations and help them balance academic with discipline focused opportunities. Consistently holding everyone in the building accountable for building positive relationships with students can help to prevent the overburdening of select teachers.

Intentionally recruiting African American teachers and devoting time and resources as described above to develop these teachers in response to their expressed professional support needs would help to rebuild the African American teacher workforce

and work to prevent the 30% mobility fluctuations apparent in this study.

Organizationally, these considerations would contribute to supports beneficial to African American teachers.

### **District-level Policy Recommendations**

The results from this study indicate administrative support as a statistically significant indicator of African American beginning teachers' intention to stay in teaching. Hence, the following recommendation:

Recommendation Two. *Make careful, intentional decisions to assign administrators with skills to retain teachers to schools with the most challenges.* Schools with the most challenges should have experienced administrators, skilled at responding to the needs of students and staff members. When schools consist of students experiencing poverty and low academic achievement, they face many challenges as an organizational unit. They require professionals up to the task of meeting their needs and are willing to commit to supporting a school climate conducive to learning for all students.

Administrators who are assigned to schools with these challenges should have a history of retaining teachers or exhibit behaviors alluded to by Brown & Wynn (2009). They should also possess a willingness to prioritize investing time and resources in new teachers, build capacity in their staff and focus on growth and improving the skills of everyone in the building (Brown & Wynn, 2009). These strategies, in addition to being associated with retaining teachers, also have the potential to lead to positive gains in academic achievement for students. In the process of choosing these administrators the following should be considered:

- Decisions-makers should consider how well the successful experiences of the administrator match the school context. Principals who have proven success (high academic gains and low teacher turnover) working with teachers and students with demographics similar to those represented by the school with a vacancy should be chosen or recruited for the principal position. Those principals with the most successful experiences with similar challenges are the most equipped to serve the students and teachers.
- Require administrators to create a strategic plan which includes ways in which they plan to meet the professional growth needs of their staff, especially focusing on any new teachers hired or assigned to the school. Support staff would be included in that plan to demonstrate a building level focus. The plan would include fund allocations to detail which types of supports are prioritized. Monitoring the plan would serve to ensure a consistent focus on building the capacity of staff throughout the building, over the course of the school year.

Recommendation Three. *Provide resources to alternatively certified teachers.* The results from this study indicate that about a third of African American teachers come to teaching through an alternative route. Therefore, districts are recommended to:

- Extend resources to teachers which help them to prepare for certification exams. Supporting these teachers with study groups and structured test preparation, as well as opportunities for improving test-taking skills, content knowledge, and experiences to become familiar with the testing procedures would only be beneficial for themselves as learners and for their students.

- Establishing networks of teachers who are willing to support alternatively certified teachers with classroom management, share grade level specific content and pedagogy knowledge, and efficient use of resources facilitates a level of support which may lead to higher rates of teacher retention. Training these teachers with strategies for coaching peers in this area, as well as monetary incentives would lighten the burden of interested veteran teachers, instead of adding to their current duties without compensation, which could possibly negatively impact their wishes to stay in the classroom. It also creates teacher leadership opportunities for teachers who are seeking ways to progress their career without leaving the classroom.

### **Teacher Education-level Recommendation**

Recommendation Four. *Institute programs which recruit, provide mentor support, and follow new teachers through their first four years of teaching.* The results of this study depict high mobility rates associated with an already small population of African American teachers. The African American teachers in the five year cohort experienced their highest percentage of mobility after their fourth year. Therefore, it is recommended to:

- Create cohorts of African American teachers that provide pre-service assistance with academic coursework, tools for preparation to pass certification exams, job placement, & build a sense of community/network. The Call Me MiSTER (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) program at Clemson University is an example of a program put into place to foster the growth

of prospective African American male teachers. This program recruits and support African American males through their undergraduate studies by providing tuition assistance, as well as academic and job placement support through a cohort system. High school students are recruited in an effort to create a diverse workforce which returns to their local communities to impact the next generation of students. The Thurgood Marshal Teacher Quality and Retention Program (TQRP) also utilizes supports for future teachers, as well as STEM professionals to diversify the respective workforces. This program follows teacher candidates from participating publicly supported HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) for the final two years of their undergraduate studies and three years into their professional teaching careers. They provide on-going webinars and online support for participants, as well as a summer institutes geared toward enhancing teacher professional knowledge and leadership. Participants are paid a stipend for attending the summer institute, all five years of their participation in the program, and are expected to serve as contributors to the summer institute in their last three years in the program. This program also actively encourages participants to become National Board Certified Teachers. Building programs to benefit cohorts of African American teachers which build upon the successes of these two programs, providing assistance with academic coursework, tools for preparing to pass certification exams, job placement, as well as building a sense of community that can help them to navigate the teaching profession after graduation could give teachers access to support mechanisms they may not find in

the districts in which they teach since the African American teacher workforce is so small. Documenting the pre-service support and following new teachers into the first years of their career would give insight into certification trends and mobility patterns (specifically what is happening for African American teachers between their fourth and fifth year of teaching) evident in the results of this study. Gearing specific cohort experiences to be tailored to the African American female and African American male professional experiences may uncover elements of support unique to each cohort and aid in retaining those teachers. Cohort programs could also be available to provide the same types of supports for those enrolled in alternative certification programs. Facilitating these types of programs would also be an opportunity for colleges and university education departments to partner with local school districts to attract and retain teachers.

- Allow veteran African American teachers with compensated opportunities to participate in the planning & mentorship within programs. Since the research concerning African American teacher's perceptions of administrative support is so scarce, creating programs which allow veteran African American teachers to participate in the planning and mentorship of such perspective and new teachers would incorporate their voice, as well as allow them to contribute to the careers of other teachers as an extension of "relational accountability" (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016, p. 75) and serve as mentors, just as they are credited with doing for their students. Funding should be made available to compensate these teachers for sharing their experiences and expertise and formal documentation for research



purposes, as well as to capture the teachers' contributions for accessibility for all teachers. Using video documentaries would be one way to capture the experiences and impact of veteran African American teachers from which other teachers (current and future) can learn.

- Incorporate social justice and culturally sustaining pedagogy into pre-service teacher curriculum. Integrating social justice and culturally sustaining pedagogy into pre-service teacher curriculum may attract teacher candidates of color, as well as other candidates with similar interests. Within these courses, candidates would have the opportunity to cultivate discussions about diversity in education. Also, designating a concentration, cohort, or strand of a similar focus within a teacher preparation program would allow teacher candidates to have the opportunity to pursue further study in these areas as well.
- Systematically monitor examples of successful support & new teacher mobility patterns. Organizing research cohorts which follow teacher candidates and offer support during their first five years of teaching, would allow data to be collected and synthesized which may help to pinpoint successful teacher retention strategies which can be incorporated into pre-service experiences for future teacher candidates. Partnerships with local school districts could enhance the richness of the endeavor.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The sample size for this study was a convenience sample based on restricted-use access to the SASS (wave 1), TFS (wave 2), and BTLS (wave 3-5) surveys. The data

sample was not designed to capture a comprehensive set of data for as many African American teachers as possible. Instead, the sampling frame was designed to include occurrences of mobility within the teacher workforce. Consequently, the researcher was not able to use inferential statistics to explore indicators related to the frequency and quality of mentor support for beginning teachers in this sample. Many of the questions related to mentorship and teacher preparedness suffered from missing data. These were facets of the teacher workplace which the researcher attempted to pursue.

Designing a study which oversamples for African American teachers is highly recommended by the researcher to closely consider these areas which are cited heavily in the literature to be associated with retaining teachers. Using survival analysis to explore the mobility patterns of African American beginning teachers was also an intention of the researcher which was not applicable to this study because of the size of the sample at the end of year five of the data collection. Despite the incompleteness of the data set, this study successfully used descriptive statistics and logistic regression with beginning teachers as a proxy variable to reveal characteristics missing in the literature about African American teachers.

This study does not represent the current African American teacher workforce. However, it is a nationally representative sample of African American teachers compiled for research. These findings detail the professional characteristics, workplace perceptions, and mobility patterns of beginning African American teachers not available in current literature. Specifically, the results give insight into the teacher certification pathways chosen by beginning African American teachers, the contexts where they teach, what

they teach, how long they stay in teaching, and indicators which are associated with their intentions to stay in their current teaching assignment.

### **Future Research**

Literature is scarce regarding beginning African American teachers, beyond research confirming that their experiences are unique and they are leaving the profession at a high rate. Solutions and strategies are needed to highlight ways administrators and policy makers can begin to positively reshape the organizational school structures which are pushing African American teachers out of the profession. These action plans are necessary to maintain the diversity in the teacher workforce provided by African American teachers. In order to capture the immense amount of expertise from experienced African American teachers and sustain the benefits of having African Americans teacher in the workforce, there is work to be done.

The results from this study uncovered the subject area specialties of African American teachers, that a large percentage of the African American teacher workforce (with nationally representative weights applied) are teaching in suburban contexts, a large percentage mobility experienced by African American teachers took place after their fourth year of teaching, and administrative support was associated with African American teachers' intention to stay in teaching. Research is suggested in the following areas:

- This study found that most African American female teachers chose English Language Arts as subject area specialties, while Mathematics was the subject area choice for African American male teachers. The areas of Science and Social Sciences were not well represented in this sample. Research which investigates

the factors which go into African American teachers' content area choices and if there are relationships between these subject area choices and their previous school experiences could provide insight into ways to increase the African American teacher presence in various subject areas.

- Most research regarding African American teachers is based upon their presence in urban school contexts. Based upon the findings in this study, research is needed to explore specifically where within the United States African American teachers are teaching. Following their mobility paths through promotion, transitioning from school to school, or leaving the teacher workforce in various geographic locations would provide researchers the opportunity to investigate local structures which are available to support them. Once identified, recommendations to improve organizational supports could be communicated.
- Specific attention needs to be paid to what is happening in the African American teacher experiences between year four and five. Results indicated the most percentage of mobility at that point. At this time in their careers, African American teachers may be looking for additional pay or leadership roles, encouraged by administrators to take on additional leadership roles, or mobility may be a response to layers of professional support that have been removed. Research would be needed to confirm what is happening at this juncture in African American teachers' careers.
- In addition to following the mobility patterns of teachers who serve in suburban areas, qualitative research which focuses on the workplace perceptions of

beginning African American teachers in suburbs and their interactions with their peers (including experiences they may encounter with microaggressions) would give insight into the professional climate and relationships which motivate African American teachers to remain in teaching. Documenting the retention rates of the teachers who are a part of the qualitative study, would add another dimension to the study as a contribution to current teacher retention literature.

- This quantitative study denoted an association between administrative support and teacher retention. This association, coupled with the amount of mobility taking place in the African American teacher workforce suggests that further study into the professional relationships of administrators and African American teachers is needed. Qualitative research which considers the race of the administrator, leadership style, and the types of professional supports put into place by administrators to support their teachers would be suggested focal points in the study.

Pursuing the topics above could lead educators to consider factors which may be key to positively impacting teacher retention rates for African American teachers and workforce as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study focused on identifying the professional characteristics, workplace perceptions, and mobility patterns of African American teachers. Five waves of NCES' BTLS, which includes the SASS (wave 1) and TFS (wave 2) were used to collect the responses of a nationally representative sample of teachers. The researcher

found that the majority of African American teachers in the sample taught in suburban schools with student populations consisting of, on average, 70% racially/ethnically diverse student populations. About a third of the African American beginning teachers were alternatively certified. Administrative support was determined to be statistically significant associations to African American teachers' intentions to stay in teaching. While gender (being female), was associated with not intending to stay in teaching. As expected, a portion of teachers left teaching after the first year, but the fourth year yielded the most turnover. While contributing a quantitatively descriptive narrative of African American teachers absent from the literature, this study also exposed many questions for research to answer if the legacy of African American teachers in the United States public school workforce is to be preserved.

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## APPENDIX: OPERATIONALIZED VARIABLES

Dependent Variables	Variable Code	Description
Mobility Status		Teacher's 2008–09 status as a stayer, mover, or leaver. Stayers are teachers who were teaching in the same school in the current school year as in the base year. Movers are teachers who were still teaching but had moved to a different school after the base year. Leavers are teachers who left the teaching profession after the base year.
	W2STTUS (created)	
	W3STTUS (created)	Categories include:
	W4STTUS (created)	1 = Leaver
	W5STTUS (created)	2 = Stayer 3 = Mover 4=Returner
Intention to Stay	T0321	1-As long as I am able
		2-Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job
		3-Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from a previous job
		4-Until I am eligible for Social Security benefits
		5-Until a specific life event occurs (e.g., parenthood, marriage)
		6-Until a more desirable job opportunity comes along
		7-Definitely plan to leave as soon as I can
		8-Uncecided at this time

Independent Variables		
Gender	T0352/W1T0352	Are you male or female?
Urbanicity	URBANS12/W1URBANS12	<p>This is a four-level collapse of SLOCP12 (urban-centric school locale code). Methodology was updated to incorporate 2000 Census population and geography information.</p> <p>Categories include:</p> <p>1 = City, 2 = Suburb, 3 = Town, 4 = Rural.</p>
General Teaching Assignment	T0ASSIGN03/W1ASSIGN03 (created)	<p>General field of main teaching assignment in 2007–08</p> <p>1-Early Childhood/PreK 2-Elementary Grades 3-Special Education 4-English and Language Arts 5-Arts and Music 6-English as a Second Language (ESL) 7-Foreign Languages 8-Health Education 9-Mathematics and Computer Science 10-Natural Sciences 11-Vocational, Career, or Technical Education 12-All Others</p>
Age	AGE_T/W1AGE_T (created)	Age of teacher in 2007–08. Coded as follows: W1AGE_T = sum (2007, - W1T0360);

School Category (level)	SCHLEVEL2/W1SCHL EVE2 (created)	<p>Four-category level of school based on grade levels offered as reported by the school. Categories include: 1 = primary: schools with at least one grade lower than 5 and no grade higher than 8;</p> <p>2 = middle: schools with no grade lower than 5 and no grade higher than 8; 3 = high: schools with no grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8; and 4 = combined: schools with at least one grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8. Schools with only ungraded classes were included with combined schools. For cases where the school was a noninterview, sample file or other information was used to impute (if available).</p>
Program Type	PGMTYPE/W1PGMTPY E	<p>School program type. For cases where the school was a noninterview, sample file or other information was used to impute (if available).</p> <p>Categories include:</p> <p>1 = Regular;</p> <p>2 = Montessori;</p> <p>3 = Special program emphasis;</p> <p>4 = Special Education;</p> <p>5 = Career/Technical/Vocational Education;</p> <p>6 = Alternative;</p> <p>7 = Early Childhood Program/Daycare Center.</p> <p>Copied from variable s0048 in SASS public, BIE and private school files.</p>
Certification Method	T0153/W1T0153	<p>Did you enter teaching through an alternative certification program?</p> <p>(An alternative program is a program that was designed to expedite the transition of non-teachers to a teaching career, for example, a state, district, or university alternative certification program.)</p>

Percentage of Minority Teacher at School	MINTCH/W1MINTCH (created)	Percentage of teachers at the school who are of a racial/ethnic minority. For cases where the school was a noninterview, sample file or other information was used to impute (if available). Coded as follows: MINTCH = (INT((sum(s0122, s0124, s0125, s0126)/s0127)*10e5)/10e3);
Percentage of Minority Student Enrollment at School	MINENR/W1MINENR (created)	Percentage of enrolled students who are of a racial/ethnic minority. For cases where the school was a noninterview, sample file or other information was used to impute (if available). Coded as follows: W1MINENR = (INT((W1NMINST_S/W1ENRK12UG)*10e5)/10e3);
Administrative Support Scale		To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? a. The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging. f. My principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it. g. Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes. i. The principal knows what kind of school he or she wants and has communicated it to the staff. k. In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.
Teacher Control Support Scale	T0286/W1T0286  T0292/W1T0292  T0293/W1T0293  T0295/W1T0295  T0297/W1T0297	
		How much actual control do you have IN YOUR CLASSROOM at this school over the following areas of your planning and teaching?

	T0280/W1T0280	a. Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials
	T0281/W1T0281	b. Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught
	T0282/W1T0282	c. Selecting teaching techniques
	T0283/W1T0283	d. Evaluating and grading students
	T0284/W1T0284	e. Disciplining students
	T0285/W1T0285	f. Determining the amount of homework to be assigned
Induction	T0220	In your FIRST year of teaching, did you participate in a teacher induction program?
Early Career Teacher	T0213	Was your FIRST year of teaching before the 2003-04 school year?

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