

School Connectedness: How Principals and Teachers Can Support Mobile Students

by

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Dedication/Epigraph

When I applied to begin my doctoral journey, I was completely unaware of how this program would impact my life. To be honest, I was not even sure why I wanted to take on this challenge. However, what I have learned about myself and my work ethic has been invaluable. Due to my coursework and writing, I had to say no to social events and fun events many weekends and evenings. My family and friends were understanding and supportive as I was holed up in my office typing away. First of all, I have to thank my husband, Don. He fully supported me when I told him I wanted to return to school. I also have to thank my best friend, Terry. I cannot imagine going through this process without her. She was my sounding board, a careful listener, and asked thoughtful questions throughout this journey. We spent hours in the pool talking about my learning. Thank you also to Jim Swank. He was such an important part of my dissertation process. He was eager and willing to talk about my research and even read my writing throughout the process. I am lucky to have you in my life. Thank you to my mom, who has always been my biggest cheerleader and supporter. I wish I were half the person she thinks I am! I will be forever grateful to my UH doctoral cohort. We had many laughs and learning together. Thank goodness for group texting! Finally, thank you, Dr. Davis, for your constant and calm support, especially during statistics!

A strong woman knows she has strength enough for the journey, but a woman of strength knows it is in the journey where she will become strong.

Unknown

Abstract

Background/Problem: Student mobility, defined as a change in campus or enrollment status, can cause many negative consequences for students and their schools. These adverse results include deficits in academic and social success. However, when social capital is intentionally increased for mobile students, the negative impact can be lessened. Schools must acknowledge that mobile students have unique needs and intentionally create interventions to support them. However, educators are only sometimes equipped with the knowledge, skills, strategies, and interventions necessary to maximize their schools' potential positive influence on mobile populations. **Purpose:** This study aimed to identify and extract the best practices of principals and teachers who work at schools with a mobile population more significant than the state mobility rate of 10% (Texas Academic Performance Report, 2021). **Research Questions:** RQ1: What programs, formal or otherwise (if any), are utilized by principals of mobile schools to impact school connectedness? RQ2: What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile classrooms? RQ3: What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their mobile classrooms? **Methods:** This study employed a multi-site qualitative case study approach. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with four principals and focus groups with 13 teachers. The collected data were analyzed using inductive coding to identify recurring themes and subthemes. **Findings:** The data imply that effective support for mobile students to increase school connectedness can be possible if educators know the best practices for supporting this group of learners. While it was clear from the interviews that mobility makes teaching more challenging, the participants in this study demonstrated a strong desire to reach all their learners and are employed in the

same district. However, more training and resources are needed to support mobile students fully. Conclusion: This study provided specific evidence from the lived experiences of teachers and principals who work with mobile students. The study also confirmed the benefits of having purposeful and planned social and academic interventions to support mobile students and their families.

Keywords: Student mobility, supports, school connectedness, connections

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Student mobility is a growing problem in America. Student mobility affects approximately 20% of students in the United States (Rumberger, 2003). Many mobile students change residences more than once per school year. There are two types of student mobility: structural and non-structural. Structural mobility occurs when students transition to the next school level (e.g., elementary to middle school). Non-structural mobility happens when students change schools for other reasons (Rumberger, 2015). The focus of this study will be on non-structural mobility, defined by Sparks (2016) as "any time a student changes schools for reasons other than grade promotion, but in general, it refers to students changing schools during a school year" (p. 2).

Antecedents of Mobility

Student mobility is an extraordinarily complex issue with many underlying causes. The reasons for changing schools can be voluntary or involuntary. Typically, a change in a school is "often a consequence of other changes in a student's (or his/her family's life); these changes vary depending on how voluntary, predictable, or desirable they are for the student and family" (Fisher et al., 2002, p. 19). Voluntary examples include changes in job location, moving to a better neighborhood, or a better school (Rumberger, 2015). Job loss, eviction, displacement from a natural disaster, homelessness, and foster care are examples of involuntary school changes (Rumberger, 2015). According to the Houston Education Research Consortium (HERC) Mobility Report (Potter et al., 2021), "if a student changed schools in the previous school year,

they were three times more likely to change schools again in the current school year than students who had not changed schools in the prior year" (p.3).

Consequences of Mobility

Changing schools can have immediate and long-term academic and social effects on students (Potter et al., 2021). Mobility is associated with lower school engagement, unsatisfactory grades in reading/math, and a higher dropout risk (Fisher et al., 2002). Research has shown that each move causes students to lose about three months of reading and math progress each time they change schools (Sparks, 2016). Changing elementary schools predicts classroom participation and academic performance (Gruman et al., 2008). In fact, "changing schools can harm a normal child and adolescent development by disrupting relationships with peers and teachers as well as altering a student's educational program" (Rumberger, 2015. p. 10). There can be severe impacts on test scores and high school graduation rates for transient students (Rumberger, 2015).

Upon enrollment at a new school, students may suffer a "cumulative negative impact as teachers and administrators adjust curriculum and activities or as relationships with peers are altered" (Welsh, 2017, p.488). Student mobility can also affect non-mobile students. The impact of high mobility can be compared to secondhand smoking, implying that all students in a school are impacted by mobility, not just mobile students (Rumberger et al., 1999). According to (Potter et al., 2021), "When a campus's mobility rate went up, its accountability scores went down" (p. 12).

Mobility and School Connectedness

Schools can provide support to reduce the adverse effects of mobility. Sameroff (2010) described how schools can implement promotive (protective) factors that can

"positively influence the development of at-risk youth, moderating the negative influence of risk factors" (p. 14). One such protective factor is school connectedness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines school connectedness as "the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals" (CDC, n.d., p. 1). Students who feel connected to their school tend to have higher academic achievement, better attendance, and greater educational attainment (CDC, n.d., p. 1).

Accordingly, teachers and school leaders are charged with providing academic, educational, and social support before, during, and after students enroll so that mobile populations can thrive and receive intensive interventions to close as many learning gaps as possible. One way schools can support transient students is by leveraging greater school connectedness. Because school connectedness directly relates to academic achievement, especially in the ongoing era of accountability, schools should be vested in developing interventions that increase school connectedness for their students and families (Dinnen et al., 2020).

Problem

Schools must acknowledge that mobile students have unique needs and should intentionally create interventions to support these learners. Protective factors can mitigate some of the harmful effects of student mobility (Dinnen et al., 2020). Kerbow (1996) asserted that mobility, rather than stability, is becoming the norm for students in schools across the United States. Hence, schools need to find ways to support students by ensuring effective instruction happens and efforts to support relationships while they are enrolled happen. Purposeful interventions such as establishing positive relationships and

high expectations for students can potentially positively support mobile students and families. Mobile students have unique instructional and affective needs, and teachers may require specific training to meet their students' needs (Fisher et al., 2002). Specifically, teachers and administrators need training to "encompass knowledge of the curricula that teachers in other schools use, flexible instructional strategies, multiple methods of assessing students' learning needs, and the unique, challenging challenges facing mobile families" (Fisher et al., 2002, p. 331).

School leaders are only sometimes equipped with the knowledge, skills, strategies, and interventions necessary to maximize their schools' potential positive influence on mobile populations. According to Grant et al. (2008), traditional teaching methods need to be modified to meet the needs of these mobile students. School officials should also connect with parents to build a relationship, share specific information about the school, and connect families to community resources if needed (Fisher et al., 2002). The needs of mobile students are specific; therefore, school leaders, teachers, and families should work together to support these students best.

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to identify and extract the best practices of principals and teachers working at a school with a mobile population greater than the state mobility rate (10%) (Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)). The school leaders in this study serve schools in a large suburban school district in southeast Texas. Additionally, I intend to determine what training teachers and leaders have received that prepared them to meet the needs of their mobile students. Specifically, I plan to identify implemented practices that increase school connectedness. By interviewing these principals, I hope to uncover

what best practices these school leaders utilize and share the recognized effective practices with other leaders. Ultimately, the school leaders and teachers can incorporate these practices to increase school connectedness at their respective schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions drive the present study:

RQ1: What programs, formal or otherwise (if any), are utilized by principals of schools with mobile students to build school connectedness?

RQ2: What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile students?

RQ3: What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their mobile students in their classrooms?

The intent of Research Question 1 was to identify the interventions that school leaders implement to support school connectedness for mobile students because previous research has determined that this connectedness increases students' academic and social success (Dinnen et al., 2019). These identified interventions can potentially support the teachers and the students they serve on campus.

The second research question aimed to determine if teachers know available supports available to them when instructing mobile students. In addition to knowledge of the specific supports, I hope to discover if principals and teachers have had the training to implement the supports with their mobile students.

The third research question sought to determine what supports teachers use when teaching mobile students. In addition to the knowledge of the specific supports, I hoped

to discover if principals and teachers have had the training to implement these supports with their mobile students.

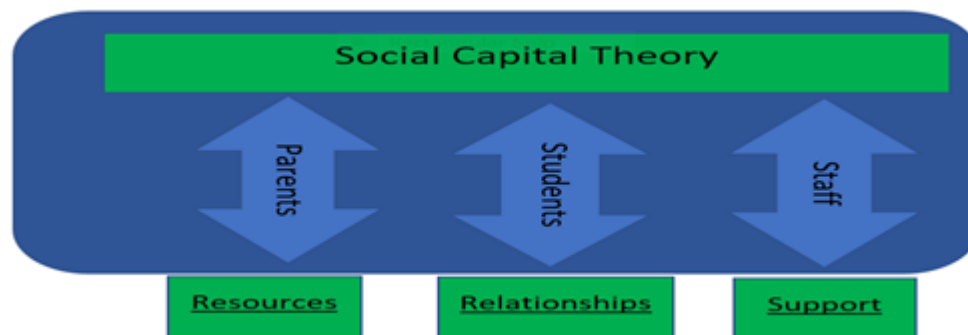
Scholarly Significance

School leaders are ultimately responsible for meeting the needs of all students in their schools. Specifically, principals are charged with providing academic and social skills to all their students. Unfortunately, mobility creates a complex challenge that can impede success in these areas. Mobility can have detrimental effects on academic and emotional success, and unfortunately, mobility is an increasing trend for students and schools (Rumberger, 2015). Many school leaders need specific training on implementing support for students when they enroll at their school. These supports can help to ameliorate some of the harmful effects of student churn (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2010). Previously conducted research suggested some best practices for meeting the needs of mobile students. However, there is a surprising lack of knowledge about implementing practical best procedures to support mobile students (Welsh, 2017).

The reasons to support this fragile population are routinely evident in the research, but more practical implementation steps are needed for a campus-based leader to help students and teachers. The findings from this study may provide steps for educators to implement quickly to encourage the success of their mobile students.

Overview of Theory, Lens, and Framework

Social capital theory provides a framework for studying the effects of mobility on student academic and social progression (see Figure 1.).

Figure 1*The exchange of social capital*

Pierre Bourdieu theorized that social capital is "derived from trust, shared values, and a sense of connectedness by which community members benefit and through which they facilitate benefits for others" (Boone, 2011, p. 3). Social capital can be accumulated through relationships between children, their families, and other community members with whom the child interacts. Schools are more effective when teachers, parents, and students have strong relationships that, in turn, increase the social capital of the students (Boone, 2011). Social capital theory explains how social ties provide capital that organizations exchange to enhance individuals' productive capacity. The community builds this capital, and the family supports children's social and cognitive development (Coleman, 1988; Han, 2014). Residential moves may disrupt parents' and students' social capital, negatively impacting students' outcomes (Coleman, 1988). Schools provide a sense of community for students; when they leave a school, they lose their connections with teachers, peers, and neighbors (Han, 2014). With the loss of relationships, there is a disruption in the network's social exchange (Gruman et al., 2008). Although moves are associated with declines in social capital, higher social capital "appears to buffer the

negative effect of moving on test scores and educational attainment goals” (Gruman et al., 2008, p. 4.) When students transfer, and the result is positive, there can be social capital gain. For example, if the parents move closer to family or the students have a more robust support network at the new school, then social capital gain occurs.

Stanton-Salazar (2011) extended the term *social capital* to include institutional actors. According to Stanton-Salazar (2011), institutional agents are high-status, non-kin agents who occupy relatively high positions in the multiple-dimensional stratification system and are well-positioned to give significant social and educational assistance. As a result, when school employees function as institutional agents, students can get social and institutional aid that benefits their social development, academic achievement, and adulthood preparedness.

Since it is evident in the research that social connections can support students, school leaders can use this knowledge to ensure that social capital is considered and utilized while working with mobile students on campus.

Methodology

This qualitative research study examined the practices of school principals and teachers to meet the needs of mobile students. This study focused only on principals with a student mobility rate at or above the state mobility rate level and teachers at their schools. The school district used in this study is a large suburban area in southeast Texas. The community serves a diverse student population of 19% African American, 44% Hispanic, 22% White, and 10% Asian. Standardized State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) scores place the district above the state average. The Texas Academic Performance Report reflected that the district mobility rate (11%)

aligned closely with the state mobility rate of (13%), so this district provided a comparable model to examine student mobility (Texas Education Agency, 2021).

The researcher identified four elementary schools as the focus for this study. Each of the 10 schools in the study has a student mobility rate of over 10%. The of the four principals have varying leadership experiences that range from 19 to 34 years.

I collected data for this case study from formal semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The interviews and focus groups were recorded, and notes were taken. The interviews were then transcribed and coded. Recurring and emerging themes were identified and recorded (Bhattacharya, 2017). The responses were then coded and categorized.

Researcher Statement and Positionality

As an elementary school principal at a Title I at-risk campus, I have frequently observed the adverse effects of frequent school changes on my students. My campus has a student mobility rate of 16.3%. This rate is higher than both the state (13%) and district (11%) mobility rates (Texas Education Agency, 2021). Professionally, I am responsible for finding ways to support my mobile and stable students to increase academic performance and provide interventions.

As a mother of two grown children who attended one elementary school from kindergarten to fifth grade, I have not personally experienced student mobility (or churn) in my household. Our family dynamics were stable throughout my children's elementary years. Although we lived in two different homes during this time, both homes were in the same school attendance zone, so there was no disruption until the naturally occurring middle and high school transitions. Since I have not personally experienced mobility, I

hope to understand this complicated problem to support my students and their families better. Additionally, all my teaching experience was at schools with low mobility rates. However, my administrative experience has been in Title I schools with high mobility rates.

Most of the current research on mobility has focused on middle and high school students. However, school mobility during elementary school may be strongly linked to school success, such as high school completion (Alexander et al., 1996). As an elementary principal, I wish to learn how to best support my mobile students and their families by conducting this research. This support will include academic and social interventions. I am particularly interested in strengthening our school culture to ensure mobile students feel welcome and supported when enrolling at my school. I intend to share this learned information with my principal colleagues as most mobile students move within our school district rather than outside our borders (Potter, 2021).

Definitions

Key terms utilized throughout this study will be generally defined as follows: *Alternatively, a certified-teacher preparation program* allows aspiring teachers to obtain certification while teaching.

Non-structural mobility: when a student changes the school; they attend for a reason other than completing the terminal grade at that school (e.g., a student switching from one elementary school to another, from one middle school to another, or from one high school to another.

School Connectedness: the belief held by students that the adults in the school care about their learning and themselves as individuals.

Student mobility: inconsistency or interruption in the educational experience of a student.

Structural mobility is when a student changes the school they attend because they have completed the terminal grade at their school (e.g., the transition from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school).

Traditional University certified: a teacher preparation program completed at a university.

Limitations

This study is limited because all the principals and teachers interviewed for this study are from the same school district and are the researcher's colleagues. The principals are all acquainted, so this might cause the interviewees to not truthfully answer the questions in the interviews to avoid looking ineffective. Also, each school's teachers were interviewed in a focus group, so this could affect responses. However, before beginning the research, all participants will be notified that their responses will be confidential, and their names will not be shared with anyone besides the researcher.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Mobile students require specific academic and social interventions to succeed as they transition and assimilate into new schools. School leaders and teachers often need to be made aware of the particular supports, leaving them unsure of how best to help students and their teachers. Through this study, I aimed to identify and examine what best practices for supporting mobile students are being implemented, with fidelity, at suburban elementary schools with mobility rates above the state average. The specific research questions guiding the study are as follows:

RQ1: What programs, formal or otherwise, if any, are utilized by principals of mobile schools to impact students' school connectedness?

RQ2: What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile students?

RQ3: What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their mobile classrooms?

Given that this study focuses on school connectedness among mobile students, I began Chapter 2 by detailing the underlying antecedents of student mobility. Following that, I dove deeply into mobility's negative and positive consequences. I then examined student mobility's academic and social implications. Subsequently, I provided examples of academic, social, and procedural best practices (or interventions) that schools can implement to lessen the negative impact of changing schools. In the following section, I explained how school connectedness can positively support new students and their families. In the penultimate section of this chapter, I described policies that can

contribute to helping students feel more connected to their school. I concluded Chapter 2 with a detailed examination of my theoretical framework, social capital theory, by outlining its origins, central tenets, and how I adapted this theory to this study.

Antecedents and Contributors to Mobility

The causations of student mobility are complex and interwoven with many underlying economic and social causes (Kerbow, 1996). Researchers have routinely found that mobility has many interrelated antecedents, such as poverty, housing issues, and family struggles (Fisher et al., 2002; Sorin & Iloste, 2006; Welsh, 2017.) Welsh (2017) defined the impact of changing schools as a "constellation of concurrent and possibly competing effects that may occur at the individual, school, or neighborhood level" (p. 484). To understand how best to meet the needs of mobile students, it is essential to comprehend why students move, which students are most likely to be mobile, and how homelessness affects mobility.

Why Students Move

There are many interconnected reasons why families move, and ultimately, students change schools. For example, Rumberger (2015) reported that the most common motives for family mobility were wanting a better home, establishing an independent household (instead of living with others), starting a new job, or wanting more affordable housing. The reasons for mobility can be divided into two categories: voluntary (e.g., school choice or job promotion) or involuntary (e.g., eviction, homeless, lost job, divorce, school closing due to low enrollment or low performance, or disciplinary consequences) (Rumberger, 2015). Involuntary moves are typically reactive or unplanned and are not

usually purposeful or strategic in improving the family's economic situation (Rumberger et al., 1999).

Another predictor of school change is school change itself. Potter et al. (2021) found that "when a student changed schools in the previous school year, they were three times more likely to change schools again in the current school year than students who had not changed schools in the prior year" (p. 3). Thus, when students become mobile, they will likely continue to be so.

Patterns of Mobility

Student mobility usually overlaps with residential mobility (Rumberger, 2003). Most schools have mandated attendance zones, so this can explain why school changes occur when there is a change in residence (Reynolds et al., 2009). In other words, a home move and a school change are often connected.

However, school choice policies allow some parents to select a school for their children to attend. Student demographics are one of the primary reasons that parents may choose a new school for their children. Maroulis et al. (2019) posited that parents may choose a school that has students with similar demographics to their child so that they can be among similar peers. The school's location can also be a determining factor for parents when selecting schools. If families rely on public transportation, a school that is too far away may not be a realistic option. Similarly, attendance can be impacted when a school location is far from the student's residence, complicating the commute (Stein & Grigg, 2019).

Enrolling in a school that is not a public school, such as a charter school, can also cause student mobility. The number of charter schools continues to grow in southeast

Texas, impacting mobile students. Although more students have opted to exit traditional public schools for charters, there has also been an increase in the number of students who return to public schools following enrollment in a charter school (Potter et al., 2021).

Mobile Student Demographics and Family or Household Conditions

Certain demographic groups are more often impacted by mobility than other groups. As stated previously, many of the underlying causes of mobility are interwoven, and this is also evident when identifying the demographic trends for mobile students. For example, students with lower Social Economic Status (SES) are affected by mobility more than those not eligible. This relationship is noteworthy because additional factors such as homelessness, school closings, and expulsion rates are more prevalent in lower SES students and can cause a school change (Masten et al., 2015). Households of mobile students are more likely to have one parent, have lower parental education levels, receive public assistance, and be composed of immigrants (South et al., 2005).

Potter et al. (2021) explained that neighborhood conditions, the household's economic circumstances, and the quality of the school attended can cause frequent moves. Parents of lower-performing students may take proactive steps to remove their kids from schools they perceive as "failing" their children (Maroulis et al., 2019). In particular, Maroulis et al. (2019) found that parents of lower-performing students often moved their children to new schools to find better educational opportunities. However, despite being driven by the hope of a better educational opportunity for their children, these families often moved their children between schools with similar demographics, which usually has yet to have the intended benefit of improving education for their

children. Consequently, students may continue to struggle, so parents may decide to transfer schools again, thus compounding and extending the mobility cycle.

Lower-income or economically disadvantaged (defined in Texas by eligibility for free or reduced-price lunch) students switch schools more frequently than advantaged students in higher-income communities (Cordes et al., 2019; Kerbow, 1996). Burdick-Will et al. (2011) suggested that neighborhood quality can affect students' success because living in high poverty is associated with lower student achievement. Mobility occurs more often in urban schools than in suburban or rural ones, and schools with more public housing and shelters have more mobility (Nauer et al., 2014; Rumberger, 2015). Black and Hispanic students whose parents rent their residences are likelier to change schools during the school year than parents who own their own homes (Sparks, 2016). Therefore, family economic status can impact where students move.

Mobility tends to occur in some student groups more than others. For example, Black students have the highest mobility rates among ethnic groups and frequently change enrollment (Kerbow, 1996; Potter et al., 2021). Black students in Houston are twice as likely to change schools as White or Hispanic students; however, these higher mobility rates "do not take into account the intersectionality of race, social class, and other social markers related to inequality" (Potter et al., 2021, p. 4). Potter et al. (2021) added that race is not the reason for mobility but is a proxy for why some groups of students are more mobile than others. Burkham et al. (2009) determined that only 45% of Black students were enrolled at the same school since kindergarten compared to 60% of White and Asian students by the time they enrolled in high school. Also, males, students

enrolled in special education, and English learners tend to be more impacted by mobility than their peers (Rumberger, 2015).

Homelessness and Mobility

Homelessness is another factor that contributes to student transience.

Homelessness is one of the most common overlapping antecedents to student mobility (Welsh, 2018). Currently, 1,384,000 students are homeless annually in the United States (National School Board Association, 2021). Homeless families share many of the same characteristics as those with children classified as mobile learners, and mobility can occur because of experiencing homelessness. Homelessness is associated with high student mobility rates because there is no fixed residence, and a school change is likely to occur. Homeless families tend to have sociodemographic risk factors such as single-parent households, low parental education, divorce, and incarceration (Rumberger, 2015). Like mobile students, homeless students often have high retention rates (not promoted to the next grade), frequent absences, and repeated school changes (Masten et al., 2015). There are additional academic consequences to being without a home. According to Rafferty et al. (2004), homeless students scored below grade level on math, reading, and spelling tests compared to students who were not experiencing homelessness.

As noted previously, the antecedents of student mobility are interwoven and connected, so there are no easy solutions to solve this complex student issue. Therefore, in addition to understanding the antecedents and contributing factors of mobility, it is also important to recognize student mobility's positive and negative consequences.

Consequences of Mobility

Mobility can have academic and social consequences for mobile students and their schools. These consequences can either be beneficial or detrimental for students. The effect of mobility depends on the reason for the transfer and the circumstances surrounding the move. The school change can impact student learning and the social connections at the school and in the community. My subsequent discussion of the consequences focused on adverse student academic outcomes, the impact of mobility on schools, and negative and positive social effects.

Impact on Mobile Students

Mobility can harm students' academic and emotional success (Cordes et al., 2019; Dinnen et al., 2020; Sorin & Iloste, 2006). Attendance is often affected when students are mobile. When students do not have regular school attendance, there can be academic consequences for them and their schools (Welsh, 2018). School changes accompanied by disruptions in the home, such as death, homelessness, divorce, foster care, and incarceration, are the most detrimental to student achievement (Rumberger, 2015; Welsh, 2017). Mobility can create negative consequences for students because when students are repeatedly absent from school, they miss important lessons and developmental opportunities (London et al., 2016).

In a longitudinal study conducted over 25 years, Herbers et al. (2013) found that students who were mobile between kindergarten and 12th grade were less likely to complete high school on time, had lower overall educational attainment, had lower levels of occupational prestige in their jobs, experienced more symptoms of depression, and were more likely to be arrested as an adult. Furthermore, students who move frequently

(six or more times by the age of 18) were 50-100% more likely to have a delay in growth or development, to have a learning disability, to have repeated a grade, or to have more frequent behavior problems (Rumberger & Larson, 1998).

Changing schools can make it difficult for students to succeed academically. This success is defined by reading on grade level and passing standardized tests. Moving to a new school can cause lower engagement, more unsatisfactory grades in reading and math, and a higher risk of dropping out of high school (Rumberger, 2015; South et al., 2005). The severity of a move can vary depending on a child's age or stage of development, family circumstances, and other risk and cultural factors (Rumberger, 2015). According to Gruman et al. (2008), schools predict classroom participation and academic performance declines when students change in elementary school. Achievement is affected by multiple factors: frequency of moves, the timing of the movement, nature of school change, grade, previous history of mobility, the reason for mobility, and personal and family characteristics (Rumberger, 2015; Temple & Reynolds, 1999). Academic achievement is most impacted when a school change occurs during kindergarten through the third grade (Temple & Reynolds, 1999).

Mobile students are more likely to repeat a grade, and student mobility is associated with decreased reading and math for each additional move (Temple & Reynolds, 1999). Kerbow (1996) identified the impact of a single school change compared to multiple school changes. His research discovered that children who moved once had gaps in the learning of about four months during the move year, and students who moved four or more times were a full year behind their stable peers by the time they entered middle school. Rumberger (2015) reported that even one nonpromotional move,

defined as school change during the school year, can reduce elementary reading and math achievement and increase dropout rates. Additionally, each school movement causes students to lose about three months of reading and math progress (Sparks, 2016). About 12% of kindergarteners who changed schools were retained compared to 4% of non-mobile peers (Burkam et al., 2009). Previous studies have shown that mobile students score significantly lower on standardized achievement tests than stable students with similar backgrounds (Rumberger, 2003; Temple & Reynolds, 1999).

Each school change can disrupt student learning and lead to knowledge gaps (Fisher et al., 2002). Friedman-Krauss & Raver (2015) studied 381 low-income, predominately ethnic students and found that mobility is more complicated for younger elementary students who changed schools at least once from kindergarten to fourth grade. The subjects in this study scored lower on the state standardized math test and the teacher observations of the student's critical thinking. It is important to note that some academic concerns may not only be connected to mobility. Since students frequently perform poorly before a move because they are disproportionately low-income and part of a minority group, which is often an indicator of being at risk. Therefore, students are challenged academically for many reasons, not just because they often move (Alexander et al., 1996).

As evidenced by the research, mobility creates many consequences for students. The following sections explore the impact of mobility on schools and teachers, respectively.

Impact on Schools

As noted in the previous section, mobility can impact students. However, the schools that serve mobile students can also be negatively impacted. Fantuzzo et al. (2014) found that a high concentration of mobile students is associated with lower school-wide reading levels and attendance rates. High student turnover can disrupt the curriculum and routines, reducing educational success and potentially increasing the need for grade retention the following year for all students (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). Additionally, schools with a high mobility rate tend to have lower overall test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance (Rumberger, 2015; South et al., 2005).

Rhodes (2005) collected data from over 500 schools to identify mobility's impact on accountability ratings. Rhodes examined race, socioeconomic status, and school size to determine if there is a significant correlation between school mobility and the overall school ranking category. The researcher also examined the ability to predict school ratings based on mobility rate and questioned: if such relationships exist, how does that significance compare to the effects of ethnicity and socioeconomic status? Rhodes (2005) found that mobility is highly correlated with school ratings. In fact, race, socioeconomic status, and school enrollment size significantly impact school success, though not as much as mobility. Rhodes' study is unique because it defined the complex links between school mobility, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Mobility can also negatively impact the classroom teachers of transient students. When a student moves into a new class, there can be disruptions to the class and learning. As Grant et al. (2008) explained, these disruptions may negatively impact teacher morale because when a new student joins a class, teachers must reteach or backtrack instruction

to catch up the new student with the missed content. Such teachers often must spend extra time catching the student up to the group or repeating the content of the lessons already in progress and maintaining continuity in learning for both the new students and the existing class (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990; Rhodes, 2005). This practice uses valuable class time that can slow the progress of the rest of the class.

Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) further explained that new students become part of a class that has already built a history, including a sense of purpose, a collective understanding of the rules and routines that govern activities, and a shared knowledgebase acquired from previous learning and required for subsequent learning. Teachers In Lash and Kirkpatrick's (1990) study of mobility's impacts on the classroom indicated that behavior management is a concern because new students can disrupt the classroom because they are unfamiliar with established rules and routines. The teachers also reported that student mobility affects the classroom climate by “creating a sense of impermanence, restlessness, and constant change and upheaval” (p. 186). Teachers also stated that mobile students often appear in their classrooms unannounced and require immediate attention.

Lash & Kirkpatrick (1990) further noted that teachers associate high student mobility with the extra work necessary to acclimate new students to the existing classroom. These interventions can cause teachers to feel overburdened and potentially affect their attitudes toward mobile students and their families, a finding affirmed more recently by Sorin & Iloste (2006).

Social Consequences

The academic consequences of student mobility are often more recognizable to school staff and parents than the social consequences of mobility. However, there can be severe and detrimental social impacts when students change schools. For example, moves can disrupt and weaken peer relationships, lower social ties, decrease school attachments, lower school engagement, and increase the risk of underachievement (Welsh, 2017). When a change of residency occurs, social relationships rupture, and students lose their social support networks (Coleman, 1988; Kerbow, 1996). South et al. (2005) asserted that when students move "to a new school or community, it severs social relationships that bind parents, children, teachers, and other community adults, thus diminishing children's social capital" (p. 70). Although moves are associated with declines in social capital, higher levels of social capital buffer the negative effect of moving on test scores and educational attainment goals (Gruman et al., 2008). Moving can harm a typical child and adolescent development by disrupting relationships with peers and teachers and altering a student's educational program (Rumberger, 2015). The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2010) explained the impact of mobility from a developmental perspective as follows:

Children's body function, brain development, and capacities for dealing with stress and behavior over time, and these variations may make them more or less vulnerable to being able to withstand the effects of mobility. Parents and children may perceive and manage a move differently depending on the child's developmental stage. Disruptions in this development can have a snowball effect, which explains how mobility can potentially harm children. Specifically, mobility

(particularly repeated mobility) can disrupt children's routines, the consistency of their care and health care, and their relationships, as well as learning routines, relationships with teachers and peers, and the curriculum to which they are exposed. (p. 7)

Mobile students often have difficulties making new friends, building relationships with their teachers, and adjusting socially to a new school (Rumberger et al., 1999). Gruman et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal study and found that mobile students were more likely to develop antisocial behaviors, less likely to get involved with others and avoid classmates. These repercussions are connected to not being acclimated to curriculum changes and the school environment, and mobile students tend to have lower school attachment levels (Alexander et al., 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990; South et al., 2005).

Mobile students tend to be less socially engaged with their schools and participate in fewer extracurricular activities (South et al., 2005). Hendershott (1989) found that mobility negatively affects children's sense of mastery over their environment, self-esteem, self-denigration, and depression. These students tend to be less committed to and dissatisfied with their new school (South et al., 2005). Mobile students will likely find peer groups whose members are not academically successful when changing schools (South et al., 2005). The reasons to address the negative impacts of mobility are evident for students to be socially successful at school.

Even though changing schools has many detrimental effects, enrolling in a new school can also have positive effects. For example, more student success will likely occur if the move increases social support from family and peer groups. Social support from

peers and family appears to be powerful moderators of outcomes for mobile students (Gruman et al., 2008).

When students transfer, and there is a positive result, social capital can also be gained (Cordes et al., 2019). For example, if the parents move closer to family or have a more robust support network at the new school, this results in a gain in social capital. A positive impact can also occur if a student moves to a school that is a better educational fit for them, is safer, or is a higher-quality school. It is also advantageous when students move to a new school and form friendships with academically successful peers (Welsh, 2017).

School mobility is a way of life for military families. Most students will move about six to nine times in their school career (United Service Organizations, n.d.). However, despite being highly mobile, students from military families do not experience the same heightened risks as mobile students from non-military families (Popp et al., 2011). Burnette (2017) concluded, "Schools that the Department of Defense Educational Activity run outperforms civilian students, and those schools are better at closing the achievement gaps between Black and White students" (p. 3). When military students move to a new school, they have support that includes a consistent set of guidelines that help them enroll in a school, help in joining extracurricular activities, and ensure that graduation requirements are known. Additional provisions that are afforded to military families include: children can continue in their current class year, even if the new school has a different age requirement, and students must be placed in the same program if they have an equivalent course (i.e., A.P. classes), children of deployed parents can continue

to attend their school, and completed courses can be waived if a student has already completed a required for graduation (Burnette, 2017).

The United States Army's *Secondary Education Transition Study* (2001) shares protective factors that the U.S. military implements to protect mobile students. In the *Secondary Education Transition Study*, steps are described that put systems in place to help ensure that new students succeed in their school. For example, the students are checked on two weeks after arrival and four to six weeks later. Students can ask questions during these meetings and obtain information about their needs. Military families have support that helps ensure students succeed when they change schools.

There are positive and negative social impacts when students enroll in new schools. Welsh (2017) noted, "Changing school is a disruptive event that results in dislocation in social environments and school organizations" (p. 490). While a move may have positive aspects, students will have short-term costs that impact their psychological well-being, affecting academic success.

Interventions for Mobile Students

Student mobility is a multi-layered problem caused by underlying economic and social issues. Although schools may be unable to curtail student moves, schools must acknowledge that mobile students have unique needs and intentionally create interventions to support these learners. The interventions for supporting mobile students should promote the positive aspects of mobility and reduce the negative impacts of mobility (Rumberger, 2015).

Programs should include structured support for students' emotional, social, and academic needs (Welch, 2017). Often, student mobility results from family instability

(such as eviction, divorce, job loss, or incarceration). Therefore, school leaders should make schools more stable for students (Sparks, 2016). For example, students will benefit when a school system enforces policies to remain in their current school despite making a residential move (Cordes et al., 2019). Additionally, because mobility causes instability and unpredictability in a student's life, it is beneficial for the school to construct stability and predictability with specific interventions (Gruman et al., 2008; Dinnen et al., 2020). Specific interventions provided by schools can positively support mobile students if implemented with fidelity. The interventions can be academic, social, or procedural.

Academic Interventions

Rumberger (2015) stated that since mobility rates are increasing and school mobility can negatively affect academic success, the school must provide educational interventions to support students when students enroll in a new school. There needs to be a careful assessment of academic strengths (Gruman et al., 2008).

School-Level Interventions. Rumberger (2003) suggested that schools create an evaluation to determine educational needs because it is crucial to assess students' needs quickly to begin remediation immediately (Fisher et al., 2002). When students change schools unless they move within the same school district, they are often not learning the same material, so there are learning gaps implementing targeted intensive interventions to close as many learning gaps as possible (Rumberger, 2015).

Potter et al. (2021) also suggest that schools develop an onboarding program that helps assess students' academic needs and needs for supportive services and helps acclimate the students into the school culture. Systemic interventions have proved to be

effective—for example, having a curriculum resource teacher (and hiring a coach to work with mobile students (Fisher et al., 2002).

Smith et al. (2008) suggest schools create a coordinated assessment plan for every mobile student. When creating a joint assessment plan, the school should consider the following questions: What reliable and valid assessment tools are already in place? Where do we need to implement new assessment tools? Who needs training on the different assessment tools? When will the initial and ongoing professional development occur? What is the most effective and efficient way to manage student assessment data and create valuable reports? How will the data be disseminated and used? Teams should meet monthly to assess progress and adjust the grouping based on the assessment. Schools should increase the amount of instructional time, decrease group size, and use instructional programs designed to catch students up to grade-level expectations (Smith et al., 2008).

Classroom-Level Interventions. Although most teachers have not had explicit training on working with mobile students, it is essential for teachers to support these learners when the learners join the teachers' classes. Rasmussen (1988) concluded that 75% of teachers surveyed had no specialized training to meet the needs of mobile students. Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) suggested that teacher training programs should include information about how to best meet the needs of mobile students. One way to acclimate new students is to quickly assess what the students know and what gaps they have in their learning (Grant et al., 2008). Specifically, interventions at the classroom level should include small group instruction because it allows teachers to effectively address gaps in learning for their mobile students (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). The groups

should be flexible to the different learning rates of students. Academic interventions should be specific and purposeful to support the gaps that regularly accompany frequent school changes (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990).

Grant et al. (2008) asserted that it is crucial for teachers of at-risk/mobile students to have elevated expectations for their learners and to ensure that the instruction is rigorous. It is also noted that teachers should have high expectations for themselves and use every minute of classroom time. Effective practices that encourage students to be engaged in learning are the most impactful for transient students. Some proven techniques that increase achievement are direct instruction, technology integration, hands-on activities, and cooperative groups (Grant et al., 2008).

There are additional supports that teachers can implement to ensure that their new students are successful as they join their classes. Some examples of these supports are reading the student's records and background information, standing near the new student to make sure they are on track, observing students for signs of struggle, and providing tutoring to address learning gaps (Rumberger, 2003).

Social Interventions

Mobile students are more successful when schools include specific social interventions to support them. The interventions can be implemented at the school level and classroom level.

School-Level Social Interventions. Schools can provide a sense of community for students (Han, 2014). A positive school climate characterized by safety, caring student-teacher relationships, and opportunities for school engagement have been found to reduce the risk of poor school performance among high school students, including students

experiencing homelessness (O'Malley et al., 2015). Protective factors, like positive school culture or strong school relationships, can benefit mobile students. O'Malley et al. (2015) suggested that these protective factors can "bolster the outcomes of youth who are identified as at-risk, thereby decreasing the outcome gaps between them and their peers" (p. 1).

School leaders can support mobility by providing interventions that build a sense of community between families and schools (Welch, 2017). This support should encourage building relationships, sharing specific information about the school, and connecting families to community resources (Fisher et al., 2002; Sorin & Iloste, 2006). Kerbow (1996) posited that schools "may have to take on increased responsibility to strengthen social links among parents and the school itself, working actively to develop relationships" (p. 28). This type of social connection is especially vital for homeless mobile students because homeless children often suffer from social and psychological isolation because of a lack of supportive social relationships (Rumberger, 2015).

Some interventions suggested in the research to support students at the school level are to have a planned orientation for newcomers, assign peer ambassadors to students, and set up welcome classrooms to facilitate the assessment of the student and help to acclimate to the school (Fisher et al., 2002; Gruman et al., 2008; Welch, 2017). Schools should explicitly state the negative impacts of changing schools to parents who may not be aware of the repercussions of frequent moves (Welsh, 2017).

Scherrer (2013) suggested that schools should attempt to mitigate the harmful effects of mobility and improve transitions by planning materials and activities for mobile students before they arrive. Additional support can include providing families with basic

needs (such as a food or clothing bank) to prevent further moves (Fisher et al., 2002). Fisher et al. (2002) suggested providing parents with GED, ESL, and computer classes. Schools can also help create partnerships with social service agencies to reduce student mobility by helping develop a sense of empowerment by assisting parents in negotiating with agencies. Additional suggestions to support the mobile family include family camps, social skills programs, and family counseling (Fisher et al., 2002).

Sanderson (2003) argued that districts should hire a transition specialist to assist with student mobility issues. The transitional specialist can help newly enrolled families with required enrollment paperwork, conduct tours for new parents and students, and conduct workshops to share the school rules, routines, and expected behaviors. The specialist can also provide monthly parent workshops that help build commitment to the new school and function as a faculty contact for parents.

Rumberger (2003) recommended these social interventions for students and families:

- Counsel students and families to remain at the school if possible.
- Make an orientation video about the school.
- Create information packets about extracurricular activities.
- Form a new-student group to meet at lunch.
- Make an appointment to meet with new students after two weeks.
- Ask staff to mentor a new student who has difficulties socially or academically.

The reasons to support this fragile population are routinely evident in the research, but more practical implementation steps are needed to be effective.

Classroom-Level Social Interventions. Teachers are the primary agents for implementing social interventions for mobile students. However, little research shows the importance of positive teacher interactions for mobile students. Effective teachers of mobile students can positively impact their students, so they must be fair, respectful, enthusiastic, and motivating, have a positive attitude toward teaching, and be reflective practitioners (Grant et al., 2008). Teachers can and should implement interventions in the classroom to encourage building new social relationships. One way to support new students is to assign a friend to help orient them to the class and the school. The friend can explain class rules and procedures and show the location of the restrooms, cafeteria, and library (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990).

Teachers should also positively interact with their student and their family to understand the family's issues (Grant et al., 2008). This relationship will help the parent and the child feel more connected to the school and hopefully reduce the likelihood of another school change (Kerbow, 1996).

School Connectedness

Researchers routinely indicated that mobility negatively impacts students academically and socially. This negative impact could be that mobile students often have missed initially bonding with teachers, classmates, and the general school community (Beck et al., 1997). Therefore, it is essential to identify school- and classroom-level interventions to encourage school connectedness for mobile students. When students feel connected to their school, it can help lessen the impact of mobility. School connectedness is defined as a belief of students that the adults in their school care about their learning and themselves as individuals (Wingspread Declaration on School Connections, 2004).

School connectedness also includes how connected students feel about their peers, teachers, and school (Scherrer, 2013). Dinnen et al. (2020) described school connectedness as "having positive interactions with teachers and administrators and a feeling of belongingness within one's school" (p. 1866). Students with school connectedness and social competence tend to have fewer emotional problems and more substantial academic success, despite being highly transient because of their sense of affiliation and community (Dinnen et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2002). Students exhibit more socially competent behavior when they have school connectedness and appear to have a protective effect against emotional distress, suicidal thoughts and behavior, violence, substance abuse, and the age of sexual debut. Substantial school connectedness can improve physical health and graduation rates (Resnick et al., 1997).

School-Level Connectedness. Schools can implement protective factors that encourage school connectedness and positively influence at-risk youth development by moderating the negative impact of risk factors (Sameroff, 2010). Schools can promote connectedness by creating positive teacher-student relationships, encouraging student engagement in school activities, and creating a positive culture (Dinnen et al., 2020). School leaders should model behavior, demonstrating that the school is responsible for working with every child enrolled (Rhodes, 2005). These efforts aim to create happy students so their parents will have a greater incentive to leave them at school (Educational Research Service, 2003). Rumberger (2015) recommended that school officials strive to reduce student mobility by improving the "school's overall quality because it is in the best interest of both students and schools to understand the potential implications and ensure that the mobile students, and their families, are supported and

encouraged to remain on their home campus. Failure does not endear parents or students to a school (Rhodes, 2005).

Fisher et al. (2002) conducted a qualitative study of 179 principals in the United States to examine school personnels' perceptions of school programs and interventions available to help mitigate the adverse effects of mobility. An interview protocol was used to guide data collection regarding working with mobile students and their families. The researchers identified five areas that schools could address to encourage school connectedness: providing basic family needs, educational/academic development, personal development of students, strengthening family bonds, and community building between families and schools. The school employees in the study reported that they could create family support by increasing the connectedness of the family to the school. The school also connected the mobile families to community resources that helped address the family's needs. The community resources included health services, counseling, food, and clothing. The report also mentioned that schools could create programs for parents to help them increase their employability by creating GED, ESL, and computer training for parents. These intervention efforts could increase the connection between the school and the families and reduce the likelihood of moving to a new school. Rhodes (2005) asserted that mobile students do not require a specific identification method but must enroll in a school that will care about them.

Most of the research on school connectedness addressed the impact on White, middle-class schools and students. However, the studies examining connectedness by ethnicity found that African American and Hispanic students feel less connected to a school than White students (McNeely et al., 2002). This fact implies that it is essential for

school leaders to increase school connectedness because mobile students tend to be African American and Hispanic (Rumberger, 2015).

Classroom-Level School Connectedness. Teacher support strongly influences positive attitudes toward school (Gruman et al., 2008). According to Rhodes (2005), teachers should be welcoming and have a positive tone and demeanor, not just be content specialists. Muller (2001) identified how caring relationships between teachers and students could affect math achievement by analyzing the perceptions of teachers' and students' relationships and then examining the perceptions' effects on students' math progress. When at-risk students perceive their teachers care about them, they benefit from the caring relationship. The researcher also discovered that the students are "particularly vulnerable to their teachers' opinions if their math achievement was barely at the passing level" (Muller, 2001, p. 13). The encouragement from their teachers helped influence their academic success in school.

Procedural Interventions

As described in the previous section, the adverse effects of mobility can be lessened when intentional methods are implemented to support students. Similarly, when schools implement procedural interventions, this action can help mobile students. For this study, *procedural interventions* are defined as procedures that can be implemented to reduce the likelihood of causing an adverse outcome in student academic and social success. This section discusses procedural interventions at the school, campus, district, and federal levels.

School-Level Procedural Interventions. Schools can benefit by implementing specific procedural interventions to meet mobile students' unique instructional and

affective needs. However, research shows that school leaders are often unprepared to help students and their parents (Wilkins et al., 2016). According to Rhodes (2005), districts and schools should aggressively attempt to reduce mobility to mitigate the adverse effects on academic accountability. To be prepared to meet these needs, teachers and administrators need the training to encompass knowledge of the curricula that teachers in other schools use, flexible instructional strategies, multiple methods of assessing students' learning needs, and the unique, challenging challenges facing mobile families (Fisher et al., 2002; Gruman et al., 2008; Rumberger, 2015). The before-mentioned training should provide teachers with guidance about the issues and rights of mobile students. A previous study of Title 1 teachers serving high numbers of students reported that 65%-75% of them had not received any training on instructional strategies to meet the needs of their mobile students. This same group of teachers indicated that 60%-84% would like additional training on teaching mobile students to support their students (Rasmussen, 1998).

One way to determine student needs is to designate a staff member to contact the previous school to gain information about student strengths, participation in particular programs, and attendance patterns (Sparks, 2016). Frequently, student records are unavailable from the previous school for several weeks; therefore, contacting the school will give the school a strategic plan to begin instruction.

Classroom-Level Procedural Interventions. Teachers in the field need specific procedures to implement when new students enroll. For example, teachers who have students move in and out of their classroom need classroom expectations, and rules reviewed several times yearly, not just at the beginning of the year (Grant et al., 2008).

Lash & Kirkpatrick (1990) suggested that teachers create portfolios for each student, including work samples. This portfolio can be sent to the new school when students enroll. This practice will provide valuable academic information for teachers to help assess student needs and strengths. It is suggested in mobility research that teacher preparation programs should include specific training on working with mobile student populations because of the frequency of mobility in the United States (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990).

District-Level Procedural Interventions. The HERC Mobility Study was used to identify student mobility patterns, and the researchers determined that mobile students stay in the same general area when changing residences. These areas are not always in the same school district but are close to each other (Potter et al., 2021). Kerbow (1996) also found that transfers occur within small geographic sub-systems in urban systems. Since students tend to move in the same areas, school districts should best work together to meet the mobile students' needs.

One procedural intervention to support mobile students more effectively is for schools to collaborate with networks to share crucial student academic information. This intervention would provide essential data to expedite specific educational interventions at the new school. Another suggestion describes the importance of developing a universal data-sharing form to acquire student information quickly to the receiving campus after registration (Dinnen et al., 2020; Potter et al., 2021). Staff can use this type of instrument as a concrete way to meet the needs of their transient students by knowing their previous academic performance and interventions. More innovative interventions, such as the data form, should be included to educate mobile or high-churn students (Potter et al., 2021).

Federal Policy Implementation

Homeless students, typically, are also highly mobile students; therefore, school leaders must be aware of the policies that protect this group of students and how to use them to support their mobile students. However, it is advantageous for school districts to have policies that support mobile students. Districts are limited in their ability to remedy the adverse effects of student mobility. Although mobility cannot be eliminated, broader social policies should be included to reduce student mobility. Kerbow (1996) suggested practices that minimize mobility and mitigate any harmful effects once it has occurred. Kerbow also believes that the school community can help to reduce student mobility.

McKinney-Vento Act

As stated, the number of homeless students is a severe problem in the United States. In response to this need, federal policies, such as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (1987 and 2001) and the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) (HUD Exchange, 2009) are designed to assist families so that they can remain in their current school to avoid changing schools if they are homeless (Pavlakis & Duffield, 2017). The McKinney-Vento Act (henceforth MVA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provide specific guidelines to safeguard mobile students (Burnette, 2017; Welsh, 2017). The McKinney-Vento Act, enacted in 1987, was the first federal policy to address homelessness. The primary purpose of the MVA is to address the needs of homeless people. This Act explicitly includes a plan to support homeless students by providing services to help lessen the barriers they experience and provide broad support for students experiencing homelessness (Pavlakis & Duffield, 2017).

Some of the specific protections defined in the MVA involve allowing students to stay at their school of origin (including providing transportation to the school of origin if needed), fast-tracking registration to allow parents to submit paperwork later, and providing liaisons to coordinate services (Canfield et al., 2012).

While the intent of the MVA policy is sound, the policy is not consistently implemented, thus causing students to be at a further disadvantage than students not identified as homeless (Wilkins et al., 2016). Even though the policy intends to serve many vulnerable students, there are definite gaps in disseminating knowledge about this Act and its implementation fidelity (Canfield et al., 2012). Cunningham (2014) stated, “Schools are where the McKinney-Vento policy turns into direct practice” (p. 222). There is a preponderance of research about the policy intention. Still, little research shows how effectively the policy is implemented and the public’s awareness of the protections provided in the Act. Presently, students are still under-identified, and there is a lack of funding at the state and district levels to implement the MVA’s scope fully. There is also a lack of coordination between liaisons, school-based professionals, service agencies, and families (Wilkins et al., 2016). Canfield et al. (2012) state that many district-level liaisons do not adequately understand the Act and, therefore, cannot fully implement the provisions as initially designed.

Cunningham (2014) conducted a study to identify how well the MVA was being implemented at local education agencies and concluded that most district homeless liaisons and campus principals were unaware of how the MVA should be implemented with fidelity. The district liaisons reported little to no supervision from the state to determine if the policy was being executed fully. This lack of inspection is related to the

underfunding of the program (Canfield et al., 2012). There seems to be a disconnect between the Act's intent and what is utilized at the campus level. Mitra (2017) asserted, "What happens after a policy is passed and how it makes its way into practice has proven to be as important as the quality of the legislation, if not more" (p. 107). To genuinely support the policy at the campus level, school-based leaders must know the opportunities and procedures to support mobile students.

As mentioned, student mobility is a complex problem with many underlying and overlapping antecedents. The many causes of mobility originate from issues outside of the school. However, policies created by government agencies can aid mobile families, such as housing laws and economic support, to improve parents' financial situation (Rumberger, 2015).

Theoretical Perspective-Operationalizing the Theory

Social capital theory explains how social ties provide capital that organizations exchange to enhance individuals' productive capacity (Coleman, 1988). The approach also emphasizes the importance of having social networks, such as information sharing, trust, and reciprocity. The collective value of all social networks and the benefits help people resolve individual and collective problems more easily (Putnam, 2000). The connections gained from an organization could be a business opportunity, a job opportunity, friendships, or create an atmosphere of trust and mutual obligation (Putnam, 2000).

There is not necessarily an agreed-upon definition of social capital; however, for this study, *social capital theory* is defined as a framework that helps to analyze and understand how and why capital accumulates within a social network (i.e., a school) to

support academic and social success. There are many benefits to having social capital, such as a sense of belonging, feeling safe, and having networks to belong to.

The following sections examine the origins of social capital theory, including critical developers of the theory, break down the tenets of social capital theory, and state how this theory applies to studying student mobility.

Tracing the Origins

Over the past few decades, social capital has been seen as a powerful concept in social science. Social capital theory originated in sociology but extended to education, economics, anthropology, business, and political science (Mikiewicz, 2021). Portes (2000) noted, “The concept of social capital is arguably one of the most successful exports from sociology to other social sciences and public discourse” (p.1). Significant influencers of social capital theory include Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam.

Pierre Bourdieu was the first researcher to elaborate extensively on social capital. According to Bourdieu, social capital is the total amount of all current and future resources gained from relationships in a social network. These relationships with others can help to achieve goals. Bourdieu (1986) asserted that social capital depends on having access to the resources that contacts have, the volume of social networks, and the number of connections that institutions possess.

James Coleman is also considered one of the initial theoretical developers of social capital theory. According to Coleman, *social capital* is “who you know, what they can do for you, and what you can do for them” (Welsh, 2017, p. 487). The family is the most impactful influence on children to gain social capital. However, social capital is also

generated outside the family from parents' social relationships (Coleman, 1988). The Coleman Report is considered the most critical study that identified the importance of social capital and families. This report determined that parents and the home environment are more influential for children than schools. According to this study, parents' roles and backgrounds are more important in school performance. Coleman's definition of social capital influenced the education study by identifying parents' roles in gaining social capital.

James Putnam, a political scientist, is considered one of the most important developers of social capital theory. Putnam (2000) posited that social capital is affected by parental involvement in the child's school and how much parents value education. According to Putnam (2000), social capital is the glue that holds communities together. Social capital allows communities to advance smoothly and is crucial to building and maintaining democracy. The social capital gained from community networks helps individuals and the community's interests. Putnam believed social capital creates a healthier, safer, and more developed society (Weaver, 2018). Putnam's book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* illustrated how civic engagement is determined by formal associations that can influence social well-being (Lee, 2014).

Social Capital Theory as Adapted in Education

People interact with others to recreate relationships, and these relationships create social capital for those involved (Boone, 2011). The relationships formed in a school with staff members create social capital for students. This connection paved the way for social capital theory to crossover into education. The community provides a resource for

children who need direct support and guidance. Caring people in schools help connect students with resources that will increase social capital for the students (Lee, 2014).

Educational success is also associated with parental and community involvement. So, it is reasonable to suggest that social capital can be created inside and outside the home and benefit students (Weaver, 2018). When a student has high academic expectations from adults in their lives, the student will conform to the group expectations from both parties (Lee, 2014).

Dika and Singh (2002) presented two significant reasons why social capital theory shifted into the educational field from sociology. One reason for the crossover was to explain the cause of children's unequal academic achievements. According to Bourdieu (1986), certain children, because of their socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, or gender, are better positioned to gain social capital when engaged in different networks of people. Coleman (1988) suggested that when there are more significant amounts of social capital, there is a diminished incidence of dropping out of school (Boone, 2011). Therefore, there is a positive link between social capital, school attainment, and school achievement (Dika & Singh, 2002).

The importance of having a regular and stable school experience is repeatedly mentioned in the research. Social capital theory provides a framework for studying the effects of mobility from not having a continuous school experience. This theory illustrates how individuals in a social network can connect to a group. Each member of a social network benefits from a reciprocal relationship with the other group members (Putnam, 2000). These social connections are significant for mobile students because

they lose their contacts when they move to a new school, and these connections support students.

The Tenets of Social Capital Theory: Bonding and Bridging

The two central tenets of social capital theory are bonding and bridging (Boone, 2011). These tenets can be exclusive or inclusive (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital is exclusive because it reinforces homogenous group identities and reinforces feelings of solidarity among group members (Boone, 2011). Bridging social capital looks inclusive because it includes people from diverse social, economic, political, and religious identities.

Putnam (2000) suggested that students have more social capital when there is a partnership between educators, parents, and the community. The amount of capital depends on the various levels of existing social capital combined with parental expectations, obligations, and social networks. In addition, school capital shapes child and youth development, and social capital increases if a school has a positive academic climate. Furthermore, networks that lead to social capital within children's families, schools, peer groups, and the community positively affect educational achievement and, consequently, students' behavior and development (Putnam, 2000).

Theory Application

Student mobility presents challenges for both students and schools. Chapter 2 presented an examination of the antecedents of student mobility, the consequences of mobility, interventions to support mobile students, and the importance of school connectedness for mobile students. The preponderance of research suggested that mobile students are more successful when they have social connections to their schools.

Therefore, using a social capital lens to examine mobility seemed appropriate. Using the data from observations, formal semi-structured interviews, and questionnaires, this researcher identified recurring themes using the *a priori* coding method. The predetermined codes provided overarching themes that show evidence of whether school leaders are prepared to meet the needs of the mobile students in their schools.

Trying to reduce the impact of student mobility is a highly complex task; however, this study intended to provide a clear understanding of the effects of mobility and what school leaders can do to help alleviate these effects. Finally, this research study adds to the literature by suggesting that educational leaders can impact academic achievement and identify interventions that may enhance the school experience for mobile students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

In this study, I aimed to identify and extract the best practices of principals and teachers who lead schools with mobile populations greater than the state average and that of the site district. The study's purpose also aimed to identify what support these principals and teachers provide to mobile students. Data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with four principals from a large school district in southeast Texas and 13 teachers from the four schools. The four schools had a student mobility rate higher than the state and district levels. The specific research questions that guided the study are as follows:

RQ1: What programs, formal or otherwise (if any), are utilized by principals of mobile schools to impact school connectedness?

RQ2: What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile students?

RQ3: What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their mobile classrooms?

Research methodology, research setting, participant selection, data collection and analysis, and provisions for validity and trustworthiness are all covered in this chapter, which provides a comprehensive review of the methods and processes employed in the study.

Methodological Approach

To address the study's research questions most effectively, I determined that a qualitative study would be the most appropriate methodology. Qualitative research aims to answer questions about the importance of evaluating people's lives, the social situations they find themselves in, and their related feelings (Fossey et al., 2002). Qualitative research techniques frequently include vivid descriptions of behavior in its natural setting and the collection of open-ended, emerging data that aids in developing themes, focuses on the participant's point of view, and identifies overarching trends (Campbell, 2014; McMillan, 2000). These characteristics of qualitative research provide a method to extract what school leaders and teachers do on their campuses to increase school connectedness.

Case study research was specifically chosen as the study's research methodology because it allows for an in-depth examination of a phenomenon (integration of multicultural literacy) in its real-life environment (classroom setting), which represents the perspectives of the individuals involved in the phenomenon being studied (Yin, 2014). Additionally, case study research best investigates a specific, real-life incident. Case study relies on numerous sources of evidence that contribute credible data; for example, monitoring and interviewing participants would ensure authentic viewpoints and complete, sophisticated data collecting (Yin, 2014).

Research Setting

My chosen research setting was a large school district in southeast Texas. The district has more than 90 schools and serves over 100,000 students. The racial demographics of the district are 22.7% White, 19.3% Black, 9.5% Asian or Asian/Pacific

Islander, 44.7% Hispanic/Latino, 0.8% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The district demographics roughly approximate those of the state: 26% White, 12.8% Black, 5.0% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 52.7% Hispanic/Latino, .3% American Indian or Alaska Native, and .2% Pacific Islander. District ABC's academic performance is consistently higher than the state average. Accordingly, the researched district is currently rated as an "A" by the Texas Education Agency.

I chose this district because its demographics align with state student demographics. Therefore, the district in southeast Texas that has been selected for research provided an instructive model to examine student mobility trends. Further, the community included multiple schools with mobility rates significantly higher than the average for the state (13.8%) and ranging from 16.9% to 22.9% mobility. As a result, these specific campuses meet this study's definition of a campus with an above-average number of mobile students; therefore, it is a fit for my research.

Participants

I used a purposive sampling strategy to select participants for my study because I wanted to choose elementary school principals and teachers who fit specific demographics. According to Welman and Kruger (1999), Purposive sampling is the most critical type of non-probability sampling. This type of sampling is focused, and participants are chosen based on specific criteria related to the research's purpose. To determine the study participants, I first identified the average state mobility rate as 13% and the district mobility rate as 10% (Texas Education Agency, 2021). I sorted the individual schools using their mobility rates from high to low and selected the top four

schools with the highest mobility rates in the researched district. The schools' mobility rates range from 22.9% to 16.9% (see Table 1).

It has been suggested that a minimum sample size of 12 be used in qualitative studies to achieve data saturation (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fugard & Potts, 2015; Guest et al., 2006). As a result, a sample size of 17 was determined to be sufficient to meet this study's qualitative analysis and scale.

I explained the informed consent agreement (See Appendix A) form with each potential participant. The goal of the research, methods, risks, and advantages of participating in the study, assurance that participating is voluntary, and a list of procedures to preserve the participant's right to privacy will all be included in the consent agreement.

Data

I conducted one semi-structured, one-on-one interview with each principal participant and one teacher focus group with each of the four campuses. Each subject's name will be paired with a pseudonym on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the pseudonym was kept separate from these materials. Each interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. I conducted these interviews via Microsoft Teams and asked permission to audio record the session to use later for analysis, as Teams has a built-in transcription function. I carefully reviewed transcript drafts while listening to each interview multiple times to ensure accuracy, (re)capture the whole interaction, and not revisit essential details, all while taking notes. The interview protocol included questions that helped to answer the research questions of what programs, formal or otherwise, are utilized by mobile school principals to impact students' school

connectedness, what supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile students, and what supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their mobile classrooms. To ensure the questions were relevant and aligned with the study's purpose, I tested the protocol via a pilot interview with another elementary district principal before the study began.

I should clarify that I am an employee of the district in southeast Texas that has been selected for research. More specifically, I am a principal of an elementary mobile school. Because I was familiar with all potential study benefits and am the principal of a school with a very transient student body, I took steps to limit the influence of my biases and experiences. According to Miller and Crabtree (1992, p. 24), to conduct effective research, one "must bracket" their preconceptions and enter the participant's lifeworld, employing the self as an "experienced" interpreter. My intent with including bracketing was to ensure that the data collected from the interviews is valid and does not include any bias from my experiences as a principal of an above-average mobile campus. During the interviews, I refrained from adding information based on my experiences with a similar mobility rate as a principal. I asked all protocol questions similarly and used the exact wording with each study participant.

Technique

I used *a priori* codes to identify keywords that represent school connectedness. These included all variations of the words: *connection*, *preparedness*, *training*, *support*, and *relationships*. These keywords were included because they relate to how schools and teachers support mobile students. During each interview, I recorded and took notes for analysis. According to Saldaña (2016), an analytic memo is a "note to file" and a "brain

dump” that can contain information on the investigated participant, phenomena, or process (p. 59). The memos allowed me to record reflections, assisted in drafting clarifying follow-up questions, and provided specifics regarding the phenomenon described by research participants. Birks et al. (2008) proposed that memoing can assist researchers in making conceptual jumps from raw data to those abstractions that explain the observed phenomenon. I utilized a three-step inductive analysis process, including the data’s organization, description, and interpretation (Parsons & Brown, 2002). The data was first coded with the a priori codes that included variations of the words: *connection*, *preparedness*, *training*, *support*, and *relationships*. Categories were then created by examining the initial codes. The data was sorted and categorized to identify themes and patterns that surfaced during the interview. I searched the transcripts for recurring themes and phrases to generalize the findings. Finally, the themes emerged based on data included in the transcripts.

I utilized member checking after the first interview by sending the transcripts to each of the principals to check for the accuracy of the interview. Member checking can be defined as a research analysis method used to help verify the accuracy, completeness, and consistency of the data presented to check the validity of coding and themes (Jackson et al., 2007).

Analysis

To begin my analysis, I reread the interview data from the participant interviews and checked for accuracy between the audio recording and transcripts. I used quotes from the participants for coding to reduce research bias. Bias can be reduced by identifying codes based on quotations from the subject rather than summarized statements that I can

create (Citation). My position as principal was minimized with participant quotes from the transcripts.

Validity

To confirm the accuracy of my data, I included information gathered from semi-structured interviews with principals and information from teacher focus groups. I had principal participants review their transcripts for accuracy. Including three data sources improves the comprehension of the phenomenon of working with mobile students and ensures the data's reliability and triangulation.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed overview of the methodology and procedures utilized in this qualitative study. This study aimed to determine what kinds of formal or informal programs the principals and teachers at mobile schools used to influence students' feelings of connectedness to their schools. In the next chapter, I will share the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Data and Findings

This multi-site case study aimed to discover and extract the lived experiences and practices of educators who work at schools with a mobile population beyond the state mean of 10% (Texas Education Agency, 2021). Since schools can provide interventions to reduce the adverse effects of mobility, the results gathered from principal interviews and teacher focus groups could help to support mobile students. The three research questions that guided this study were:

1. What programs, formal or otherwise, if any, are utilized by principals of mobile schools to impact school connectedness?
2. What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile classrooms?
3. What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their mobile classrooms?

The remainder of this chapter includes a description of the participants and sampling process, a review of the analysis procedures, and a full presentation of findings.

Participants

In this section, I identify the groups of participants, describe their recruitment criteria, then provide profiles of each individual. As explained in Chapter 3, this study's target population included four elementary school principals and 13 teachers employed at the four most mobile campuses in the studied district. Of the 17 participants, two were male, and 15 were female (see Table A). Twelve participants were university certified,

and five were alternatively certified. The ages of the participants ranged from 25 to 57, and the years in education went from two to 34 years (see Tables A and B).

Recruitment

During the first stage of the research project, I gathered participant permission through a recruiting email (see appendices C and D). I used purposeful sampling to give extensive and comprehensive information on the experiences of elementary school principals and teachers who worked at highly mobile schools. I selected participants by reviewing mobility rates from the TAPR report from TEA. Then I emailed the principals of the four most mobile district campuses to clarify the study, and all four participants filled out the necessary consent forms. I then scheduled interviews after receiving consent. Then I requested that each principal participant email all teachers on their campus ascertain their interest in participating in the study.

Principal Participants

Four principals participated in the interviews for this study. Each principal was interviewed separately on Microsoft Teams. The principal group consisted of three females and one male. The total years of experience in education ranged from 19 to 24 years, and all principals have been in their current roles for less than ten years. The details of the principal cohort can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1*Principal Participant Data*

School	Pseudonym	Age	Years of Service	Certification	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Title I Experience	School Mobility Rate
A	Carlos	46	19	Alternative	Male	Hispanic	Yes	22.9%
B	Paige	57	34	Traditional	Female	White	Yes	18.5%
C	Tonya	46	23	Traditional	Female	African American	Yes	20.6%
D	Bella	51	27	Alternative	Female	White	Yes	21.5%

Carlos, the principal of School A, is a Hispanic male under age 50 who obtained his alternative teaching certification after completing a bachelor's degree in computer systems engineering. After four years as a bilingual certified teacher, he became an assistant principal at the same charter school. After leaving the charter system, Carlos became an assistant principal at a public elementary school. He has served in the principalship for seven years and has experience in only Title I schools.

Paige, the principal of School B, is an under-60-year-old White woman who obtained her teaching certification through a traditional university-based program. Before relocating to Texas, she taught music and art for 10 years at a private school in another state. She has been a teacher, assistant principal, and principal at two schools in the selected district. Her experience includes both Title I and non-Title I schools. She has been a principal for seven years.

Tonya, the principal of School C, is an African American woman under age 50 and in her seventh year as an elementary principal. She earned teacher certification with

her university degree and has worked primarily on Title I campuses. When she applied for the principalship, she wanted to lead a Title 1 school because that was her passion. Her 23 years of teaching experience have all been in the district under study.

Bella, the principal of School D, is a 50-year-old White woman who obtained her teaching certification alternatively. She worked in the mutual fund industry for several years before running a home daycare. After working with children in her home, she decided to pursue her teaching degree alternatively. Most of Bella's teaching career has been in Title I schools. However, she was an assistant principal at a non-Title I school before becoming principal at her current campus, which receives Title 1 funding.

Teacher Participants

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the teacher participant demographics, demonstrating that all educators have had experience working in a Title I school. Additionally, the table indicates that 77% of the teacher participants obtained their teacher certification through traditional methods. A total of 12 teachers participated in the study, and there were teacher focus groups from each of the four campuses. The focus groups from each campus participated in group Microsoft Teams meeting with their perspective campuses, except for Piper from school C. Piper was interviewed separately because of the difficulty in finding a time to meet with her school focus group. The details about the teacher cohort can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2*Teacher Participants*

School	Pseudonym	Age	Years of Service	Certification	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Title 1 Experience
A	Carol	54	21	Traditional	Female	White	Yes
A	Sasha	57	24	ACP	Female	African American	Yes
A	Cruz	28	4	Traditional	Male	Hispanic	Yes
B	Penny	43	18	Traditional	Female	Hispanic	Yes
B	Diana	37	6	ACP	Female	White	Yes
B	Micah	27	4	Traditional	Female	White	Yes
C	Meredith	26	4	Traditional	Female	White	Yes
C	Gracie	25	2	Traditional	Female	African American	Yes
D	Piper	52	19	Traditional	Female	African American	Yes
D	Phoebe	31	5	ACP	Female	White	Yes
D	Elizabeth	31	5	ACP	Female	White	Yes
D	Shelby	25	4	Traditional	Female	Hispanic	Yes

Teacher Focus Group A

Three teachers from School A took part in the research. There were one male and two females in Focus Group A. The group comprised one African American, Hispanic, and White educator. The participants ranged in age from 28 to 57 years, and their years of experience went from four to 24 years. The teachers taught either third or fourth grades during the spring semester of the 2022-2023 school year.

Teacher Focus Group B

Three teachers from School B participated in the Focus Group B interview for this research study. Focus Group B consisted of three females, two of whom were White and one who was Hispanic. The group members ranged in age from 27-43 years, and their years of educational experience went from four to 18. The teachers taught fourth or fifth grade during the 2022-2023 school year.

Teacher Focus Group C

Three female teachers from School C represented Focus Group C. Two were African American, and the other was White. Two teachers are in their first years of teaching and have only worked on the surveyed campus. All three obtained their teacher certification through the traditional method and taught in grades 1, 4, and 5.

Teacher Focus Group D

Four teachers from School D participated in Focus Group D. The teachers' years of experience ranged from 4 to 22 years, and the ages of the group went from 25 to 49 years. All teachers were female, two were Hispanic, and two were White. The four educators taught third or fourth grade during the 2022-2023 school year.

Data Analysis

I used a qualitative research approach to investigate the research questions. I also conducted semi-structured interviews and focus groups to collect data and link it with the study goals. During the data collection process, I kept an open mind to reduce bias and thoroughly investigate all responses. I evaluated the data and responses as participants provided them to ensure that other participants' responses did not influence their original answers. I give greater details on these processes in this section.

I incorporated Saldaña's (2016) idea of analytic memoing in this study. The memos let me capture my thoughts and include crucial phrases or quotes from the participants' responses. I used a three-step inductive analytical approach, including organizing, describing, and interpreting the data (Parsons & Brown, 2002). I planned to use Dedoose software to code the transcripts and search for themes. However, as I began to evaluate the transcripts, I discovered that hand-coding the data rather than using the software was more efficient. Since this hand-coding process required me to study the transcripts multiple times, I had many opportunities to become familiar with the replies.

The semi-structured interviews allowed participants to respond to questions correlating with the study questions. The participant interviews utilized identical interview questions for each person or focus group (Appendix A) while remaining flexible enough to enable participants to explain and comment on their experiences working with mobile students and their families. When participants did not offer information related to the issue or did not answer the question, I employed probing questions. I conducted all interviews on Microsoft Teams, and each participant was allowed to choose a date and time that accommodated their schedules. Before beginning

each interview, I reminded the participants that participation in the study was entirely optional and that each participant could leave the study at any moment without penalty. In addition, I reassured each participant of confidentiality and reminded them that their identity and responses would remain anonymous.

Once the transcripts of the interviews were finished and recorded, I saved the data on my computer in a password-protected file. I emailed the transcripts back to each principal participant so they could review them. This step provided member checking for accuracy. Member checking is necessary to guarantee genuine and accurate replies and ensure credibility. According to Jackson et al. (2007), member checking is a research analysis technique used to evaluate the data's correctness, consistency, and completeness to ensure that the coding and themes are trustworthy. The words of the participants addressing their experiences working with mobile students served as data units for this study. Their words, phrases, and sentences were used as descriptive codes for analyzing the interview data to describe, summarize, and extract emergent trends.

Organizing

My original plan was to use *a priori* codes to identify keywords representing school connectedness, such as *connection*, *preparedness*, *training*, *support*, and *relationships*. I selected these keywords because they relate to how schools and teachers support mobile students. As I read the transcripts, it became evident that I needed to combine some of the original keywords because of the overlap in concepts. The interview responses showed that these terms were used interchangeably to reference the same phenomenon. I combined *relationships* and *connections* into one code and *preparedness* and *training* into another. Other key concepts appeared, such as *processes for mobile*

students, challenges to the school and teachers, and ideas for future implementation.

These themes and subthemes are directly related to the three research questions of this study and will be examined later in this chapter.

Describing

I thoroughly evaluated and hand-coded the data to find common patterns and themes in the interview responses. I subsequently categorized the identified data, created a descriptive coding list, and separated it into three main theme groups and nine subthemes (see Table 3).

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Processes for Support	A. Formal Support, School Level B. Informal Support, School Level C. Formal and Informal Support, Classroom Level
2. Connections	A. School-wide Connections for Students B. School-wide Connections for Families C. Classroom Connections for Students
3. Challenges	A. Challenges for Schools B. Challenges for Students C. Challenges for Teachers

Interpreting

After determining the themes and subthemes, I used pattern coding to interpret and summarize the data. According to Miles and Huberman (2020), pattern coding provides a way to condense substantial amounts of data into themes, helps identify causes and explanations in the data, and examines patterns of human relationships. After reviewing the recordings and transcripts several times, I could see the similarities in the responses from the participants. This allowed me to see patterns and themes in the data. In the next section, I will present the three themes that emerged from the interview data.

Themes

The first theme, *processes for support*, shows how students can be supported formally and informally at the school and classroom levels. This support can be academic or social, benefiting mobile students and their families. These supports are implemented intentionally to help to mitigate many of the negative effects of changing schools. The second theme, *connections*, delineates how schools can help mobile students and their families feel more connected to the school. As stated previously, school connectedness can provide support to help students to be more successful academically and socially. The third theme, *challenges*, describes the challenges that schools, teachers, and students encounter when educating mobile children.

Theme 1: Processes for Support

Even though schools might not be able to prevent students from moving, school leaders should recognize that mobile students have specific needs and consciously design supports to help these children succeed in their schools. According to Welsh (2017), programs should provide students with organized assistance for their emotional and

social needs and academic requirements. The interview participants' supportive interventions indicated that formal and informal supports are intentionally implemented to support mobile students. The responses provided clear examples of how the school formally and informally helped mobile students and their families through procedures and practices. Lastly, the interview responses offered examples of how teachers provided formal and informal support for these students in the classroom setting.

Formal Support, School-Level

Formal support at the school level can be defined as the campus having support systems that are well-established programs, procedures, and practices built into the school's customs and cultures. These supports are purposeful and consistently used to help new students who may transfer in and out of the school throughout the school year.

One example of school-level programs mentioned by principals included a process that ensures that all new students and their families are greeted when they enroll. All four principals said they make it a practice to meet all new students and their families on their arrival at the school. For example, Carlos explained how he always introduces himself to new students and their families. He also stands in the library every morning and sees the new students when they come in with the registrar. He does this to connect quickly with the student by asking where they are moving. He also makes it a point to meet the new families when they come to the school for community events.

Sonya also described her process for meeting new students. She gives the families a personal tour of the school and tells them how great the school is and how sweet the kids are. She does this intentionally to help mobile families since they have already enrolled in several schools. This practice aligns with the previously mentioned idea that

social capital can be accumulated through relationships between children, their families, and other community members with whom the child interacts. Schools are more effective when teachers, parents, and students have strong relationships that, in turn, increase the social capital of the students (Boone, 2011).

Once a student is enrolled in the school, all principal participants described formal supports that are in place at their campuses. All four principals stated that they had shared documents created for each new student after enrollment. These documents include information about the student's previous schools, testing data, special programming, strengths and needs, and an action plan for student support. This information is then shared with the assistant principals, counselors, academic interventionists, and instructional specialists. The action plan includes what interventions are needed, who will provide the support, who is responsible for following up on progress, and when the follow-up will occur. When student records are received from the previous school, it is added to this document. Tonya shared that after receiving the data, the assistant principals and instructional specialists looked at the documents quickly. Hence, "Nobody falls through the cracks, especially if they have been highly mobile."

Another common support that Carlos, Paige, and Tonya mentioned is a formal orientation process for all new students. According to Paige, an orientation is scheduled every two weeks to include all enrolled students. Similarly, at Tonya's campus, an orientation is conducted every nine weeks for the new students. The registrar provides each family with a brochure about the school that includes contact information for various offices, such as the counselor, clinic, and assistant principal. At the time of registration, the registrar at Tonya's school informs the new students and their families

about the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and briefly explains the program and its benefits.

PBIS, a tiered support system implemented to assist students behaviorally, academically, socially, and emotionally, was also mentioned as a formal program by Penny from Focus Group B and Focus Group C that helps support new students as they assimilate into a new campus. Teacher Penny in Focus Group B shared that she uses the established campus PBIS system to share classroom expectations and review these expectations at her morning classroom meetings. They also practice social skills at the meetings, discuss how things are going in the classroom, and help transfer school culture to new students. Carol from Focus Group A stated that her students learn the school culture by doing the school pledge daily at 10:00.

Connecting families with community resources is another formal support the principals reported utilizing at the school level. Principal Carlos stated that the school counselor always reaches out to new families when they enroll to see if they need assistance getting food for their children. The school has a food backpack program that sends home food every Friday afternoon to help provide food during the weekend. The counselors also share information about other community-supported food donation programs in the study site district with the parents. Additionally, providing families with a community resource book that lists supports available in the community is one of the ways Principal Tonya ensures that new students and their families know where to find help if needed. Bella, the principal at School D, explained that she had established a mobile food bank at her campus to support her students and their families better. The families could visit the school to get food if needed. Bella also said she has partnered

with a local business and a church that helps her students' families. One example she shared was a local church-sponsored gathering for her students and their families. The families were served a meal, and the children were given a fun craft to complete while their parents shopped for Christmas gifts provided by the church.

Informal Support at the School Level

To ensure the success of mobile students on campus, schools also rely on informal school-level support. Although these are not formal and prescriptive forms of support, the results can benefit students and their families. Two principals, Bella and Carlos, shared that the purposeful supports begin before the mobile students are even enrolled on the campus. For example, Bella is intentional about hiring teachers who are first-generation college graduates and who live in the area near the school so that they can better identify with the students and their families. She explained that she looks for teachers who have “grit.” According to Bella, grit is essential to working with mobile students. Tonya also spoke about the intentionality of placing the mobile student into the strongest teacher's classrooms:

We want to look for a solid and very strong instructional teacher regardless of whether the kid is a strong, academically strong student; we still want that teacher to be solid. Because naturally, you want to put that kid in a space with lots of security. So, that is one of the things that we really try to look at a lot. It is like, OK, who is the most solid teacher? Many times, we, especially at the beginning of the year, will leave some room for that super solid teacher so we can put new kids into the class.

This practice aligns with the underpinnings of social capital theory and school connectedness because if the student is in a class with a strong teacher, they will gain social capital and connectedness and have more of an opportunity for school success. In addition, Carlos explained the importance of providing professional development for the staff on how to best work with students in poverty. This is essential training because most mobile students live in poverty (Fisher et al., 2002; Sorin & Iloste, 2006; Welsh, 2017). As discussed in Chapter 2, researchers have consistently discovered that mobility has numerous interconnected antecedents, such as poverty, housing challenges, and family conflicts (Fisher et al., 2002; Sorin & Iloste, 2006; Welsh, 2017). Carlos also stated the importance of the staff believing that they educate the whole child rather than just supporting the academic needs. Teacher Piper reiterated this sentiment in Focus Group 3. She stated:

The student, for us, is a whole person. It is a deal where we may not see the progress academically as with any other student. However, it could come out with how they behave, you know? If you go from being a super shy kid to now, you can present your project to the class; I see that as success. If you come in having behavior issues because you do not feel connected, and all of a sudden, you know you are, you are treating people with respect, and your language changes.

This practice also aligns with the key concepts of social capital and school connectedness. If the teacher connects with the student, they are more likely to progress academically and socially. Four teacher and principal participants stated that a positive culture and a structured well-run school could benefit all students, including mobile students. Principal Paige corroborated this concept by saying that her school is well-run

most of the time and that the classrooms are secure and well-organized. Most of the time, the building is silent so students can focus on learning. Even though some mobile students come to her school from less fortunate backgrounds, this school can provide children with stability.

Piper echoed this sentiment in Teacher Focus Group 3. She indicated that some of the students are from very rough homes and that they are looking for a safe place for them to be able to grow and learn. She shared that she has a very structured classroom, and she believes that this benefits students who move in because they know that there are expectations that they need to accommodate.

Another view shared by Principal Tonya shared the importance of having clear and elevated expectations. She does not expect them to be 100% successful until they know what is expected of them. She stated that they could cooperate and become part of the school once you tell them about the expectations in the building, hallways, playground, etc. Similarly, Meredith from Focus Group C said she has to build positive influences because that helps the kids to make them accountable. That accountability helps them to understand that it is okay to have a problem and still come to school. She tells her kids that she expects incremental growth and effort. Both principals and teachers reported the need for stability and high expectations for their students.

As mentioned before, schools may be unable to stop kids from relocating. However, administrators should be aware of the unique requirements of mobile students and actively provide support to assist these students in achieving in their schools. However, principals can implement supports that help students when they enroll in a school. For example, Principal Bella supports mobile students by ensuring they are

placed into an expert teacher's class instead of a new teacher's class who is not experienced with working with this group of students. She explained that this intentional placement could help a mobile student to acclimate faster in a new school. This Informal Support School Level provides additional aid to the children when starting school even though the supports are not specifically designed for only mobile students because they could benefit all students.

Formal and Informal Support at the Classroom Level

Classroom instructors should provide formal and informal assistance to mobile students based on the child's unique requirements. While formal and informal assistance aims to help students succeed academically and socially, certain demands may suggest a need for a specific type of classroom-level support. For the sake of this study,

Formal Classroom Support. Formal Classroom-Level Support is a systematic approach to assisting students in the classroom setting. Teachers from each focus group described how they formally help their mobile students after registration. Principals Bella and Carlos asserted that the classroom teacher is essential when a new student enrolls in a school. They emphasized that the instructor becomes the kid's advocate once a student enrolls in their class. Carlos outlined in detail how his teachers formally help their students:

As soon as they (mobile students) enroll, they (the assistant principals, instructional specialists, and classroom teachers) examine the assessment data provided to them, perform their assigned tasks, and be screened and evaluated. This is how the teacher offers assistance in the classroom. Then, however, the educator becomes an advocate. For instance, a student needing a speech

evaluation is coming in. In that case, they may already have such significant academic needs that the teacher initiates conversations with the administrative team's assistant principals about what they are observing so that we can begin early intervention and determine if they need special education evaluation or some form of support.

The list of supports Carlos detailed above indicates that there are formal and informal ways that the teachers on his campus are purposeful and planned in supporting their mobile students.

Bella also describes how her teachers support their new students when they realize that their students need more specific help as they get to know the students. Sometimes it is necessary to move students to other classes for targeted academic support, and the teachers have the autonomy to move students without administrative approval. Therefore, making decisions that can quickly get interventions started to serve the new student better. Carlos and Bella shared how their teachers provide informal and formal support for their mobile students.

According to Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990), interventions at the classroom level should include small group instruction because it allows teachers to effectively address gaps in learning for their mobile students, and the groups should be flexible to the different learning rates of students. Academic interventions should be specific and purposeful to support the gaps that regularly accompany frequent school changes (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). Several of the study participants mentioned the use of small-group instruction in the interviews. For example, Carlos, Tonya, Micha, and Penny said small group instruction benefits all mobile students. They mentioned that small group

instruction is used to fill in student academic gaps, specifically those gaps mobile students often have. Carlos stated that academic small-group instruction could be beneficial for mobile students because it is best to meet the targeted needs of this group of students. Carlos and Tonya mentioned that formal classroom supports are essential in meeting the needs of all students and especially mobile students.

According to most study participants, teachers implement many informal methods daily to support their new students when they join their classes. Carlos described the importance of the classroom teacher taking the time to talk to the students to learn more about their situation and their needs. Carlos explains this:

They are keeping communication open between the classroom teacher once they start making contact with the family, hearing things directly from the students, and making sure that they reach out to whomever they need to, whether it is counselors, speech-language pathologists, or anybody else around the leadership team to support their student.

Similarly, Micah from Focus Group B shared how she intentionally makes an effort to get to know her students by:

I usually try to pull them aside and ask them questions like, “Hey, where did you come from?” and “What school did you come from?” and then work with them one-on-one to see where they are in math and science to get an idea. So that is usually what I will do on the first day so they do not feel invisible.

Sasha described this same method in Focus Group A:

I tell them to sit back and watch. I am not going to call you. You have a week to get yourself acclimated before you know your name

might appear on something that still needs to be finished. And then just trying to figure out what they do know. And I will give them the sheet of paper and tell them, you know, do your best.

All three of these educators stated that they are intentional in the way they support their new students socially initially so that they can feel confident in their new classes. When teachers get to know their students, they may learn that the child does not have educational materials, such as books, at home. In response to this need, the classroom teachers support their students in School B by providing parents with resources and school supplies that need not be returned.

Informal Classroom Support. Each principal and teacher participant stated that they had experience working in Title I schools, which enabled them to identify the inadequacies and needs of particular mobile students quickly. Meredith claimed that because she previously worked at a school similar to where they are now teaching, she is more prepared to include mobile children in her present class. Sasha also mentioned that because she has many years of expertise, she can recognize certain signals about the children, which enables her to determine where to begin working with the student based on where they are now in their development. Carol and Principal Paige mentioned the importance of being prepared for new students before arriving in their classroom as informal support for their new arrivals. This preparation included having school supplies ready for the students on the first day of enrollment. Carol stated:

At the beginning of the year, I always set up five to six book bags with blank composition notebooks, the homework folder, the data folder, and the reading

folder so that when they come in, I can just give them all their stuff because they usually come with nothing.

Furthermore, all our supplies had been depleted, so I tried to get them up front and prepare bags.

Although it is only sometimes the case, Micah also likes to be prepared when new students come to her class by ensuring she has a seat for them when they arrive. When a new student joins the class, this teacher changes the entire class's seating chart so that the new student is not the only person in a new spot. The principal and teacher interview data showed many examples of formal and informal supports that schools utilize to help new students to be academically and socially successful in their new school.

Theme 2: Connections

The second theme, connections, explains how schools can assist mobile students and their families to feel more connected to the school. This section will explain how school-wide and classroom connections can support mobile students and their families. As stated previously, school connectedness can assist students in achieving greater academic and social success; school connectedness can help students to attain greater academic and social success. According to the research, student mobility has negative academic and social implications. Every move in school causes students to lose three months of reading and math progress (Sparks, 2016). Changes in primary schools affect classroom engagement and academic achievement (Gruman et al., 2008). Mobile students may have missed developing relationships with teachers, classmates, and the school community (Beck et al., 1997). As a result, identifying school- and classroom-level interventions that improve school ties among mobile children is critical. Mobility

has less of an impact on children who are connected to their school. My analysis indicated that schools intentionally include school-wide connections with students and their families and classroom connections with students. This type of assistance exists at the school and classroom levels on campus.

School-Wide Connections for Students

School-wide connections are specific actions that schools implement to ensure that their new students are more likely to feel connected to their school despite being mobile. Most participants stated that the most important way to build school connectedness is to make and build strong relationships with students.

School counselors were mentioned repeatedly throughout the interviews regarding their role in supporting new students through relationship building. Counselors at Paige's, Carlos's, and Tonya's campuses place phone calls to welcome parents to the school. Additionally, Carlos shared that the counselors are essential staff members used to support mobile students. Carlos further explained some of the ways that counselors provide support include:

At the campus level, I would say that counselors are an important piece in supporting the emotional needs of the students, and as they identify anything on the cum folder and we start making contact and building relationships with their families. We sometimes put systems in place, such as check-ins with the counselors, and the counselors begin to see some of the challenges they face. Do they need to go into backpack buddy and receive a meal on Friday? They need another support from a social worker, or have they been identified as a family in transition, as a McKinney-Vento student? Then they put those things in place, so

those are the interventions that I feel are pretty standard and regular when it comes to identifying our students' academic and social-emotional needs and high mobility.

Given Carlos's details, it is clear that the counselors provide effective support for their students and their families. Similarly, Principal Paige and Teacher Diana shared that their counselors are incredibly involved when a new student enrolls. Their school has a Junior Counselor program that allows established students to be ambassadors, or mentors, for the new students. The program is led by students who had to apply for the position and were interviewed for the job by the counselors. The students are selected, trained, and then convened every two weeks to include all students who enroll during that period in the meetings. The Junior Counselors share a slide show presentation to the newcomers during lunch, including PBIS matrices, the school chant, and student expectations.

Programs that Support Connections

Several of the participants mentioned two specific programs that help new students to become connected to their school. The two programs are PBIS and Leader in Me. Principal Paige shared her ideas about PBIS and how the program helps to build a positive culture that supports new students:

We do a good job explaining and reinforcing our expectations, building-wide, and they are the same and very clear. I think that PBIS is strong on our campus.

Which I think helps new kids because then the expectation is the same everywhere. It is the same in PE, it is the same, and they are hearing the same language. So, when discussing what we are doing to assimilate, PBIS helps a lot.

Because then they do not have to figure out, I can do this with this teacher, but I cannot with this teacher.

Principal Bella shared that her school uses *The Leader in Me* program. This is a program that is designed around Stephen Covey's (2014) leadership principles. *The Leader in Me* website describes the program as a comprehensive approach to education, changing how schools assess achievement. This method provides educators with the necessary knowledge and resources to teach every student leadership, create a culture of empowerment, and align processes to drive academic success (Leader in Me, 2023).

Bella further explained how they have been implementing the program at her campus:

So, one piece that we have really been working on bringing in is that we are a *Leader in Me* campus. So, we are really focusing on leadership strategies from the *Leader in Me*, an area we can dive into to help our students develop that sense of pride. That sense of ownership in this is who we are now; it is one thing we have at our school.

PBIS and *Leader in Me* are commercial programs that these principals use to share culture and connectedness in their schools.

The principals and teachers who participated in this study intentionally connected with the mobile families and the students. Some of the school-wide supports mentioned by the principal participants included meeting the families on the first day, providing good customer service to families, scheduling community events, and communicating regularly with the family.

Paige, principal at School B, said that she makes the morning announcements via video every day so that the students will know her, and that will strengthen relationships.

One way that Tonya works to build connections with the new students is by meeting every new student after their orientation with the counselors. Tonya shared the following about the principal visit:

I basically talked to them and said, we are a safe school. You can always come to me if you have a question or concern. And so, kids will go and tell me about academic problems. They will come and tell me about social concerns.

It was clear from the study participants that they understood the need for school-level support to increase connectedness for mobile students.

All four of the interviewed principals stated that they are intentional about meeting new students and families new to the campus. Paige said she or another administrator greeted the families and walked the student to class. Carlos mentioned that he visits new families when they come to have lunch with their children. Another way the staff connects with the new students and their families is to host community events. Paige detailed an ice cream social event they held at their largest apartment complex. The event was intended to reach out to the students who lived in the complex and to bring the school to the community. Diana, a teacher at School B, shared that the principal did a great job encouraging staff to attend the event and be present. Paige also explained that the school just had a spring carnival, and there was a great turnout from the staff and community. Meredith from Focus Group C also shared that they have had several family nights this year, which has helped engage the families with the school.

School-wide Connections for Families

Effective communication between teachers and families was a reoccurring idea shared by all principals and teachers. It was evident that the educators understood that for the students to feel connected to the school, the parents must also feel connected.

Cruz shared:

Also, I have to make sure that you are not only the student comfortable with me but also build that confidence with that parent. Sometimes we do not know their immigration status or anything or what is going on. Sometimes they have like fear of school. So for me, it is also building relationships with parents, letting you know. You know you can contact me for whatever reason if you need. If your child needs anything, just let me know. I am here for you.

Making this type of connection with the parents increases the social capital and the school connectedness of the families and the students.

Principal Paige highlighted that some of these families cannot attend school. There are working mothers, including single mothers with two or three occupations. They are unable to volunteer. They cannot attend meals with their child, but they may attend an evening program or something similar. However, keeping them connected through this is a daily occurrence in the classroom. Some of my instructors do excellent work, while others do poorly. They only communicate with the parent is when the child misbehaves, so the relationship is nonexistent, and the program is ineffective. I believe that the teacher's influence lies in how connected parents feel.

Principal Paige, Principal Bella, and teachers Cruz, Diana, and Meredith all mentioned the importance of calling parents to introduce themselves and welcome the

parents to their class. For example, Janice stated that school D is really good about making positive phone calls home, and she always has a good relationship with her parents. She said that she is positive and gets to build a connection with the parents. This connection can lead to the parents sharing additional essential information about their children.

Several principal and teacher participants described different modes of parent communication. Paige, Gracie, Cruz, and Sasha all stated that they use the district communication platform called *School Messenger* to share information with the families. The system is free for schools from the district and includes all student contact information, so it is simple for users to send messages to families. The before-mentioned participants indicated that both schools, as a whole, and individual teachers use *School Messenger*. Additionally, Phoebe from school D has created a magnet with a QR code for the families to put on their refrigerators. This link provides information about the school and classroom for parents to access easily. The teachers record strategies for the parents to use at home with their students. This teacher also sends home a folder every Friday with information for the family about the week and assignments. Sasha revealed that she sends a postcard the first week the student is in her class to start the communication between home and school. On the postcard, the teacher asks the parent to email the teacher and share their preferred communication method. Carol uses *Class Tag*, which is like a Facebook group for the class. She posts pictures from the day on the class page. Instructions and login information is sent home with each child when they join the class. The teacher described this method of communication with the parents as a non-threatening way to get parents connected with the class.

Classroom Connections for Students

School connection is defined by Dinnen et al. (2020) as “having positive interactions with teachers and administrators and a sense of belonging within one’s school” (p. 1866). Students with high levels of school connectivity and social competence had fewer emotional difficulties and higher levels of academic accomplishment while transitory (Dinnen et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2002). According to the principals in the study, the teacher is essential in building strong connections for mobile students. As mentioned previously by Principal Paige, real school connections happen on campus between the student and the teacher in the classroom. Paige, Carol, and Meredith shared that the teachers must make the kids feel loved as soon as possible. One way to help the kids feel connected is for the teachers to learn about the students and their backgrounds.

Carol starts this connection immediately when a new student is brought to her class for the first time. She asks her students to turn and talk or read so that she can focus her attention on the new student. She immediately assigns a student mentor, introduces herself, and tells them how to pronounce her name because many people have trouble saying it. She is also intentional about making sure that she pronounces their names correctly.

Meredith from School C also shared the importance of the first impression of meeting the teacher for the first time. She said it is important for new teachers at a highly mobile campus to create positive first impressions when students join their classes. Teachers should make the kids feel welcome. She also stated that this is particularly important with high mobility students so that they will get a good first impression of the school since they may have enrolled many times at numerous campuses.

Several participants shared the importance of having a student mentor, or friend, for new students. Teachers can and should implement interventions in the classroom to encourage building new social relationships. One way to support new students is to assign a friend to help orient them to the class and the school. The friend can explain class rules and procedures and show the location of the restrooms, cafeteria, and library (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). Principal Paige stated that most of her teachers assign a buddy for the new students. Piper from School C shared why she gives a student mentor to support new students:

So, something that we try to do here is hook them up with a buddy, You know, somebody who has been here probably out of school year or even they have been here for several years at the school. And they can give them information, help them, or this is how we do this. I am very structured; my partners and I are very structured in our classroom. And I think that benefits the students who come in because they know that there are expectations that they need to accommodate. And so when you have another buddy or a student who knows the expectations, somebody is there to help them. They can ask a question, hey, how do I do this? Many of our students have gone to four or five different schools, and a lot of them are the ones who need the most help.

Another way teachers help to build connections with their students is through class meetings. According to Principal Bella, class meetings effectively connect new kids to the other kids in their class. Christine and Shelby shared during the class meetings that they use a social contract to formally connect students to their class. Janice from School D shared more detail about what her class does at a class meeting:

We also have a social contract aside from the team time, we have a social contract that we kind of touch base on, on how we treat each other. So, how we want it, what we want to see, what we want to feel, what we want to hear, and just hit every time we are in team time. Just talk about what that looks like, give examples, and have those conversations with them. And, if there is any redirection we need to do, we will talk about whatever happens at home or in your old school, like that is its own thing. But, like when we are at our school, when we step into the school, we have expectations because respect is our number one thing. And, so, we have those conversations with them. It is not just about, like, You do not do that. We take the time to explain and talk about like why we have certain expectations, and even the kids themselves will correct each other by talking about what we want to see and what we want to feel. We will see if we will touch on the social contract and have them sign it since they are new, which helps us a lot.

Carol shared that when she gets a new student, she does one thing right away: She pairs them up with a leader or a guide from my classroom. They sit with them and help them get everything they need. Then they show them around the classroom and the school. Show them where the bathroom is, how to use it, and all the other rules in my classroom. She has a list of everything that needs to be done in my classroom. They just teach them everything by going through that list on the first day. The other kids must then go up to them, shake their hands, look them in the eye, and ask them what their name is, what their favorite ice cream is, and what their favorite snack is. By including these

supports in the classroom, the study's teacher participants intentionally created ways to connect students and their families when they enroll at their campuses.

Theme 3: Challenges

The reasons for supporting mobile students academically have been explained throughout this study. However, as schools support their mobile students, there are significant challenges to providing this support. This third theme encapsulates how mobility causes challenges for schools, students, and teachers.

Challenges for Schools

Each participant reported needing to be specifically trained to work with mobile students. Sasha says she has no specific training on mobile students and does not think any training would help except for years "under your belt because you just learn that from time and listening to other people and experiences." Principal Paige shared that teachers need good customer service training to work with all students, including mobile students. She described how this type of training would work:

We all need more training to address mobile students' social and academic needs. I tell my teachers this a lot. You must dig deep for empathy and sympathy for these kids. It is not their fault that they move every six months when the free lease runs out. Meet them where they are at and then just, you know, make them feel as loved and accepted as soon as possible. I mean, in many cases, I just feel like. This sounds kind of corny, but we have just got to bring these kids in and love on them because it is the best we can do. After all, we can start filling in the other gaps once we can do that. However, they have got to, you know, they have got to feel like they want to be there. You know, feeling like they are a part of the crew.

Principal Tonya shared that it can be challenging for teachers to work with at-risk mobile students because some of her staff, although they have teachers' hearts, do not understand the needs of students in poverty. She said this could be true because some people do not understand classism and do not know how to connect with people from other backgrounds.

The challenge of working at a mobile campus is that there can be mobility of staff also. Bella shared that because her school is very mobile and has many struggling students, it is challenging to retain experienced teachers. She mentioned that because of their location, which is farther from the district's main area, they also have a high staff mobility rate. She finds that new "baby teachers" get some years of experience and then move to a more affluent school. She also shared that at her school, many students need individualized support, not just mobile students.

Another challenge Paige and Diana mentioned is how difficult it is to get the academic support needed for mobile students because they often move during the special education referral and testing process. Then the student moves before the testing is completed. Penny from School 2 described the frustration of trying to get help for a student, and then they move:

We sit here and try to figure out their needs so you can get them the help they need, but it takes a while with all the paperwork and everything. I worked my tail off to get them evaluated and the support they needed, and then they were gone. You want to hurry up and get those things in order so that wherever they go, it is on paper, and they get that help. So, just from the very beginning, knowing your students, knowing their strengths and weaknesses, hurry up and get that

paperwork turned in, and get the timeline started so that you can get them the help if they do move. Many times, they are movers, and they never do get that. You know, never get that assistance because they are constantly moving.

Thus, it was mentioned by the participants that it is essential to get to know the student's needs quickly to secure support in case they are not enrolled at the campus for long.

Teachers and principals identified communicating with the mobile student's parent(s)/guardian(s) as challenging. Carlos shared that parents do not always disclose everything about their child at enrollment, which can cause challenges. For example, parents may be reluctant to share this information up front if a student has behavior problems in previous schools. Also, if there were many negative telephone calls from a previous campus about discipline, parents may not be open to creating a relationship with the school. Carlos said negative calls could create a division between the family and the school. Therefore, it was stated that schools should intentionally connect with the families to build trust and support.

As stated in Chapter 2, attendance is often affected when students are mobile. When students do not have regular school attendance, there can be academic consequences for them and their schools (Welsh, 2018). Principal Bella shared that when they get academic records from recently enrolled students, they look first at the attendance record because the absences usually indicate educational gaps because of missing school. Piper also shared attendance concerns from School 3:

We have a large population with many attendance issues. So not just transient that they move, but they are not here. You know, I have several students who are missing about 35 days. That is the whole nine weeks of school. I contacted their

parents because somebody needed to check in on the student. The parents will say they have been sick but have not seen a doctor. I find that many of our parents do not want the help.

As previously mentioned, building a strong relationship with the parents can help make school connectedness and improve student success, including increasing attendance.

Therefore, school officials must also connect with parents to build a relationship, share specific information about the school, and connect families to community resources if needed (Fisher et al., 2002). Kerbow (1996) posited that schools “may have to take on increased responsibility to strengthen social links among parents and the school itself, working actively to develop relationships” (p. 28). The needs of mobile students are specific, so school leaders, teachers, and families should work together to support these students best.

Attendance is also an issue for students who are labeled as homeless. Like mobile students, homeless students often have high retention rates (not promoted to the next grade), frequent absences, and repeated school changes (Masten et al., 2015). There are additional academic consequences to being without a home. According to Rafferty et al. (2004), homeless students scored below grade level on math, reading, and spelling tests compared to students who were not experiencing homelessness. Micah from School B discussed attendance difficulties for one of her students who were homeless and getting bus transportation to school via the McKinney-Vento Act. The student’s mother had no working phone and could not be reached. The boy would miss four or five days of school in a row and be missing more often than he was present. This is consistent with previous research that found that when students relocate, their attendance is frequently impacted,

and academic consequences for students and their schools may result from inconsistent attendance (Stein & Grigg, 2019; Welsh, 2018). If mobile students have poor attendance, it can be difficult for teachers to close academic gaps. Absences can negatively affect students because of missed lessons and disrupted learning opportunities (Welsh, 2018).

Challenges for Students

As noted previously, mobility can cause social and academic challenges for students. When the study participants were asked about mobile students' challenges, making friends was the most reported concern. Principal Paige described this as follows:

You see, you can tell within just 10 minutes of talking to them that they have come from some, you know, rougher circumstances. Regardless, just walking into a classroom with all these new faces and you have had to do that repeatedly, you just do not feel like you have any stability. Social and emotional are the biggest challenges for mobile students. We sometimes see negative behavior because they have to come in and establish themselves.

This result is consistent with studies by Gruman et al. (2008), who discovered that mobile students were likelier to exhibit antisocial behaviors, were less likely to engage in social interactions, and avoided their classmates. Mobile children often show lower levels of school attachment due to their inability to adjust to curriculum changes and the learning environment (Alexander et al., 1996; Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990; South et al., 2005).

Carlos explained that making friends is one of the biggest difficulties for mobile students. He stated that it is challenging because they are building relationships and do not know how long it will last, which can create a way between the student and the rest of

the children. This challenge could also be seen when the student gets to know their new teacher. He said it is hard for kids to get to know a new teacher and understand what the new teacher needs from them and how to communicate with the new teacher. Teachers from each of the four focus groups named making friends a big challenge for mobile students. Therefore, it is important that schools and teachers purposefully create ways to support this process for mobile students.

Typically, mobility is a recurring phenomenon for some children. The intent of one of the protections from the McKinney-Vento Act is to allow students to remain at their home campus. However, this can be problematic when implemented on the campus level. Principal Paige explained the challenges the McKinney-Vento Act presents:

I understand the purpose is to try to keep these kids even when they move, to try to do the one thing that is stable in their life at school. So, if we can keep school the same for them, that is one less disruption they have in their life, right? I think the original purpose of that was founded on something really good. Like with many things, though, that. People have now taken advantage of that. I see I have a kid bused daily from far away because they are on McKinney-Vento. Half the time, he is not at school because he misses the bus. The bus is 45 minutes late getting there morning. It is just that to me, I am like, how is that better for a kid? It depends on the parents; they are also doing their part, which is tricky.

Carlos also shared his agreement with the challenges of busing a student from his new home back to his current campus:

Sometimes, they allow them to stay so they do not have to jump to a new school. So, it is positive. I know I think that sometimes there might be ways that some

families learn how to maneuver through that system to use them to their advantage. In some cases, I have a hard time, but for example, I have a McKinney-Vento student coming from out of the district that did not qualify for transportation, and he goes through one school from his previous district where he lives. He passes another school in our district and then gets to our school. So, he has to drive through almost three different schools to get to our school. And then he is always late, and I always think, what is better in this case? Get him to go to another school, and I know that is a change with all the challenges we just discussed, or is it better to stay at the same school but come in an hour late daily? Furthermore, because of their situation, and it is not, you know, I am not blaming the parent; I am just saying that their situation gets in the way of when he arrives at school.

Both principals shared that they understand the value of the McKinney-Vento Act.

However, negative challenges can accompany the protection of remaining at their home campus after moving residences.

Mobile students are often behind their peers academically because of their school changes. Changing elementary schools predicts classroom participation and academic performance (Gruman et al., 2008). Therefore, educators must understand the needs and protections that mobile students require.

Challenges for Teachers

There are challenges for teachers when mobile students move into a classroom that already has routines, procedures, and learning happening. Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) noted that teachers associate high student mobility with the extra work necessary

to acclimate new students to the existing classroom. These interventions can cause teachers to feel overburdened and potentially affect their attitudes toward mobile students and their families, a finding affirmed more recently by Sorin & Iloste (2006). Teachers from schools A, B, C, and Paige shared how it is difficult for teachers when new students join a class midyear without any academic information. Often, student records take a long time to arrive at the new school, and parents are only sometimes forthcoming with information about their children. Teachers are responsible for gathering information directly from the students upon arrival.

Phoebe from School D stated:

There is a lot of emotion, I think, for any kid moving, but for the Littles, I mean, they are six and seven. So, it is hard for them to talk to you that first week. I sit with them and talk; I try to talk to them. I try to avoid asking them super difficult questions. Most of the time, they do not know where they came from or what school. Many of my kids who have enrolled either never went to school, did not go for long, or did not have enough memorable experiences to share. So, it is hard to ask what they can read if they cannot or ask them to write you something if they cannot. And there is a lot of anxiety for them because they see the kids around them and how we have our routines and procedures; they are working and lost. And so you are trying not to overwhelm them, but at the same time, you want to see where they are and what they know.

By providing time for the students to acclimate to the class, Phoebe is helping to connect her student to the class. However, this wait time could delay getting needed academic information to begin interventions.

Principal Paige shared that she relies on teachers to do quick assessments by pulling students to do individual checks to determine their reading level or what they know in math. She shared that it would be beneficial if teachers had clear expectations from the administration, like a checklist that explains what all teachers should do within the first two weeks of having a new student. Penny, a teacher from Paige's school, mentioned that it would be beneficial to have a system in place so that teachers could get information for a new student, including who the previous teachers were and their contact information, strengths and weaknesses, and work samples for all new students. Additionally, Penny from School B shared that getting information from previous teachers or sharing information with the new teachers after a student moves to a new school can help share background information about the student to help them to transition into the new school.

There was a consensus among the teacher participants that where the student moved from makes a significant difference in the student's skill level. Elizabeth from School D and Gracie from School C shared that it is easier to support mobile students when they transfer from other schools in the same school district versus schools from other districts. This district has a standard curriculum consistent at all elementary schools, thus making school change easier for students and teachers. For example, Elizabeth shared that seeing the connections from getting a new student from within the same district has helped with knowing where to start working with the new student because of the standardized scope and sequence.

The timing of the move was also indicated by teachers Phoebe, Gracie, and Piper. For example, Piper said that when students join their class, and students can make the

transition easier or more challenging. Interestingly, none of the principals mentioned that the time of year was significant for a mobile student to join a class. Gracie from School C said that coming into fourth grade in the middle of the year is challenging for new students because the content is much harder. She said that coming from a different district causes kids to struggle and cause them not even to try to learn the new curriculum. Cruz from School 1 shared that it is challenging when new students join his class because he has already established his reading groups, and then he has to figure out where to meet the new students academically so they can be successful.

The teachers who participated in the interviews could articulate the challenges that mobile students presented when joining their classrooms. Despite the challenges of instructing this group of students, the teachers were still optimistic and passionate about supporting and nurturing their students.

Conclusion

This qualitative multi-site case study aimed to identify the best practices employed by principals and instructors at schools with high student mobility rates. I interviewed four principals and thirteen elementary school instructors and analyzed qualitative data to identify the best practices. In this chapter, I highlighted the themes and subthemes that emerged from examining the research participants' interviews, reviewed the overarching themes, and provided specific examples from the participants' own words. The data analysis revealed that these school administrators and instructors were aware of and implemented support strategies for educating mobile students. In addition, I discovered that the participants were confident about their ability to provide a positive environment for students when they enter their school or classroom.

Chapter 5 will analyze and interpret the study's findings, summarize the answers to the study's research questions, provide recommendations, and detail implications for future research.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Introduction

This closing chapter concludes my research on what programs and interventions educators utilize to support school connectedness for mobile students. This research addressed the issue that schools must recognize that mobile students have distinct requirements and should design interventions to serve these children.

Student mobility is a complicated issue with potential adverse effects on academic and social success. As a result, school leaders must find ways to assist their mobile students by offering effective teaching interventions and the purposeful building of social connections. Mobile students with higher levels of school connectedness and social competence tend to have fewer emotional problems and greater academic success than those with lower levels of connectedness (Dinnen et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2002).

To support their mobile student populations, educators, especially school leaders, should provide targeted interventions that build a sense of community between families and schools (Welch, 2017). Unfortunately, school administrators and teachers are not always prepared with the information, skills, methods, and procedures to maximize their schools' potential benefit on mobile students.

Through this qualitative multi-site case study, I aimed to examine and extract the best practices of principals and teachers who work in schools with mobile populations above the state mean of 10% (Texas Education Agency, 2021). The following research questions directed this study:

RQ1: What programs, formal or otherwise, if any, are utilized by principals of mobile schools to impact school connectedness?

RQ2: What supports, if any, are offered by these principals to teachers of mobile students?

RQ3: What supports, if any, are offered by teachers to their students in their classrooms?

In the preceding chapters, I reviewed existing literature about student mobility that included information about antecedents and consequences of mobility, supportive interventions for mobile students, and how school connectedness can help mobile families. Kerbow (1996) asserted that mobility, rather than stability, is becoming the norm for students in schools across the United States. Hence, schools need to find ways to support students by ensuring effective instruction happens and efforts to support relationships while they are enrolled happen. This section examined how the findings address or answer the initial research questions that inspired this study. In the following sections, I will explain interpretations of the answers to the research questions based on a review of the theoretical framework, the current and established literature, and the study's findings. The study's limitations, implications, practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusion are also discussed.

Summary of Findings

In this section, I summarize the findings organized around the research questions in the order they were asked. Three research questions guided this qualitative study and were specifically addressed through the participant interview data.

Results: Research Question 1

To answer my first research question, I examined what programs principals of mobile schools utilize to impact school connectedness. All participating principals understood the need to implement programs to support school connectedness despite needing formal training on working with mobile students specifically. All four principals said they make it a practice to meet each new student and their families upon enrollment, and three principals stated that they have an organized orientation process for all new students.

The principal participants reported the importance of providing counselor services for their mobile students and their families. The essential functions of the school counselors included helping new students by forming relationships with them and checking in with them as they acclimate to the school. According to principals, their counselors also connected families with community services, planned community activities, and contacted families regularly.

The campus principals mentioned two programs to increase school connectedness: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and the *Leader in Me*; both initiatives aim to create a more positive environment because protective elements, such as a favorable school culture or strong ties, may benefit mobile children (O'Malley et al., 2015). Therefore, by using these programs at their campuses, the school leaders purposefully include opportunities to support all students, particularly mobile students.

Another formal support mentioned by all four principals was how data about new students is collected and disseminated. Each school leader has a shared document

containing information on the student's prior testing results, special programs, strengths and needs, and an action plan for providing support. The document is distributed to the school's counselors, academic interventionists, teachers, and instructional specialists. The document outlines the plan's necessary actions, who will assist the student, who will be accountable for monitoring progress, and when monitoring should occur. These specific supports mentioned by the participants provide examples of what the principals utilize to impact school connectedness at their campuses.

Results: Research Question 2

The second research question asked what support principals offer to teachers who work with mobile students. Two principal participants shared that they support their teachers before mobile students even enroll at their campuses. Hiring strong candidates who have grit and determination and are best suited for working with mobile students and providing training on how to work with students in poverty were defined by participants as ways to support teachers. Another way that school leaders support their teachers is by ensuring that their campus has a positive culture (Putnam, 2000). Four study participants shared that their school has a supportive and well-run culture, which benefits all students, including mobile students. Like the principals, six teacher participants mentioned that having school-wide programs, like PBIS and *Leader in Me*, provides the structure and positive culture needed to support new students. The students learn about these programs during class meetings or team time in their classrooms. By having these programs in place and setting the expectation that these programs are implemented with fidelity, the principals are supporting the teachers and the students. Results from this study revealed

that student mobility and negative behavior often go hand in hand, so school-wide programs can support positive behaviors that also impact teachers and students.

All principal participants mentioned providing structured and effective academic and social interventions for mobile students. Two principals reported supporting their teachers by hiring strong academic interventionists trained to work with struggling students. The interventionists track student progress and intentionally remediate missing learning opportunities. By having these interventions in place, the principals are supporting the teachers of the mobile students by helping to close academic and social gaps.

Several teachers said it was important for school leaders to know that success for mobile students might look different than success for non-mobile students. These teachers said they felt encouraged by the principal because they knew how important it was to teach the whole child and keep an eye on the mobile student's incremental growth. This view makes teachers feel like their leaders support them as they work with mobile kids in the age of high stakes testing. When this kind of support is used, the school administrators help support the teachers directly.

Results: Research Question 3

The last research question focused on what support teachers offer their mobile students in their classrooms. The teacher participants reported daily implementing formal and informal support to aid their new students. Each participant mentioned the value of building a strong relationship with their students. This relationship is initiated when the teacher takes the time to talk to the students to learn more about their situation and their needs, and their backgrounds. Every teacher participant mentioned the usefulness of

making the kids feel welcome as soon as possible when they join their class. The study results showed the importance of giving students a great first impression when they meet their teacher. Also, nine of the 13 teacher participants stated that they matched a friend for their new students to help acclimate them to the new class. This friend shares how the type operates and explains the teacher's expectations for the students. The student mentor, or buddy, is also available to the new student for them to ask questions and to have a familiar face in the classroom.

Building relationships with the parents was also mentioned to support mobile students in their new class. Effective communication between teachers and families was a reoccurring idea shared by all principals and teachers. It was evident that the educators understood that for the students to feel connected to the school, the parents must also feel connected. This finding aligned with previous research by Grant et al. (2008), who stated that teachers should also positively interact with their student and their family to understand the family's issues and that this positive relationship will help the parent and the child feel more connected to the school and, hopefully, reduce the likelihood of another school change (Kerbow, 1996).

One of the biggest challenges shared by the study's teacher participants was gaps in the learning of mobile students. While the academic gaps were mentioned as a concern, it was noted by several teachers that it is important to wait to start educational interventions until the student feels more comfortable and confident in the new classroom environment socially first. Study participants shared that they address the learning gaps by providing small-group instruction. Two principals and two teachers mentioned that small groups benefit all mobile students to get the targeted interventions needed. This

finding is similar to the recommendation from Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990), who suggested that interventions at the classroom level should include small-group instruction because it allows teachers to effectively address gaps in learning for their mobile students.

The classroom teachers could articulate the importance of their role in supporting mobile students in their classroom. All the teachers in the study had previous experience working in a Title 1 school, so they were aware of the needs of their mobile students. It was evident from the interviews that the classroom teachers understood their role and the importance of their responsibility to ensure their mobile students had academic and social support.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study suggest that effective support for mobile students to increase school connectedness can be possible if educators know the best practices for supporting this group of learners. While it was clear from the interviews that mobility makes teaching more challenging, participants in this study demonstrated a strong desire to reach all their learners. According to Grant et al. (2008), effective instructors of mobile kids can positively impact their students if they are fair, respectful, passionate, and encouraging, have a positive approach toward teaching, and are reflective practitioners. As the instructional leader, the principal is responsible for creating a positive school culture that is characterized by safety, caring student-teacher relationships, and opportunities for school engagement to reduce the risk of poor school performance among mobile students, including those who are homeless (O'Malley et al., 2015). Rumberger (2015) further recommended that school officials strive to reduce student

mobility by improving the “school’s overall quality” because it is in the best interest of both students and schools to understand the potential implications and ensure that the mobile students, and their families, are supported and encouraged to remain on their home campus. This recommendation mirrors what was shared by the study’s principals. The school leaders all stated that they were aware that they were responsible for supporting students by creating a positive environment for all students, including mobile students. This is similar to what Dinnen et al. (2020) found: Schools could promote connectedness by creating positive teacher-student relationships, encouraging student engagement in school activities, and creating a positive culture.

The participants in the study mentioned the need for more training on how to help mobile students. Unfortunately, since only some of the 17 educators reported receiving any specific training on working with mobile students, this directly conflicts with the research findings that suggest that training is essential to working with mobile students. It is advised in previous research that districts and schools work hard to limit mobility to counteract the negative academic and social consequences of mobility. The prior learning suggests that teachers and administrators be prepared to meet the needs of mobile students by receiving training that includes knowledge of the curricula used by teachers in other schools, as well as flexible instructional strategies, multiple methods of assessing students’ learning needs, and the unique, challenges faced by mobile families (Fisher et al., 2002; Gruman et al., 2008; Rumberger, 2015). Therefore, school districts should have specific plans and strategies that all educators know and implement.

As presented in previous research, this study also found that all participants identified the importance of quickly assessing students to determine academic and social

needs to start interventions. This practice is similar to the suggestions by Smith et al. (2008), who suggest schools create a coordinated assessment plan for every mobile student. Also, when creating a joint assessment plan, the school should consider what tools are already in place, where new assessment tools are needed, who needs training on the different assessment tools, how will staff development be used to support the plan, what is the most effective and efficient way to manage student assessment data, and how will the data be disseminated and used? The participants stated that they had interventions in place. However, only some people articulated a specific plan to support new students that was used with fidelity.

These study participants shared that their mobile students commonly exhibit poor student behavior. Many participants provided specific examples of negative behaviors they had seen from mobile students when they joined their class. According to Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990), behavior management is a problem because new students might disrupt the classroom due to their lack of experience with established norms and practices. The study also shows that student mobility affects the classroom climate by creating a sense of impermanence, restlessness, and constant change and upheaval. However, when students exhibit more socially competent behavior when they have school connectedness, it protects against emotional distress, suicidal thoughts and behavior, violence, substance abuse, and the age of sexual debut (Lash & Kirkpatrick, 1990). Substantial school connectivity has been shown to promote physical health and graduation rates (Resnick et al., 1997). Therefore, providing a safe and structured school that offers opportunities to gain social capital can increase mobile students' connectedness and school success. The study's participants often mentioned the

importance of building a strong relationship with the families to encourage the mobile families to remain on campus. This type of support includes the relationships the principals, teachers, and school counselors nurtured. The study's educators' practices described specific supports implemented at the school and classroom levels. Therefore, school connectedness can assist students in achieving greater academic and social success; school connectedness can help students to attain greater academic and social success.

Implications

Although all survey participants described the need for mobile student support, practical strategies for providing support are limited in previous research. I collected best practices for supporting mobile learners through a review of mobility literature and interviews for this study. This study uncovered strategies that school leaders and teachers implement to help mobile students at the campus and school levels. In the next three subsections, I will summarize the implications for practice at the district, campus, and classroom levels.

Implications for Policy for School Districts

When students move to a new school, they typically move to the same general geographical area when changing residences. These areas are sometimes in different school districts but are close to each other (Potter et al., 2021). Therefore, school districts should work together to meet the mobile students' needs. Almost all my study's teacher participants reported that it often takes a long time to receive student records, and this delay can impact intervention implementation because of unknown student information.

Kerbow (1996) found that student transfers occur within small geographic sub-systems in urban systems. One intervention district-level leaders could implement is collaborating with nearby school districts to promptly share critical student academic information. If a student moves to a new school in Texas, student records are sent via Texas Records Exchange (TREx), a web-based application provided by Texas Education Agency (TEA). TREx sends documents electronically between Texas public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools and sends high school transcripts to Texas public colleges and universities. By Texas Law, a district must respond to a request for a student record from the receiving district within 10 working days. However, this 10-day timeline is not always followed. However, it would be advantageous for districts to create policies that ensure a shorter turnaround requirement for data sharing. These policies would provide important academic and social data allowing the new school to start interventions. Also, if parents provided the name of the school where the student is moving to, the data could be shared more quickly.

Another suggestion describes the importance of developing a universal data-sharing form to acquire student information quickly to the receiving campus after registration (Dinnen et al., 2020; Potter et al., 2021). This document would provide essential data to expedite specific educational interventions at the new school by providing previous academic performance and interventions.

Sanderson (2003) posited that districts should hire a transition specialist to assist with student mobility issues. The transitional specialist can help newly enrolled families with required enrollment paperwork, conduct tours for new parents and students, and conduct workshops to share the school rules, routines, and expected behaviors. The

specialist can also provide monthly parent workshops that help build commitment to the new school and function as a faculty contact for parents. This liaison could also help create partnerships with social service agencies to reduce student mobility by helping develop a sense of empowerment by assisting parents in negotiating with agencies.

Additional suggestions to support the mobile family include family camps, social skills programs, and family counseling. Coordinating GED, ESL, and computer classes for parents would benefit mobile students and their schools (Fisher et al., 2002). A transition specialist's additional duties would be to faithfully communicate information regarding the McKinney-Vento Act to schools and families. Despite the policy's intention to assist many needy children, significant gaps exist in distributing knowledge about the Act and its implementation consistency (Canfield et al., 2012). According to Cunningham (2014), "schools are where the McKinney-Vento policy turns into direct practice" (p. 222). According to Canfield et al. (2012), many district-level liaisons require a proper understanding of the Act and, as a result, cannot completely implement the provisions as originally developed.

Having a transition specialist is similar to the type of support that military families get. It is noted in the research that "Schools run by the Department of Defense Educational Activity do better than civilian schools, and they are better at closing the performance gap between Black and White children" (Burnette, 2017, p. 3). When military students move to a new school, they have support that includes a consistent set of guidelines that help them enroll in a school, help in joining extracurricular activities, and ensure that graduation requirements are known. Military families have support that helps ensure students succeed when they change schools. Since this type of support has been

successful with military families, it could be advantageous to implement similar approval by the district for mobile families.

Implications for Practice for Principals

Just as educators need training on working with mobile students, new students need training to connect to the new school. Potter et al. (2021) recommended that schools construct an onboarding program to assess students' academic needs and needs for supportive services in integrating into the school culture. This belief was shared with three principal participants, who already have a formal orientation process for all new students at their campuses.

As previously stated, schools with mobile students typically have to wait several weeks to acquire academic records. Designating a staff person to call the prior school to obtain information regarding student strengths, involvement in certain activities, and attendance patterns is one method for determining student needs (Sparks, 2016). Also, principals could assist teachers and students by developing an evaluation tool for determining needed skills, as it is critical to assess what pupils need quickly to begin remediation as soon as possible (Rumberger, 2003). This quick evaluation would provide teachers and interventionists with crucial information about student strengths and needs.

The principal participants in this study also described formal supports that are in place at their campuses. All four principals stated that they had shared documents created for each new student after enrollment. These documents include information about the student's previous schools, testing data, special programming, strengths and needs, and an action plan for student support. This information is then shared with the assistant principals, counselors, academic interventionists, and instructional specialists. Then an

action plan is generated to determine the interventions needed. As evidenced in the mobility literature and from the interviewed principals, purposeful interventions are essential to support mobile students academically and socially.

Implications for Practice for Teachers

Teachers must ensure mobile students feel connected to their campus and classroom. As presented in previous research, this study found that intentional and purposeful support from the classroom teacher can be beneficial for supporting mobile students. One way for teachers to help their students is to have high expectations for their learners and ensure rigorous instruction. It is also noted that teachers should have elevated expectations for themselves and use every minute of classroom time (Grant et al., 2008).

Another suggestion from Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) offered that teachers should create a portfolio for each student that includes work samples. Since it was previously mentioned that mobile students usually move often, the portfolio can be sent to the new school when students enroll. This teacher practice will provide valuable academic information for teachers to help assess student needs and strengths when the student moves to another new school.

Participants discussed the value of connecting to their students' parents when a new student joins their class. This connection can lead to more social capital for the families. It is suggested that students have more social capital when there is a partnership between educators, parents, and the community (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, networks that lead to social capital within children's families, schools, peer groups, and the community positively affect educational achievement and, consequently, students'

behavior and development. Teachers should also positively interact with their student and their family to understand the family's issues (Grant et al., 2008). This relationship will help the parent and the child feel more connected to the school and hopefully reduce the likelihood of another school change (Kerbow, 1996). Parents can connect with their parents by meeting with them either via phone or at an in-person conference. Several of the study participants detailed how they connect with their parents. It is in the best interest of the teacher, student, and parents to be connected and work together to support the student at the new school.

Implications for Future Research

I examined the lived experiences of elementary school principals and teachers and what they do to support the connectedness of mobile students. Limited research on practical methods educators can use to aid mobile students as they enroll in new schools is available. Additionally, there needs to be more information about how school districts and government agencies can support mobile students. Thus, research targeted toward this population and how to better support their success would be beneficial to add to the literature. Research findings will contribute to the research gap, specifically on effectively supporting mobile students academically and socially on elementary school campuses. Also, this study's results can help educators develop a deeper understanding of the challenges educators and mobile students experience to create targeted support when supporting mobile learners and their families.

The study's limitations serve as a starting point for further research. A greater sample of principals and teachers from other school systems might give valuable information on effective strategies for working with mobile students. What is being done

to support mobile students in the researched district is likely to be different than in other districts, so a larger study population could be used to identify other best practices among educators.

Future longitudinal research might track mobile students from when they enroll to when they leave one school to assess how connected they reported being at the start of their time compared to when the student leaves the school. By tracking students over time, there would be an opportunity to determine if the supports implemented at the schools had long-lasting impacts on students' academic and social success.

Another idea for future research would be to survey the students when they enroll and again later in the year to see how they report school connectedness. This prospective study could provide a more detailed description of students' lived experiences at a new school and their reaction to the supports that the schools have implemented. Since mobility is on the rise in the United States, future research would be beneficial to uncover best practices that are shared with educators across different school districts or even states.

Theoretical Framework

The results of this study show the theoretical impacts social capital can provide to positively support mobile students and their families. There are many benefits to having social capital, such as a sense of belonging, feeling safe, and having networks to belong to. Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of having social networks such as information sharing, trust, and reciprocity. The collective value of all social networks and the benefits help people resolve individual and collective problems more easily (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (2000) also asserted that school capital shapes child and youth

development, and social capital increases if a school has a positive academic climate. Furthermore, networks that lead to social capital within children's families, schools, peer groups, and the community positively affect educational achievement and, consequently, students' behavior and development.

The tenets of social capital theory, as conceptualized for this study, manifested in several meaningful ways through this analysis. For example, the study participants articulated the social challenges that mobile students have and described informal and formal support at the school and classroom levels. The consistency among the responses highlights the impact that caring people, like the principals and teachers in this study, help connect students with resources that will increase social capital for the students (Lee, 2014).

Therefore, educators are responsible for providing opportunities to increase social capital for new students. The participants in this study explained how they intentionally interact with their students and their families to understand and support the mobile families they work with. These relationships help the parents and the children feel more connected to the school and, hopefully, reduces the likelihood of another school change (Kerbow, 1996). Therefore, all educators working with mobile students and their families must intentionally and informally support this group.

Limitations

This study is limited because all the principals and teachers interviewed for this study are from the same school district and the researcher's colleagues. The principals are all acquainted, so this might cause the interviewees to not truthfully answer the questions in the interviews to avoid looking ineffective. Also, since the teachers were on the same

TEAMS interview, their responses could affect how others responded to the protocol questions. However, at the beginning of the interviews, all participants were notified that their responses would be confidential and that their names would not be shared with anyone besides the researcher. No general conclusions can be drawn because the research was restricted to a specific district.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provided specific evidence from lived experiences of teachers and principals who work with mobile students. Given that I am an elementary school principal at a mobile campus, I was not surprised at most of the findings from the study. However, what I found to be the most valuable takeaway from the study was the information gathered from the educators who participated. Talking to the principals and teachers during the interviews provided a rare opportunity for educators to take the time to discuss a problem of practice at length. The study also confirmed the benefits of having purposeful and planned social and academic interventions to support mobile students and their families. As was stated in Chapter 1, mobility rather than stability is becoming the norm in schools across the United States. This group of students depends on skilled educators who can support them.

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Appendix A

Principal Interview Protocol

1. Tell me about your educational journey to teaching or principalship. What kind of schools have you worked at?
2. Mobility for this study will be defined as changing schools more than once during a school year. What training has prepared you to work with mobile students?
What training have your teachers had to work with mobile students?
3. How are mobile students identified when they enroll in your school? Are there procedures in place that help quickly identify student needs and strengths? Does your registrar alert you or your counselors about the enrollment of mobile students?
4. Can you describe the academic and social interventions implemented at the classroom and campus levels in your school to support your mobile students?
5. Do your mobile students and their families feel connected to your class or school? Why or why not? What can schools do to increase connectedness for students and their families?
6. How do you meet new students at your school? Parents of the new students? Are the counselors aware of the enrollment of mobile students?
7. Do you feel that you have been successful in working with mobile students in the past? Why or why not? What resources do you need to support school connectedness for your mobile students? What resources do your teachers need to support school connectedness?

8. What challenges do mobile students have when enrolling in a new school? What can the school do to make this an easier transition? What can teachers do to make this an easier transition? Have you used any of these strategies before? What was the result of these support strategies?
9. Tell me what you know about the McKinney-Vento Act and how it impacts your mobile students? Do your teachers know about the Act and the protections afforded to your mobile students?
10. How would you describe the culture of your school? How do you teach your new students about traditions and your school culture? Is there a plan for new students to learn about these traditions?
11. How do you determine which class a new student is placed into when they enroll at your school?
12. What information do your teachers receive about mobile students before enrolling? After they enroll?
13. Often, mobile students have gaps in their learning. How do your teachers strategically plan to meet their specific needs?

What else would you like to share about your school or working with mobile students?

Appendix B

Teacher Interview (Focus Group) Protocol

1. Tell me about your educational journey to teaching. What kind of schools have you worked at?
2. Mobility for this study will be defined as changing schools more than once during a school year. What training has prepared you to work with mobile students?
3. How are mobile students identified when they enroll in your school? Are there procedures in place that help quickly identify student needs and strengths? Does your registrar alert you or your counselors about the enrollment of mobile students?
4. Can you describe the academic and social interventions implemented at the classroom and campus levels in your school to support your mobile students?
5. Do your mobile students and their families feel connected to your class or school? Why or why not? What can schools do to increase connectedness for students and their families?
6. How do you meet new students at your school? Parents of the new students?
7. Do you feel that you have been successful in working with mobile students in the past? Why or why not? What resources do you need to support school connectedness for your mobile students? What resources do your teachers need to support school connectedness?

8. What challenges do mobile students have when enrolling in a new school? What can the school do to make this an easier transition? What can you, as teachers, do to make this an easier transition? Have you used any of these strategies before? What was the result of these support strategies?
9. Tell me what you know about the McKinney-Vento Act and how it impacts your mobile students?
10. How would you describe the culture of your school? How do you teach your new students about traditions and your school culture? Is there a plan for new students to learn about these traditions?
11. What information do you receive about mobile students before enrolling? After they enroll?
12. Often, mobile students have gaps in their learning. How do you strategically plan to meet their specific needs?
13. What else would you like to share about your school or working with mobile students?

Appendix C

Principal Consent Letter



Title of research study: School Connectedness: How Principals and Teachers
Can Support Mobile Students

Investigator: Amy Frank

This project is part of a dissertation being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Bradley Davis.

Key Information:

The following focused information is being presented to assist you in understanding the key elements of this study, as well as the basic reasons why you may or may not wish to consider taking part. This section is only a summary; more detailed information, including how to contact the research team for additional information or questions, follows within the remainder of this document under the “Detailed Information” heading.

What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Taking part in the research is voluntary; whether you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide and can ask questions at any time during the study.

Detailed Information:

The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

I am inviting you to take part in a research study about student mobility.

In general, your participation in the research involves two single one-on-one interviews on your experience as a principal leading a school with a highly mobile student body.

Taking part in this study has minimal risks. Potential risks include potential discomfort when discussing your perceived preparation during the interview. While there is no personal benefit, you can compare the risks to the benefit of contributing to the study of leadership preparation within the field of education. This research has been reviewed by the University of Houston Internal Review Board.

Why is this research being done?

Currently, mobility rates are increasing; therefore, the school must provide educational interventions to support students when students enroll in a new school. There is a preponderance of existing literature that defines the negative effects of mobility. However, little research provides practical support that school principals can use at the schools to support their mobile student population. This study intends to provide a clear understanding of the effects of mobility and what school leaders can do to help alleviate these effects. This research study adds to the literature by suggesting that educational leaders can impact academic achievement and identify interventions that may enhance the school experience for highly mobile students.

How long will the research last?

I expect you to be in this research study for one 60-minute one-on-one interview. The interview will be conducted in the spring of 2023.

How many people will be studied?

I expect to enroll about four principals and four teacher focus groups in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

- I will contact you to schedule one 60 one-on-one interviews. I will interview you via Teams.
- I anticipate the one-on-one interviews to begin in the spring of 2023. One-on-one interviews will last up to 60 minutes. Principal participants will be interviewed one time.
- Interviews will be conducted privately.
- Interviews will take place at times convenient for study participants. I aim to be flexible so that study participation is not taxing, uncomfortable, or too demanding of time.

This research study includes the following component(s) where we plan to audio record you as the research participant:

- I agree to be audio-recorded during the research study.

- I agree that the audio recording can be used in publications/presentations.
- I do not agree that the audio recording can be used in publications/presentations.
- I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the research study.

Potential participants that do not agree to be audio recorded will be excused from the research.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You can choose not to participate in the research, and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you are a UH student, a decision to take part or not or to withdraw from the research will have no effect on your grades or standing with your institution.

Your alternative to taking part in this research study is not to take part.

What happens if I say yes, but change my mind later?

You can leave the research anytime, and it will not be held against you.

If you decide to leave the research, every point of information pertaining to you will be permanently and completely erased from the researcher's records.

If you decide to leave the research, contact the principal investigator so that the investigators can remove your data from the study's record.

If you stop being in the research, already collected data that still include your name or other personal information will be removed from the study's record.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We do not expect any risks related to the research activities. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please contact Amy Frank.

- Emotional discomfort in anticipation of answering questions (NOTE: You do not have to answer any question you are uncomfortable answering).
- Emotional discomfort in describing past or present experiences working with mobile students.
- Taking part in this research study will not incur added costs to you.

Will I receive anything for being in this study?

Participants in this study will not receive compensation for the time they invested in participating.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include contributing to research regarding a principal's effectiveness in supporting highly mobile students and their teachers.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information private, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the code number will be kept separate from these materials. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other representatives of this organization, as well as collaborating institutions and federal agencies that oversee our research.

This study collects private information with identifiers (such as name, birth date, etc.). Following collection, researchers may choose to remove all identifying information from these data. Once identifiers are removed, this information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

We may share and/or publish the results of this research. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

To whom can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you should talk to Amy Frank at ae frank@cougarnet.UH.EDU, or you can call me at 713-824-6594.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or cphs@central.uh.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.

You cannot reach the research team.

You want to talk to someone besides the research team.

You have questions about your rights as a research subject.

You want to get information or provide input about this research.

May we contact you regarding future research opportunities?

In the future, our research team may be interested in contacting you for other research studies we undertake or to conduct a follow-up study to this one. There is never any obligation to take part in additional research. Do we have permission to contact you to provide additional information?

Yes

No

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

_____ Signature of subject	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of the subject	
_____ Signature of the person obtaining consent	_____ Date
_____ Printed name of person obtaining consent.	
_____ Printed name of the person witnessing consent process	

Appendix D

Teacher Consent Letter



Consent to Take Part in a Human Research Study-Teacher

Title of research study: School Connectedness: How Principals and Teachers

Can Support Mobile Students

Investigator: Amy Frank

This project is part of a dissertation being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Bradley Davis.

Key Information:

The following focused information is being presented to assist you in understanding the key elements of this study, as well as the basic reasons why you may or may not wish to consider taking part. This section is only a summary; more detailed information, including how to contact the research team for additional information or questions, follows within the remainder of this document under the “Detailed Information” heading.

What should I know about a research study?

Someone will explain this research study to you.

Taking part in the research is voluntary; whether you take part is up to you.

You can choose not to take part.

You can agree to take part and later change your mind.

Your decision will not be held against you.

You can ask all the questions you want before you decide and can ask questions at any time during the study.

Detailed Information:

The following is more detailed information about this study, in addition to the information listed above.

We invite you to take part in a research study about student mobility.

In general, your participation in the research involves one group interview on your experience as a teacher at a school with a highly mobile student body.

Taking part in this study has minimal risks. Potential risks include potential discomfort when discussing your perceived preparation during the interview. While there is no personal benefit, you can compare the risks to the benefit of contributing to the study of leadership preparation within the field of education. This research has been reviewed by the University of Houston Internal Review Board.

Why is this research being done?

Currently, mobility rates are increasing; therefore, the school must provide educational interventions to support students when students enroll in a new school. There is a preponderance of existing literature that defines the negative effects of mobility. However, little research provides practical support that school principals can use at the schools to support their mobile student population. This study intends to provide a clear understanding of the effects of mobility and what school leaders can do to help alleviate these effects. This research study adds to the literature by suggesting that educational leaders can impact academic achievement and identify interventions that may enhance the school experience for highly mobile students.

How long will the research last?

I expect that you will be in this research study for one focus group interview. The interview will be conducted in the spring of 2023.

How many people will be studied?

I expect to enroll about four principals and four teacher focus groups in this research study.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

- I will contact you to schedule one 60-minute focus group interview. I will interview you via Teams.
- I anticipate the group interviews to begin in the spring of 2023. Group interviews will last up to 60 minutes. Participants will be interviewed one time.
- Interviews will take place at times most convenient for study participants. My aim is to be flexible so that study participation is not taxing, uncomfortable, or too demanding of time.

This research study includes the following component(s) where we plan to audio record you as the research participant:

- I agree to be audio-recorded during the research study.
 - I agree that the audio recording can be used in publications/presentations.

- I do not agree that the audio recording can be used in publications/presentations.
- I do not agree to be audio-recorded during the research study.

Potential participants that do not agree to be audio recorded will be excused from the research.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

You can choose not to take part in the research, and it will not be held against you. Choosing not to take part will involve no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you are a UH student, a decision to take part or not or to withdraw from the research will have no effect on your grades or standing with your institution.

Your alternative to taking part in this research study is not to take part.

What happens if I say yes, but change my mind later?

You can leave the research anytime, and it will not be held against you.

If you decide to leave the research, every point of information pertaining to you will be permanently and completely erased from the researcher's records.

If you decide to leave the research, contact the principal investigator so that the investigators can remove your data from the study's record.

If you stop being in the research, already collected data that still include your name or other personal information will be removed from the study's record.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

We do not expect any risks related to the research activities. If you choose to take part and undergo a negative event you feel is related to the study, please contact Amy Frank.

- Emotional discomfort in anticipation of answering questions (NOTE: You do not have to answer any question you are uncomfortable answering).
- Emotional discomfort in describing past or present experiences of working with mobile students.
- Taking part in this research study will not incur added costs to you.

Will I receive anything for being in this study?

Participants in this study will not receive any compensation for the time that they invested in participating.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

We cannot promise any benefits to you or others from your taking part in this research. However, possible benefits include contributing to research regarding a teacher's effectiveness in supporting highly mobile students.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

Efforts will be made to keep your personal information private, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number, which will appear on all written study materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the code number will be kept separate from these materials. We cannot promise complete secrecy. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and other representatives of this organization, as well as collaborating institutions and federal agencies that oversee our research.

This study collects private information.

with identifiers (such as name, birth date, etc.). Following collection, researchers may choose to remove all identifying information from these data. Once identifiers are removed, this information could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

We may share and/or publish the results of this research. However, unless otherwise detailed in this document, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Who can I talk to?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, you should talk to Amy Frank at ae frank@cougarnet.UH.EDU, or you can call me at 713-824-6594.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Houston Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also talk to them at (713) 743-9204 or cphs@central.uh.edu if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
You want to get information or provide input about this research.

May we contact you regarding future research opportunities?

In the future, our research team may be interested in contacting you for other research studies we undertake or to conduct a follow-up study to this one. There is never any obligation to take part in additional research. Do we have permission to contact you to provide additional information?

- Yes
 No

Signature Block for Capable Adult

Your signature documents your consent to take part in this research.

_____ Signature of subject	_____ Date
_____ The printed name of subject	
_____ Signature of the person obtaining consent	_____ Date
_____ The printed name of person obtaining consent.	
_____ The printed name of the person witnessing consent process	

Appendix E

Meadow ISD Approval

District Improvement and Accountability

To: Amy Frank
 From: Ashley Clayburn, Ed.D.
 Cc: Cesar Diaz, Becky Mendez, Tamera Felder, Patricia Myers
 Date: December 15, 2022
 Re: Approval of Application to Conduct Research in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD

Your request to conduct the research project titled: School Connectedness: How Principals and Teachers Can Support Mobile Students, has been approved for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

As you pursue this project please refer and adhere to the conditions listed below:

General Conditions:

- Keep Cesar Diaz, Becky Mendez, Tamera Felder, and Patricia Myers, principals of Bane ES, Holbrook ES, Hancock ES, and Moore ES respectively, informed of all activities involved with the project.
- You are approved to conduct your research only on the following campus(es): Bane ES, Holbrook ES, Hancock ES, and Moore ES
- Dr. Ashley Clayburn will email your principal candidates the consent form. Once these are signed and returned to Dr. Clayburn, she will email them to you. Once you have the signed principal consent forms, you may contact the principals to set up interview dates and begin the process of identifying teachers for the focus groups.
- As your research sponsors, Cesar Diaz, Becky Mendez, Tamera Felder, and Patricia Myers will assist you in the following manner:
 - Work with you to determine which teachers would be the best fit for the focus groups.
 - Send consent forms to the identified teachers at the campuses named above. The forms will only be sent once. If participants do not respond, they will not be contacted a second time.
 - Consent forms should be returned to Cesar Diaz, Becky Mendez, Tamera Felder, or Patricia Myers respectively. He/She will provide you with the consent forms of those individuals who consent to participate in the study. At that point, you may contact the participants to set up the focus group times.
 - You may not contact the principals or teachers directly until consent to participate has been received by Ashley Clayburn, Cesar Diaz, Becky Mendez, Tamera Felder, or Patricia Myers.
- Interviews and focus groups may be audio recorded only. No videotaping allowed.

Data Related Conditions:

- No additional data may be collected beyond the interview and focus group responses.
- Practice confidentiality while conducting the various steps necessary to complete the project.
- Use a pseudonym instead of actual names of the district, campuses, or personnel in your research report.

10300 Jones Road, Houston, Texas 77065
 281.897.4000

P.O. Box 692003
 Houston, Texas 77269-2003

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- Use a random code system to record data collected. Never use actual names, ID numbers, social security numbers, etc.

Appendix F

IRB Approval



DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION

March 8, 2023

Amy Frank
acfrank@uh.edu

Dear Amy Frank:

On March 6, 2023, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	School Connectedness: How Principals and Teachers Can Support Mobile Students
Investigator:	Amy Frank
IRB ID:	STUDY00003988
Funding/ Proposed Funding:	Name: Unfunded
Award ID:	
Award Title:	
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 502 principal consent 3 7.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • 502 teacher consent 3 7.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • 503 IRB Protocol 3 8.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol; • CFISD Approval letter.pdf, Category: Letters of Cooperation / Permission; • Focus group questionnaire, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Principal email for study 3 7.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Principal initial email 3 7.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Principal Interview Protocol 2 26.pdf, Category: Study tools (ex: surveys, interview/focus group questions, data collection forms, etc.); • Teacher email for study 3 7.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH
Institutional Review Boards

Review Category:	Expedited
Committee Name:	Noncommittee review
IRB Coordinator:	Maria Martinez

The IRB approved the study on March 8, 2023; recruitment and procedures detailed within the approved protocol may now be initiated.

As this study was approved under an exempt or expedited process, recently revised regulatory requirements do not require the submission of annual continuing review documentation. However, it is critical that the following submissions are made to the IRB to ensure continued compliance:

- Modifications to the protocol prior to initiating any changes (for example, the addition of study personnel, updated recruitment materials, change in study design, requests for additional subjects)
- Reportable New Information/Unanticipated Problems Involving Risks to Subjects or Others
- Study Closure

Unless a waiver has been granted by the IRB, use the stamped consent form approved by the IRB to document consent. The approved version may be downloaded from the documents tab.

In conducting this study, you are required to follow the requirements listed in the Investigator Manual (HRP-103), which can be found by navigating to the IRB Library within the IRB system.

Sincerely,

Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office
University of Houston, Division of Research
713 743 9204
cphs@central.uh.edu
<http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/>