8-2024

How Teachers Perceive Teacher Leadership in a Massachusetts Urban Turnaround High School: A Concurrent Mixed-Methods Case Study

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HOW TEACHERS PERCEIVE TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN A MASSACHUSETTS URBAN TURNAROUND HIGH SCHOOL: A CONCURRENT MIXED-METHODS CASE STUDY

A Dissertation Presented

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2024

Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies Program

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ABSTRACT

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August 2024

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Turnaround schools represent a strategy for swiftly revitalizing underperforming educational institutions. This study examined how teachers perceived the role of teacher leadership within one urban turnaround high school. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?
2. In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of student performance in turnaround schools?

This research was conducted through a concurrent mixed-methods case study that involved one urban turnaround high school. The findings offer valuable insights into teachers'

perceptions of teacher leadership and its impact on school improvement initiatives. The results also have implications for refining state policies in Massachusetts concerning turnaround schools, facilitating positive transformations in the roles of teacher leaders within such educational settings.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends who have encouraged me to obtain my doctorate. I would also like to dedicate this study to all my participants from Commonwealth High School. If it wasn't for all your support and dedication, I would not have been able to complete this study. I am truly grateful to all parties who were involved in this process. It is my hope that the findings of this study will help to advocate for change in turnaround policies and practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my parents, Betsy and Mike, you both have been so supportive of all my goals and aspirations in life. Your sacrifices have allowed me to pursue my dreams; your love and support have always pushed me to expand my horizons. I am truly grateful and so lucky to have you as my parents. I would not be who I am today if it wasn't for you both.

To Dr. Wenfan Yan, I would like to personally thank you for serving as my advisor and dissertation chair. You have supported me since the start of this doctoral program, and you have been a constant staple in this journey. You have taught me so much, and I am truly grateful for all your dedication and advice along the way. Enjoy your retirement.

To Dr. Krueger-Henney, for all your endless support throughout my entire dissertation study. I am so grateful to have had you for numerous courses in this program. I learned so much from you and your expertise. You have always pushed me to dig deeper and look at things from a different perspective; you have helped me grow as a teacher leader and advocate for urban education.

Finally, to Dr. Kristen Weeks. Thank you for being my mentor. You encouraged me to pursue my doctoral work 5 years ago. You played a major role in my development as a teacher and as a leader. You continue to support me in my leadership journey, and I will always be grateful for everything you have done along the way.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO TURNAROUND SCHOOLS AND TEACHER LEADERSHIP

School reform practices and education policies regarding school improvement have evolved greatly over the last decade. Today, one of the major efforts to improve student achievement in low-performing urban schools centers on implementing a school turnaround model. According to Cucchiara et al. (2015), “School turnaround is a reform strategy that strives for quick and dramatic transformation of low performing schools and has gained prominence in recent years” (p. 259). Peck and Reitzug (2014) stated that “‘turnaround’ refers to the rapid, significant improvement in the academic achievement of persistently low-achieving schools” (p. 8). Most turnaround schools are located in urban and rural areas where there are high levels of poverty. This model is aimed at transforming academically low-performing and low-achieving schools, with each state's Department of Education hoping they will become higher achieving in a short time.

It is important to outline my role in this study. I was a former teacher at the school that served as my study site. As a teacher at this urban turnaround high school, I saw firsthand many of the inequities that plague these schools. I worked at the school for 6 years during the turnaround process, starting when the school first underwent the turnaround process. During my time there, I saw teachers left out of key discussions about ways to improve the school. I saw teachers doing great work but forced to change their teaching

styles and curricula when new leadership came in. In this particular school, there were constant changes in principal leadership, and when a new principal came in, they thought they could "fix" the school quickly. In my 6 years, I saw four principals come and go after trying unsuccessfully to turn the school around. Working in this environment, it appeared to me that turnaround was not an effective measure for "fixing" the school since it became evident that one cannot undo years of neglect and expect drastic changes. Therefore, it was my goal as a researcher and as a former turnaround school teacher to further investigate how teachers in leadership positions can help improve the school during the turnaround process.

Problem Statement

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts adopted its turnaround policy in the early 2000s. Since 2010, 65 K–12 Massachusetts public schools were designated underperforming under the state's accountability measurements. Of the 65 schools listed as turnaround, 13 are considered high schools (Grades 9–12)—only one of which has ever successfully exited turnaround status. This latter school, part of the Boston Public Schools, was in turnaround for exactly 3 years and exited turnaround in 2014 (Lane et al, 2016).

These statistics highlight a major problem: The high school success rate of exiting turnaround status is only 8% in Massachusetts. It seems evident that this issue is not being adequately addressed in Massachusetts, as no other high schools have been able to exit this designation since 2014. Based on the low success rate at the high school level, it is indisputable that there are various factors preventing these schools from exiting turnaround status or improving their school conditions. Thus, there is a critical need for research in this area of school reform.

In addition, regarding the physical locations of the turnaround high schools in Massachusetts, they all are situated in urban areas with high levels of poverty. According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE, 2021), five high schools in Boston Public Schools are in turnaround. In addition to the five schools in Boston, New Bedford High School, the High School of Science and Technology in Springfield, and the High School of Commerce in Springfield, are all in turnaround status (DESE, 2021). All these schools are in urban settings. When examining the demographics of the schools in Boston, over 40% of the students are of African American descent, and about 50% are Hispanic. At New Bedford High School, 45% of students are Hispanic, and 15% are African American. Finally, at the schools in Springfield, 70% of the students are Hispanic, and 18% are African American (DESE, 2021).

These turnaround schools are primarily composed of students of color. More than 90% of the students in these schools are considered high-needs and low-income, meaning they require additional support in their learning and also live in poverty (DESE, 2021). There are no turnaround high schools in any other suburban or rural areas, which is important to note when considering the significance of this problem. There is a high need to investigate these schools to determine the effectiveness of turnaround. Therefore, I argue research should focus on how teacher leadership opportunities can lead to school improvement. Since turnaround primarily impacts schools in urban locations where there are high levels of poverty, this demonstrates that no other schools in other geographic locations, such as the suburbs, need to be "fixed." However, turnaround does not solve the problem of poverty, which is a systemic issue that leads to many of the problems these schools face. In fact, turnaround is detrimental to the students who attend these schools. Turnaround is a deceiving

term that designates a school as failing, and there is a direct correlation between turnaround and students who live in poverty. Though the turnaround model is used to fix schools, systemic issues of school reform and economic inequality already keep these schools from succeeding. Indeed, there is little evidence that turnaround doing anything but perpetuate these systemic issues.

Since school turnaround does not appear to be an effective means of improving low-performing urban high schools in Massachusetts, it is important to understand the perspectives of teachers from these schools on why they do not think their school is improving. The reason for studying teachers and not students, other staff, or families is that there is very little research on the role teachers play in turnaround schools, particularly the ways that teachers are positioned throughout the turnaround process at these schools (Cucchiara et al., 2015; Herman et al., 2008; Leithwood et al., 2010). Scholars have found that when teachers are included in any turnaround decision-making processes, the school is more likely to improve. For example, when teachers have a voice in making decisions in these schools, there are positive outcomes because teachers and administrators are working together to help improve school conditions (Lane et al., 2019). Therefore, I contend that there is an urgent need to study and strengthen a knowledge base around the roles teachers play in turnaround schools.

One of the major gaps in the turnaround literature relates to the perspectives of teachers. Teachers play a major role in these schools, yet little is known about their beliefs or their contributions to the process (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Most of the existing literature has focused on the role of school administrators (Anderson, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Meyers & Sadler, 2018), and other major studies have centered on

the students who attend these schools (Giraldo-Garcia et al., 2021; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Mitras & Gross, 2009; Pazey & DeMatthews, 2019). There are very few studies about how teachers are engaged in and add input to the turnaround process, even though teachers are essential to schools as they must continuously plan and create curricular materials and engaging lessons and units, cultivate strong classroom relationships, communicate with families and parents, as well as complete their professional responsibilities such as working with a team and participating in professional development opportunities. Thus, learning more about how teacher leaders help in school improvement plans is imperative to turnaround research.

As a former turnaround school teacher, I have observed that the significance of this problem is often overlooked by others. It is also important to understand what it means to work as a teacher in a turnaround school environment. When a school enters turnaround, the school community is put under a microscope. There is increased surveillance by district personnel doing classroom walkthroughs. There is an increased presence of state representatives from DESE. There are also independent researchers coming into classrooms to evaluate teachers, even though some of these researchers have never taught before and do not understand what it is really like teaching in an urban environment. To the students, these are strangers invading their classroom spaces. The students and the teachers get nervous and anxious during these visits.

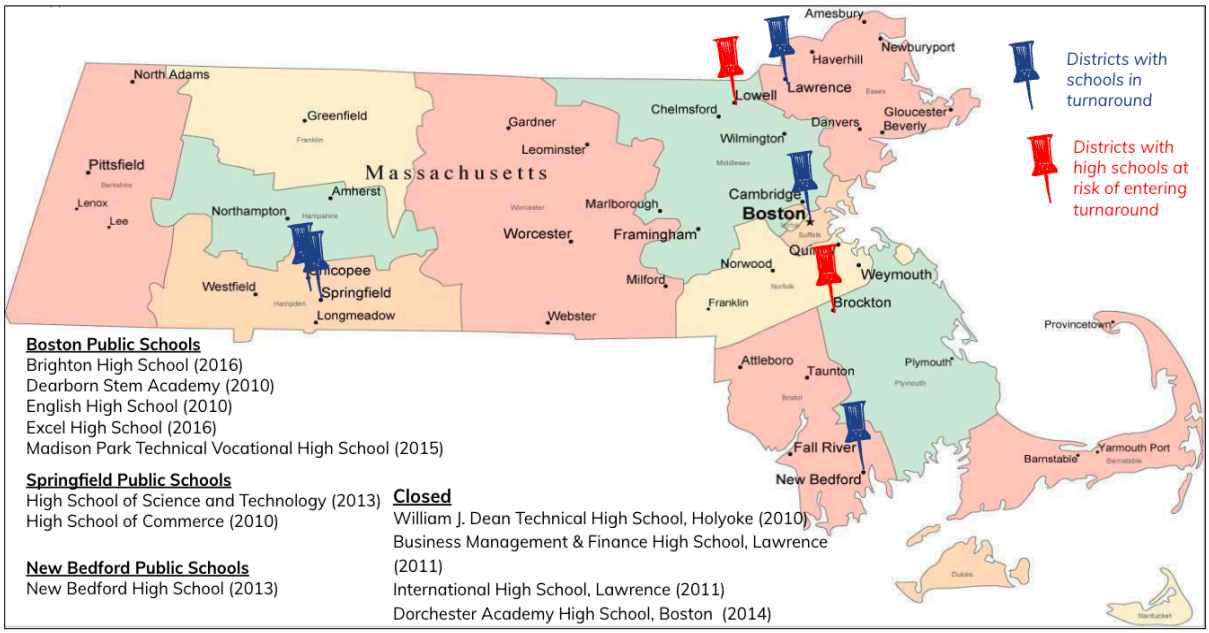
In addition, teachers are held to much higher expectations. Teachers in turnaround schools are expected to implement pedagogical strategies that will lead to an increase in student achievement that can be measured by the state's standardized assessment. If there is no growth in state testing scores, teachers are scrutinized and could potentially lose their

jobs. These teachers work a longer workday and are mandated to complete several hours of professional development each year to help improve their practice and teaching skills. The pressure on these teachers is immense but often overlooked.

As shown in Figure 1, all the current turnaround high schools in Massachusetts are located in urban areas of Massachusetts. The blue pins represent districts that have high schools currently in turnaround, and the red pins mark districts that are at risk of entering turnaround status. The red pins are also found in urban areas, indicating a direct correlation between risk of entering turnaround status and a community's socioeconomic status and location. In addition, the figure highlights that of the 12 turnaround schools, four have already closed. As mentioned previously, only one school has ever successfully exited turnaround, Jeremiah Burke High School in Boston, Massachusetts. However, since 2010, no other high school has been able to exit this status, raising concerns that the turnaround model is not effective in improving these schools.

Figure 1

Current Turnaround High School Locations in Massachusetts



A Brief History of Turnaround

School turnaround stems from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which President Johnson signed into law on April 11, 1965. This was the federal government's first involvement in U.S. schools and has since become the source of most school reform efforts today (Thomas & Brady, 2005). When the ESEA of 1965 was enacted, its purpose was to help increase federal funding to schools with populations of students considered to be living in poverty. According to Alfred (1965), "The basic aim of this legislation was to equalize educational opportunities and assure every child can develop his or her inherent mental capacity" (p. 483). ESEA sought to increase funding to disadvantaged, low-income students, and, more specifically, it led to the creation of Title 1 programs. Title 1 schools are found in areas with high poverty that require additional funding to help close achievement gaps by

race and income (Liu, 2007). Title 1 programs impact many students of color who live in high-poverty urban areas (Gamson et al., 2015).

School turnaround practices came about after a more recent update to ESEA in 2001: No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Duke, 2006). As a result, schools are held to high accountability standards, especially through standardized testing. For example, students in Massachusetts are expected to earn passing scores on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams. Currently, a passing MCAS score is 470 or higher on a scaled score from 440 to 560. High school students must earn a 470 or higher on all three required MCAS exams, including English language arts, mathematics, and science (DESE, 2021). Peck and Reitzug (2014) stated, "A more general unintended consequence is the adverse impact of focusing too much attention in high-poverty schools on raising test scores" (p.733). In the federal government's view, high test scores indicate a school's positive or satisfactory achievement level. However, high test scores should not be synonymous with achievement. According to Riegel (2020), students need to have their basic needs met—such as being fed, feeling safe, and having a sense of belonging—before we can expect them to be engaged in learning (Riegel, 2020). However, turnaround policies ignore poverty as a factor that impacts student success in school. A good test score should not constitute the only measure of whether a student is learning or achieving in school. Many studies have shown that standardized testing is not an efficient way to measure proficiency and growth in students (Henry 2007; Kohn, 2000; Rezai-Rashti & Lingard, 2020). Standardized tests are only one measure of what students have learned; there are several other ways students can show what they have learned. As an alternative to testing, students should be able to build portfolios of work demonstrating that they meet state standards. Teachers also must adjust

their curricula to helps students prepare for these standardized exams, which can take the fun and creativity out of learning (Kohn, 2000).

Current education reform legislation has attempted to increase student performance in all schools, not just turnaround schools. Yet, today, one of the major reasons that all schools are not improving is because current policy holds schools to very high, almost impossible, expectations, like getting high passing scores on the MCAS and closing student achievement gaps. Since many schools are historically and chronically underfunded, it is unrealistic to expect all schools to improve equally (Thomas & Brady, 2005). Most urban high schools are not given a realistic chance to improve. Massachusetts turnaround policy gives schools 3 years to show significant improvement (Lane et al, 2016) if schools do not meet accountability measures as outlined by the state, the school will either close or be taken over by an outside educational agency (Lane et al, 2016). Since 2010, three high schools in Massachusetts have closed due to not meeting the state's expectations (Lane et al, 2016). In addition, there are other external factors, including poverty and food and shelter insecurities, that impact student performance in low-income and disadvantaged communities (Gamson et al, 2015). Moreover, teachers are responsible for meeting the challenging expectations of getting students to pass these exams, despite all these factors outside school that impact student learning.

Turnaround, with its 3-year timescale, is an unrealistic approach to improving student achievement. The turnaround model has been borrowed from the business world to rapidly improve an organization (Johnson, 2013). In the business realm, major changes are made in leadership, under which new plans are put into place to help the company improve. This is similar to school turnaround policies because turnaround involves changing the structure and

leadership of an underperforming school. As a result, a major emphasis by school leadership is on the teachers, who are expected to help improve their students' performance on high stakes exams. However, this does not necessarily lead to an increase in student achievement (May & Sanders, 2013).

According to May and Sanders (2013),

> Under the current version of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Department of Education predicts that failing schools could jump from 37% to 82% with estimates that four out of five public schools could be labeled as failing with the majority attributed to struggling urban schools. (p. 42)

These failing schools have since adopted a model that is familiar to the business world. According to Johnson (2013), "The discourse and strategy of 'turnaround' are borrowed from a business model of quickly turning around corporations in danger of going into bankruptcy or 'organizational decline'" (pp. 234–235). Schools are not business organizations and what works for businesses may not be applicable for educational settings.

NCLB called for stricter accountability measures for schools. Under the law, every school was required to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). According to Linn and Baker (2002), AYP includes "measurable objectives for improved achievement by all students and for specific groups: economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency" (p. 4). Measurable objectives include attendance rates, graduation rates, and testing scores on state assessments. In other words, anything one can collect data on in a school can be considered a measurable objective, and in turnaround schools, many of these objectives are intensely scrutinized (Stobaugh et al., 2016). In addition, Linn and Baker (2002) found that

AYP is based heavily on students' performance on these state-mandated assessments. However, the measurable objectives tend to rely most significantly on the outcomes of the state testing scores; as a result, this is a major focus in turnaround schools. It is imperative to understand that it has become the teacher's responsibility and job to help students prepare for these assessments. That said, gaining more insight into how teachers delegate the high-stakes task of preparing students for these exams among themselves is essential to understanding how these practices impact turnaround schools.

Schools in turnaround focus on improving pedagogy to help raise test scores. Thus, turnaround schools tend to focus on pedagogical practices that are research-based (Redding & Corbett, 2018). Jennings and Renter (2006) found that NCLB had a major impact on public education with its emphasis on more testing and accountability measures. Consequently, this put more pressure on turnaround schools to improve students' performance on high-stakes testing. This also, coincidentally, put more pressure on the teaching staff at these schools since their employment could be terminated if their students had low test scores (Smarick, 2010).

Many scholars have suggested that this emphasis on intense standardized testing in turnaround schools is the result of a neoliberal reform movement. This movement emphasizes the privatization of public education by corporate entities and wealthy individuals and investment in charter schools, which is detrimental to the foundations of public education (Bartlett et al., 2002, as cited in Johnson, 2015, p. 242). According to Wayne Au (2016),

> Within this milieu of free-market, neoliberal education policies, high-stakes, standardized tests have emerged as perhaps the most crucial piece underlying these

> reform efforts. The high-stakes, standardized tests provide the data on which student, teacher, and school value are measured, establish the basis for viewing education as a market where consumers can make choices about where to send their children to school. (40)

Corporate entities are profiting from these turnaround reform practices as they want to show that turnaround can make these schools much better and to encourage parents to send their children to these schools. Yet, this is not in the best interest of the students since they are seen merely as objects to help corporate investors make more money. It is also not in the best interest of the teachers, as they are the ones who must meet the needs of unrealistic expectations in preparing students for standardized exams (Cucchiara et al., 2015).

School turnaround plans comprise just one response to preventing a failing school from closing. The turnaround reform movement is relatively new to the education world, and according to Peck and Reitzug (2014), there is little data showing that this type of reform model is effective (p. 10). Thus, more research is still needed to examine the effectiveness of turnaround policies in schools, specifically in high schools, because so few high schools exit turnaround status. However, Smarick (2010) found that school turnaround efforts have consistently fallen far short of the hopes and expectations of federal and state agencies. As the evidence has suggested, school turnaround policies and practices are not a reliable solution for improving student achievement in urban schools at the nation level. This is true for Massachusetts turnaround high schools, as only one school has ever succeeded under this reform strategy.

In their study, Myers and Smylie (2017) found that “despite the growing intensity of dialogue, funding, and action, there is little empirical evidence that school turnaround, as a

general reform strategy, is raising student achievement" (p. 502). In addition, they noted that "the current practice of turnaround suggests that little consideration is given to recognizing that, at its heart, school turnaround is a problem of organization change, not simply the introduction of new personnel, programs, and practices" (p. 503). These scholars emphasized an important point: Organizational change is not just about changing staff and hoping the organization will get improve. There are many inequities within standing education policies that keep schools stuck in this designation. Gaining teachers' perspectives on this landscape would offer insights into why turnaround policies and practices do not work.

Education policy plays a major role in the outcomes of school reform. One of the major issues is that NCLB did not help to improve urban education. According to Reyes and Garcia (2014), "NCLB became the foundation of federal policy to serve children in poverty. The policy is grounded in punitive accountability measures and sanctions that create high stakes education environments for poor children who are compared academically with affluent students" (p. 350). School turnaround has become a primary approach to solving this problem and improving student achievement. Yet, even with the current policy, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Massachusetts State Law on Turnaround Schools

Under Massachusetts General Law (MGL), the state's turnaround policy (MGL Part 1, Title XII, Chapter 69, Section 1J) specifies how an underperforming or chronically underperforming school will be evaluated annually. Per the policy, every school designated as underperforming has 3 years to "turnaround." This law details the process for creating and submitting a school turnaround plan. While there are no authors listed, the law was adopted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2016 and designates the power and

responsibilities that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which evaluates all the public schools in Massachusetts, has in relation to underperforming schools. The Massachusetts state commissioner of education must evaluate each underperforming school annually and must write a report detailing the progress being made on the implementation of the school's turnaround plan (MGL Ch 69, § 1J, 2016, pp. 9–10).

The purpose of a school turnaround plan is for an underperforming school to create a "roadmap" to help improve the performance of the school. Several factors are taken into consideration for this plan. For instance, the plan must include measurable annual goals (MAGs) covering 12 areas of growth. According to MGL Ch. 69, § 1J, (2016), these areas include, but are not limited to, student attendance rates, student safety and discipline, student promotion and graduation rates, progress of academic underperformance, achievement on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), reduction of achievement gaps, mastery of 21st-century skills, development of college readiness, parent and family engagement, building a culture of academic success, and building a culture of student support (MGL Ch. 69, § 1J, 2016, pp. 2–3).

The state's turnaround policy advocates for members of the school community to create the school's turnaround plan. Per MGL Ch. 69, § 1J, (2016), members of this group include the commissioner, or a designee; the chair of the school committee, or a designee; the president of the local teacher's union, or a designee; an administrator from the school; a teacher from the school; a parent from the school chosen by the local parent organization; representatives of applicable state and local service, health, and welfare agencies; representatives of state and local workforce agencies; a member of the higher education community; and a member of the community chosen by the chief executive of the city or

town. Once these group members meet, they have 45 days to present their plans to the superintendent of schools (MGL Ch 69, § 1J, 2016, pp. 1–2).

If the turnaround plan is approved by DESE, the school has 3 years to implement its turnaround plan and show enough growth in all its MAGs. If the commissioner determines that the school has met its goals, the school will continue with the turnaround plan. If one or more goals are not met, the commissioner may modify the plan. If multiple goals are not met, the commissioner may appoint an external receiver to take over to operate the school (MGL Ch 69, § 1J, 2016, pp. 9–10). The receiver must be from a nonprofit agency and have demonstrated a record of success in improving low-performing schools (MGL Ch 69, § 1J, 2016, p. 5).

While this law is detailed, it does not take into consideration the effects of turnaround changes on the teaching staff. According to Cucchiara et al. (2015), "Teachers described their work as extremely rigorous, emphasizing long hours and multiple demands (for raising test scores, addressing students' emotional needs, and implementing new programs)" (p. 266). With only 3 years to make major changes, this law is extensive regarding all the factors that must improve for the school to exit turnaround. It does not consider the pressure staff will have to endure to successfully turn the school around. The law states that funds should be made available "to increase the salary of any administrator, or teachers in the school, to attract or retain highly-quality administrators or teachers" (MGL Ch 69, § 1J, 2016, p. 3). However, the law only states that funds *should* be made available; the language does not guarantee an increase in salary, which can be misleading and can ultimately impact student learning if teachers are not paid an appropriate salary for the working conditions they must

endure. Also, the law does not consider any leadership opportunities for teachers that could assist with the implementation and success of the school improvement plan.

The Role of Teachers in Current Turnaround Schools

Scant research has been conducted on the various leadership roles teachers play in turnaround. According to Cucchiara et al. (2015), "We know little about how variations in organizational structure, culture, and practices shape teachers' day-to-day experiences and their beliefs about the turnaround process" (p. 261). Teachers are hired in turnaround schools to raise student achievement. However, not much is known about their beliefs about the entire process, such as whether they agree with the leadership and the direction the school is moving or if the working conditions are sustainable. In addition, Cucchiara et al. found that teachers were working too hard and too long. Turnaround schools typically demand a longer workday, usually extended by an additional hour, and the researchers found that the teachers in these schools were being pushed by administrators to improve student outcomes in the classroom so much that it led to teacher burnout. They also found that teachers were treated as objects, not people, in the reform strategy, leading to constant turnover in teaching staff (p. 260). For example, teachers felt that all they need to do was to teach students how to pass high-stakes examinations, which took much of the fun out of teaching.

If teachers are treated as objects in reform efforts, this conveys that the schools do not value their input. Yet, teachers represent a major factor in the turnaround process since they are the ones who provide instruction to students. I argue that teachers should have a primary voice in turnaround plans and should have opportunities to impact leadership decisions at these schools. Thus, there is a need for distributive leadership in these schools as this approach could serve as a viable way toward school improvement.

According to Herman et al. (2008), one of the first recommendations when beginning a school turnaround process is to hire teachers who demonstrate a belief that all students can learn. Not only will student outcomes improve, but student-centered instruction will also be strengthened and prioitized (Herman et al., 2008). However, employing teachers who have the mindset that all students can learn does not necessarily mean that the school will exit its turnaround status. There is a need for further analysis into what teachers believe about the entire turnaround process. Without acknowledging or including teacher perspectives in this process, there will remain a gap in the effectiveness of a school's turnaround plan. In addition, Herman et al.'s study found that if teachers know they are heard by administrators and have a voice in making decisions, they are more likely to stay and work at that school. I maintain that positioning teachers in leadership roles in which their experiences and expertise are included in major school decisions will help lead to more successful outcomes and overall improvements throughout the 3-year school turnaround process.

Understanding how teachers process turnaround practices is essential for the growth of turnaround schools, and research should continue to advocate for teacher voice and increased leadership opportunities for teachers in turnaround schools. Leithwood et al. (2010) found that when teachers have a voice at the table and they know their voices are being heard, they tend to have more faith in their administration and continue to work at these schools. Indeed, we cannot ignore teacher input as they have a major impact on the students they teach and in the school as a whole. Without teachers, there would be no schools, so the need to understand their perspective is important to the advancement of turnaround research.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The rationale for this study stemmed from the fact that only one high school in Massachusetts has ever exited turnaround status. The success rate for turning around a high school in the state is only 8%—a statistic that raises questions regarding the effectiveness of school turnaround, specifically at the high school level. There are currently 12 schools stuck in turnaround status, and many of these schools have been in this cycle for over 10 years. This study was designed to gain more insights into the role that teacher leadership plays in the turnaround process. Most studies on school turnaround have only focused on the how school administrators implement changes within turnaround schools. Very few studies have considered how teachers can act more as leaders and offer their expertise in making important decisions for a school. This study's findings illuminate how teachers perceive leadership within a turnaround high school. I argue that teachers can offer significant expertise and advice for helping their schools to improve. This study also gives teachers a voice and enhances the understanding of their roles in improving turnaround high schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how teacher leadership can empower teachers to take on leadership roles within turnaround schools. Few studies have examined teachers' roles of in these schools, and it is important to identify the working conditions for teachers in these schools, especially considering the high principal turnover rate at many turnaround schools. In addition to uncovering the working conditions, is important to examine the availability of leadership opportunities for teachers, which, as I argue, is a major factor in improving turnaround schools. I also investigated the effectiveness of professional development in improving or increasing teacher leadership opportunities.

Research Questions

This study sought to understand the importance of teacher leadership in urban turnaround high schools. The goal of the study was to explore the relationship between the availability of teacher leadership positions in turnaround high schools and the improvement of working conditions in the school during the turnaround process. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?
2. In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of student performance in turnaround schools?

Summary

In Massachusetts, high schools designated as turnaround schools are struggling to exit this status. Considering that only one high school in Massachusetts has ever successfully exited turnaround, it does not appear that turnaround is effective at the high school level. From a brief initial review of the literature on turnaround schools, there is a gap in the understanding of the roles of teacher leadership, specifically at the high school level. There is therefore an urgent need to engage in this research. I argue that teachers play a major role in turnaround high schools. Teachers need to follow and teach high-stakes curricula that meet the state standards, and they need to adequately prepare students for mandated state standardized testing. Teachers have the additional pressure of ensuring that their students' achievement increases significantly in a short, 3-year timeframe.

Understanding the roles teachers play both inside and outside the classroom is essential to turnaround school research. Teachers have numerous roles in the school

community, and there is a need to examine how teacher leadership could help improve school outcomes during the turnaround process. This research advocates for teacher voice and increasing leadership opportunities for teachers working in turnaround schools. Applying a distributive leadership model is one way to help a turnaround school to strategically spread responsibilities and tasks to improve the school. Teachers and administrators need to work together to establish clear leadership roles that help improve student performance.

Lastly, teacher working conditions in turnaround schools need to be further explored. Traditionally, turnaround schools have longer school days and teachers in these school are expected to take on extra responsibilities, including administrative duties like lunch duty, hall duty, collecting and analyzing student data, and presenting at meetings (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Teachers in turnaround schools experience many stressors that can make work challenging. As stated earlier, most of the turnaround literature has focused on the role and tasks of administrators and students. It is important to review both successful and unsuccessful turnaround efforts in this area, with a focus on the role teachers have in turnaround efforts. The next chapter presents an extensive review of the literature around turnaround efforts that involve, if not prioritize, the lived realities of teachers as this is a major gap in turnaround research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As discussed in Chapter 1, is imperative to further understand the role teacher leadership plays in improving turnaround high schools in Massachusetts. This chapter presents an overview of the literature pertaining to teacher leadership in the context of turnaround school settings. Turnaround schools have existed for over a decade now in Massachusetts. With only one high school ever exiting turnaround status during that time, it is crucial to review the existing literature on turnaround schools particularly at the high school level. There are no better turnaround school members than teachers to lead this work, given the multiple spaces they occupy in and outside the classroom and the many roles they maintain simultaneously. I argue that advocating for teacher leadership is critical to improving a turnaround high school. Hence, there is a need to further investigate the existing literature regarding turnaround schools and teacher leadership.

This literature review is divided into five main areas of research. The first examines distributive leadership as a theoretical framework for supporting improvement efforts in turnaround high schools. The second area centers on literature regarding teacher leadership, namely what a teacher leader is and the roles of teacher leaders within turnaround high schools. The third area focuses on the working conditions of teachers in turnaround high schools. The fourth area reviews the literature regarding how professional development

opportunities impact teacher leadership in turnaround high schools. The last area focuses on the roles that administrators, the school community, and students can play in improving the turnaround process. The insights uncovered from this literature review highlight the major gaps in turnaround school research.

Distributive Leadership

Distributive leadership theory originated from the idea that leadership is shared and extended. According to Harris (2009), "Distributed leadership similarly implies that the practice of leadership is one that is shared and realized within extended groupings and networks, some of these groupings will be formal while others will be informal and, in some cases, randomly formed" (p.175). When applied to a school setting, this includes the administration working together with teachers, parents, and students to accomplish tasks to improve the school. Distributive leadership cannot be effective if leadership is spread across people without facilitation, orchestration, and support (Liang & Sandmann, 2015, p. 38); it must be practiced and executed with all members on board. There needs to be clarity around what is expected of everyone and what direction the team wants to move in, and there must be a shared sense of leadership from all participating for this type of leadership to succeed (p. 39).

It is important to note that distributive leadership is more than a divvying of tasks (Zepke, 2007). Zepke (2007) noted that there are three pillars of distributive leadership: (1) distributive leadership is "an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals" (p. 303); (2) the boundaries of leadership are undefined; and (3) leadership can either be distributed widely or have varying degrees of distribution (p. 303). Zepke also argued that distributive leadership is more than a collaborative practice; rather, each member

can take leadership roles to benefit the group based on their expertise. He also stated that distributive leadership can adopt a top-down or bottom-up style of leadership. It can even take a holistic approach, in which there are not top or bottom levels of leadership (p.304). This is an important point because since distributive leadership comprises so many different approaches, it is not clear which style may be best for a school in turnaround. It is possible to attempt each type to compare, but traditionally, in a school setting, most decisions are top-down, or delegated from a central administrator (i.e., school principal; Spillane et al., 2001).

According to Brown and Littrich (2008), when distributive leadership is applied to the school setting, it includes all the disseminated patterns of leadership operating throughout a school and school community (p. 166). These scholars argued that good leadership is foundational to good learning and good teaching practices (p. 166). In their study, they concluded that at the secondary level, distributive leadership is an effective model to implement. They found that when applied, distributive leadership led to advances in curriculum and teacher empowerment and fostered a sense of strategic change to previous systems (p. 177). This study was conducted at the higher education level; however, if applied to a high school setting, the same results could potentially be replicated if similar structures were put into place. Good leadership is foundational to good teaching and learning, and this is not possible without teacher leadership and voice in advocating for that change.

When distributive leadership is applied to high schools, teachers are no longer seen as followers of authority but as leaders and change makers (Harris & Muijs, 2005, p. 14). Naicker and Mestry (2013) argued that when schools engage in a distributive leadership model, teacher leaders have more voice and help drive the decisions, while principals must play the role of facilitating decision-making processes among teachers. They noted that

distributive leadership does not remove formal leadership; rather, the principal acts as a facilitator to establish organizational conditions and climates to allow distributive leadership to occur (p. 101). If the principal does not put these systems in place, then distributive leadership will not succeed. In the context of turnaround schools, the principal must be aligned with the teachers and must create the setting (or settings) that make this possible. However, if executed properly, this could benefit the school while giving teachers more opportunities to engage in leadership activities.

Distributive Leadership and School Improvement

In a study conducted by Daud et al (2015), they suggested that distributive leadership should be a framework for schools to follow in their efforts to improve. They conducted a survey of school leaders and teachers in a setting where distributive leadership was executed and found that when distributive leadership was balanced among all groups involved, it was effective (p. 432). That is, when teachers and principals work together as equals toward a common goal, effective change can be made in improving the school. Thus, a level of trust is required for this to be properly conducted.

In schools where distributive leadership is applied, there are a few other factors that must be taken into account for it to be effective. One is teachers' commitment to change. Thien (2019) argued that there needs to be a correlation between a teacher's commitment to change and acceptance of distributive leadership for the latter to be effective. In schools where teachers were prone to change toward this model, there were advances in school improvement. Another major finding from Thien's study was that participative decision-making opportunities in schools that included both teachers and administrators also led to improvements in the school (p. 4). As I argued in Chapter 1, teachers need to have a voice

when decisions are being made, and if turnaround schools implement participative decision-making opportunities through a distributive leadership model, this could lead to measurable school improvements.

Distributive Leadership and Organizational Change

One of the major findings across the literature on distributive leadership in schools is that committed teachers can lead organizational change (Billingsley & Cross, 1992; Elmore, 2000; Ingvarson et al., 2006; Timperley 2005). Teachers who commit to moving their school out of turnaround status will help advocate for organizational change—a key reason why distributive leadership should be implemented in turnaround schools. In their study, Hua and Ling (2019) surveyed teachers and administrators in schools who were applying distributive leadership. They found that teachers who were committed to change had a more significant impact on school improvement. They also found that administrators who put trust in their teachers had a better chance of improving the school (p. 45). Hua and Ling's study highlighted another important factor when applying distributive leadership: trust. Without the trust of the people in the organization, distributive leadership will not be effective.

After reviewing the distributive leadership literature, one of the major premises that emerged around effective distributive leadership was that administrators must trust their teachers to make decisions they believe will benefit the students and the school. Cansoy (2019) examined the relationship between teachers and administrators in more than 27 studies. One of the major findings from these studies was that schools that implemented transformational leadership practices, such as applying distributive leadership, found teachers' job satisfaction increased (p. 44). There was a strong correlation between administrators' leadership and shared responsibilities with teacher leadership that led to

overall higher job satisfaction (p. 45). Cansoy's study findings suggest that when teachers feel empowered, they enjoy their jobs. In the turnaround literature, researchers have found that teacher retention is low; therefore, applying a model whereby administrators place trust in teachers' decisions could be another way to help improve turnaround schools, especially at the high school level.

According to Louis and Murphy (2017), trust is multidimensional and can be viewed many ways when applied to a school setting (p. 106). More specifically, they suggested that trust can be cognitive, focusing on trust in capacities and professionalism, or it can be affective, centering on personal affinity (p. 106). Their study involved a mix-methods approach in which surveys and interviews were used to gather data about trust between principals and teachers. They found that cognitive trust and caring for employees produced a more equitable school setting. This again reinforces the notion that was administrators trust their teachers, an effective distributive leadership model can be applied in that school setting.

Distributive Leadership in Practice

A few studies have investigated the application of distributive leadership to turnaround schools specifically. For example, Lane et al. (2019) examined teacher morale in a school where distributive leadership was applied. They found that teachers felt powerless, that there was still a centrality of power held by administrators (p. 5), and that teachers had lost confidence because they did not feel they had any say in making decisions, even though they were able to voice their own ideas. The teachers at this school also felt burnt out by their additional work responsibilities. Lane et al. concluded that there needed to be more advocacy for teacher leaders in the school, and the school needed to address the administrative power complex, as distributive leadership was not being properly executed. In this setting, decision

making was top-down, and even though teachers were asked for their input, they were silenced by the administration (p. 7). Although this represented a failed attempt to apply distributive leadership, there are many important takeaways. Knowing what went wrong in this instance could be corrected in other schools if school leaders and teachers act as equals and work together to improve the school.

Critiques of Distributive Leadership

While distributive leadership sounds like an ideal approach to improving turnaround schools, this model has notable deficits. Currently, issues of gender, race and ethnicity are still not priorities of distributive leadership (Coleman, 2012; Lumby & Morrison, 2010). In addition, issues of power and authority come into play in distributive leadership theory. According to Harris (2013), "Inevitably, issues of power, authority and inequality loom over distributed leadership as they do in any other form of leadership and its associated practice" (p. 546). Someone is always going to be in charge of a school. Yet, how that leader views their own role and power to make leadership decisions will determine how positively they impact a school.

In a typical school district, most of the leadership decision making is top-down, and this comprises one of the critiques of distributive leadership. According to Harris (2004),

> The current hierarchy of leadership within both primary and secondary schools means that power resides with the leadership team, that is, at the top of the school. In addition, the separate pastoral and academic structures in schools, the subject or department divisions plus the strong year groupings, present significant barriers to teachers working together. These structures can actively prevent teachers attaining

> autonomy and taking on leadership roles within the school as they demarcate role and responsibility. (p. 20)

This is important to note because there are top-down structures within a school district. Though an individual school may want to begin applying distributive leadership, its efforts will not be effective if district leaders do not relinquish power and allow the school to make autonomous decisions (Murphy et al., 2009).

Indeed, power is another major threat to distributive leadership. If school leaders do not give up power, then distributive leadership will not be effective (Harris, 2013). However, top-down control can be re-imagined under a distributive leadership model. According to Woods (2016), "Authority is not just the legitimation of top-down control but is capable of emerging in diverse ways from different organizational perspectives and positions. Its meanings may be interpreted, contested and reframed" (p. 155). If a school rethinks decisions from different perspectives, this could help better improve a school. That is, decisions that rely on multiple perspectives from members of a school community can help improve conditions.

It is important to note that since turnaround schools are heavily surveilled in their efforts to improve test scores, the process perpetuates the notion that it is deeply radicalized and classed. This is a shortfall of distributive leadership because these power dynamics can be very difficult to overcome within a radicalized and classed system.

Teacher Leadership

In the literature on turnaround schools, many scholars have insisted that the single most important factor for improving these schools is effective leadership (Bush, 2020; Curtis, 2013; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Sawchuk, 2011). Most scholars have focused on the role

of administrators in turnaround schools, while few have engaged with theory and practice around improving teacher leadership. According to Cutris (2013), "Teacher leadership is defined as specific roles and responsibilities that recognize the talents of the most effective teachers and deploy them in service of student learning, adult learning and collaboration, and school and system improvement" (p. 4). Teacher leadership does not take one form. It can include creating a culture of collaboration and shared accountability, it can occur by emphasizing a greater commitment to differentiating instruction, or it can include compensating excellent teachers for their efforts to improve instruction (p. 5).

Teacher Leadership and Standardized Testing Outcomes

Berry's (2019) research showed that schools that encourage teacher leadership have better outcomes related to standardized testing and teacher practices (p. 51). The study, which was completed in Miami-Dade Public Schools in Florida, revealed a correlation between teacher collaborations and strong instructional leadership practices that led to advanced scores in English and mathematics standardized test scores (p. 52). Thus, this suggests that if teachers in turnaround schools exercise strong instructional leadership practices, this could lead to an increase in student achievement. In Massachusetts, an increase in standardized test scores is a major factor in the review of a school's turnaround plan. Yet, if schools fostered an environment that allows teachers to collaborate effectively and use strong instructional practices, then this could be another way to foster change.

As mentioned previously, teacher leadership can take on many forms. However, one of the most common forms occurs in a teacher's individual classroom. Muijs et al. (2013) argued that teacher leadership needs to expand from individual classrooms to other areas throughout the school (p. 364). They found that teacher leadership is impacted by other

barriers, including organizational boundaries, team boundaries, and subject boundaries. If teachers from different departments and school leaders do not work together, then teacher leadership will not be as effective as it could be (p. 365). However, implementing a distributive leadership model within the school can help prevent school leaders from not working together.

Sebastian et al. (2017) studied the relationship between principal leadership and teacher leadership in urban high schools. They noted that most previous research had focused on how principal and teacher leadership impacts student achievement at the elementary school level. They also found that at the high school level, there is often no differentiation between principal leadership and teacher leadership and its impacts on student achievement (p. 2). For their study, they used teacher and principal survey data to conduct a quantitative analysis of the relationships between teacher and principal leadership opportunities. They found that principals in urban high schools prioritized improving climate and enabling teachers to expand their leadership capacities (p. 16). The study results emphasized a link between principal and teacher leadership to improve the conditions of the school. While this study was not conducted in a turnaround school, the findings can be applied to other schools that are in turnaround. When principals and teachers work together as leaders, there appear to be beneficial outcomes.

Teacher Leadership and Student Academic Achievement

In the literature on teacher leadership, a key finding is that teachers are the most critical school-specific factor in improving student academic achievement (Chingos et al., 2014; Hanushek, 2010; Rivkin et al., 2006 Wright et al., 1997). In a study by Blackwell and Young (2021), the researchers found that teacher turnover is growing at a high rate,

specifically in urban schools (p. 92). When schools try to improve, teacher turnover is one of the most significant hindrances to improvement (p. 93). Analyzing national survey, Blackwell and Young found that 37% of teachers left their jobs because of dissatisfaction with school administration (p. 92). They found that an improvement in working conditions reduced the rate at which teachers left the profession. They also found that when teachers enjoyed their work environment, this led to advances in student achievement (p. 108). This is important to note because many schools in turnaround have a high rate of teacher turnover due to poor working conditions (Cucchiara et al, 2015). This needs to be a major area of focus for schools that are in turnaround. If teacher working conditions are not satisfactory, there will be high turnover—and a decline in student achievement.

Teacher Leadership and School Climate

Schools that embrace teacher leadership see improvements in school climate and culture that can help create a more supportive school environment (Simpson, 2021, p. 229). Simpson (2021), however, found that developing teacher leaders is not an easy task because school administration must be passionate about teacher leadership and willing to share responsibility in decision making (p. 238). Simpson's study adds to the discussion of trust between administration and their teachers by observing that administrators who have trust and are willing to share decision-making responsibilities help produce better outcomes for the school. This is essential in turnaround schools. Teachers and administrators need to work together toward a common goal of leaving turnaround status. If this is not accomplished, then schools will continue underperforming.

Teacher leaders can play many roles within a school. According to Mangin (2016), teacher leaders work primarily with other teachers to co-plan lessons, observe teachers,

collect data, and share best practices among their schools (p. 939). Mangin argued that teacher leadership can be seen as a capacity-building tool. Yet, teacher leaders are usually forced to follow local education policies, complying with authority figures from their schools, such as administrators, and they are usually asked to implement district and school mandates for instruction (p. 940). Thus, this research highlights that while teacher leaders are important, there is still work to do to maximize teachers' impact on school improvement. If teachers are forced to follow district mandates that are outdated or do not work, there will be no improvement in the school. This is a significant problem in turnaround schools, where teachers are expected to follow mandates from policymakers who likely have never been in these schools (Van Roy, 2021). Teachers must challenge this status quo of being compliant. Teachers and administrators must work together to create a common goal that will help to improve the school, acknowledging that, sometimes, district mandates are not the solution.

Teacher Leadership and the School Community

When teachers, principals, and parents from a school community come together to work toward a shared goal, they form a type of leadership that is a driving force in raising student achievement (Lamber, 2003). Teachers must work with both administrators and parents to create these shared goals, especially in turnaround schools, where, in theory, all three groups of people come together to write the turnaround plan. According to Musselman et al. (2014), "Teachers must be given opportunities to use their knowledge, skills and strengths in providing thoughtful leadership and activities that positively influence teaching and learning. Their role is key to the well-being of students, parents and the community at large" (p. 5). In their study, Musselman et al. found that when teachers collaboratively influenced educational communities beyond their classroom by participating in community

events, it led to more positive outcomes for students and the school climate (p. 8). The researchers argued that teachers must have the support available to improve teaching and learning and that they play a vital role in the well-being of students, parents, and the larger community. Teachers must drive instruction, and when teachers are supported by the administration and the community. Such support must be addressed in turnaround high schools; teachers need to be able to not only work with administrators, but also with parents and to become involved in the local community.

As Duncan (2014) defined,

> Teacher leadership means having a voice in the policies and decisions that affect your students, your daily work, and the shape of your profession. It means guiding the growth of your colleagues. It means that teaching can't be a one-size-fits-all job—that there must be different paths based on different interests, and you don't have to end up with the same job description that you started with. It means sharing in decisions that used to be only made by administrators—and the best administrators know they'll make better decisions when they listen to teachers.

This notion that teachers need to have a voice in policies and decisions has been identified repeatedly. However, it is also important to understand *how* teachers become leaders.

Allen (2018) argued that, although there is a need for teacher leaders, teachers need additional support from their school to allow for leadership opportunities. She suggested that each school needs to offer leadership opportunities for experienced teachers because many model teachers are teaching in their classrooms all day, and more have few opportunities to collaborate with other teachers. Allen maintained that experienced teachers should be given more time to plan professional development opportunities to support other teachers in their

school (p. 242). Teachers should be able to share and model their expertise in the classroom. If schools devote more time to improving professional development for teachers, this could lead to an increase in student achievement. The more teachers can collaborate, the more success a school can have, especially in a turnaround setting.

Teachers as Leaders

Teachers in turnaround schools are expected to become empowered leaders (Tubin, 2017). Tubin (2017) suggested that there are five steps to empowering teachers in turnaround schools. The first is to let teachers know they can take risks in the classroom to improve instruction (p. 260). The second is to nominate the "fittest"; that is, teachers should be carefully selected based on their ability to engage in leadership roles (p. 261). The third is to connect teachers to a prestige model emphasizing that the school will become better and operating on that assumption (p. 262). The fourth is to validate data. Teachers should be expected to analyze classroom assessment data to improve instruction (p. 263). The final step is to share successes. Teachers should be able to collaborate and share successful practices from their classes (p. 264).

However, I find a flaw in the second step of selecting the fittest. Tubin (2017) suggested that the school administration should choose teachers who demonstrate leadership rather than offering opportunities for all teachers to engage in leadership. If leaders are selected by the administration based solely on their recommendation, this does not give everyone a fair chance to improve their practice and empower all teachers. Turnaround is a collective effort, and all teachers need to feel a sense of empowerment in their practice. If only a few can experience this, then such an approach is not the most practical means of improving a school. Troen and Boles (2011) found that teamwork contributes to teachers'

empowerment when they can collaborate. This is a model that turnaround schools should implement to increase teacher leadership opportunities.

Thompson et al. (2016) called the process of creating a turnaround plan "scaffolded craftsmanship" (p. 6), "a painstaking, piece-by-piece reconstruction, scaffolded … by facilitators but depending at least equally on the energy, commitment, and inventiveness of local educators" (p. 6). In one turnaround school from their study, they found that the plan was effective when the principal included the teachers in decision-making processes, which is what empowered them (p. 10). There appears to be a correlation between principals including teachers in the decision-making process and the success of the school, a correlation that future research should explore further. I argue that this type of relationship is essential for turnaround school success. Teachers and administrators working together can effect measurable improvements in the school. It is evident in several studies that this is an effective method for improving school conditions. When teachers are invited to assume leadership roles, then the school improves. These takeaways are relevant to all turnaround high schools on their journey toward school improvement. Collaboration is key, and adopting a distributive leadership model could prove effective in the turnaround process.

It is important to note that teacher leadership can impact the predominant racialized and classed realties of turnaround schools because when teachers have a voice and have more opportunities to grow as teacher leaders, they will have a greater impact on the students who attend these schools. Students will have teachers who are very strong in pedagogy and teaching and learning practices, which can help to greatly improve student outcomes. Students who are provided with rigorous, high-quality instruction are more likely to improve academically, thereby leading to gradual improvements in the school overall. Even though

these schools are racialized and classed, giving teachers more voice and more leadership can positively impact the students who attend these schools by providing them with a high quality and rigorous curriculum that will help them succeed after high school.

Teacher Working Conditions

Most turnaround schools are often found in urban districts, namely in neighborhoods where the majority of residents live below the poverty line. Urban schools present many challenges for both students and teachers that impact working conditions. Many scholars have shown that urban schools present challenging working conditions that can lead to teacher burnout, loss of effectiveness in teaching and instruction, and, as a result, high turnover of teachers—all of which impact retention and recruitment efforts (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2014; Klassen et al., 2011). These working conditions include longer hours, heavy class loads, and requirements to stay after school for extra professional development. Since urban teaching already presents challenges to many teachers, having one's school designated as turnaround adds even more pressures, which can lead to more negative and challenging working conditions. For example, longer school hours can strain staff and students as there is considerable pressure to push academics constantly. There is also increased pressure on teachers to improve their teaching and pedagogy to help increase student performance on standardized testing. This impacts everything from student learning, school culture, and climate to the overall success of the school, particularly teachers' desires to invest continued time and effort in their profession.

Urban education scholars have identified that the vast majority of teachers leave their schools due to challenges with student attendance, behavior, and readiness to learn (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007; Tsouloupas et al., 2010). However, other scholars have found

that it is not always the students who cause teachers to leave. Mirra and Rogers (2020) found "that issues such as availability of learning resources, class size, quality of school leadership, and teacher autonomy are the key determinants of teacher satisfaction or turnover (p.1084). All the issues listed previously make up a major part of teachers' workplace. If these issues are not addressed by the school administration, it can lead to teachers wanting to go elsewhere where they have access to these resources, making for a better work environment. This is particularly true in turnaround schools, where negative and demanding working conditions are driving teachers out the door quickly (Cucchiara et al., 2015).

In turnaround schools, there are often changes in administrative leadership, and this can impact teacher working conditions. Blackwell and Young (2021) examined the relationship between school leadership and teachers' working conditions. The purpose of their study was to determine if school leadership was a major factor in teacher turnover (p. 93). They found that how a principal manages teacher leadership, student conduct, professional development opportunities, and instructional strategy impacts teacher working conditions (p. 108). However, the study did highlight another important connection between teachers' working conditions and their perceptions of leadership. According to Blackwell and Young (2021):

> Our findings indicate that improvements in teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership, managing student conduct, professional development, and instructional strategies result in improvement in teachers' perceptions of school leadership as a working condition, which has been strongly associated with teacher retention. (p. 109)

This finding is important to build on because it can be directly applied to schools in turnaround. If school administrators create a school environment where there is teacher leadership, good professional development opportunities, and strong instructional strategies, it could help improve teacher retention and, as a result, lead to improvements in the school.

A review of the literature on teacher working conditions revealed some gaps in the scholarship. First scholars have concluded that many teachers leave because of the students in their classroom. However, very few studies have investigated whether the lack of teacher leadership impacts teacher burnout. Many studies have suggested that if schools present structures in which teacher leadership is acknowledged, then teachers may want to stay. Yet, there is not enough evidence to support this; thus, further research is required. Secondly, teacher working conditions in all types of turnaround schools need to be further examined to identify similarities and differences. Some turnaround schools could in fact have great working conditions, yet this is not evident in the literature.

Teachers and Mental Health

The mental health of teachers also plays a major role in the success of a school. According to Pachaiyappan and Raj (2014), "Teachers should be mentally alert and stable to develop alertness and stability within students" (p. 117). Likewise, Srisvasta and Kahn (2008, as cited in Pachaiyappan & Raj, 2014) found that teachers with poor mental health were more prone to burnout than teachers with higher mental health (p.117).

The climate and culture of a school can impact teachers' mental health. Barker et al.'s (2023) study found a direct link between trust in the school culture (maintained consistently through leadership) and teachers' increased mental health. In addition, Barker et al. found that the well-being of teachers depended on the motivation of committed teachers. This can

be directly connected to teachers who work in a turnaround setting and who have many extra pressures and tasks that can greatly impact their mental health. It is also important to note that school leadership can establish the culture and climate of a school, and if it is in a setting where teachers lose motivation, it is likely to be detrimental to the teachers and students.

Role of Professional Development in Turnaround Schools

Beneficial professional development (PD) opportunities have been cited in the literature as empowering teachers and providing them with the training necessary to help improve and drive instruction (Borman et al., 2005; Collett, 2017; Taylor et al., 2005). However, there are many gaps in the role PD plays in teaching and in improving student outcomes. In Massachusetts, all turnaround schools are required to write mandatory professional development opportunities into their turnaround plans (Lane et al, 2016). Therefore, it is important to understand how PD can empower teachers to want to become teacher leaders. If teachers do not have opportunities to grow or to learn new ways to improve instruction, they may not want to continue in the profession. It is also important to uncover whether PD is as effective as it should be to help teachers improve instruction and increase leadership skills in turnaround schools. This section of the literature review explores the purpose of PD, how professional development can empower teachers, and the effectiveness of PD for teachers in turnaround schools.

Since PD is relevant to all turnaround high schools, it is important to understand why it is a required part of the turnaround process. According Pharis et al. (2019),

> Public schools in the United States are charged with addressing ever-increasing demands as educators strive to create optimal learning environments where all students graduate from high school prepared academically for opportunities they

> choose to pursue. To create optimal learning environments for all students, educators are tasked to implement multiple educational programs and strategies designed to challenge academically diverse students, reduce the achievement gap, meet federal, state, and local curriculum requirements, and remain abreast of an increasing amount of pedagogical and content area research. Educators, focused on continual improvement of teacher quality and student achievement, participate in a variety of professional development activities to enhance their abilities to provide high quality instruction for all students. (p. 30)

As the preceding quote makes clear, professional development can enhance teachers' abilities to provide high-quality instruction for all their students. Professional development also represents a response to federal laws and policies that all stem from NCLB in 2001. This is particularly true for underperforming schools, as PD is mandated for all teachers as one way to help schools improve. However, it is still unclear if mandated PD is effective in promoting teacher leadership. Besides PD, there are other factors in place that make this determination difficult, such as teacher working conditions or the leadership style of individual school leaders.

Effectiveness of Professional Development

The effectiveness of professional development has become a major area of education research. According to Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021), there are six characteristics that make PD more effective for teachers. First, effective PD must be relevant and beneficial for teachers and it must be sustained for several years before it can help improve instruction for teachers. Second, PD more effective if teachers take part as a group. Working together in groups with teachers who all have a common goal of helping to improve their teaching keeps

teachers engaged in their professional growth. Third, PD is more effective if teachers identify with what the PD is offering and they endorse taking part in it. If there is teacher buy-in to the PD, teachers are more likely to take part in it. Fourth, PD is more effective when it involves training in subject knowledge because, at a high school, every teacher teaches different subjects, so specific training on teachers' own subjects is helpful to improve their teaching. Fifth, PD is more effective when it involves outside expertise, since experts in the field can show and explain how their methods or approaches to teaching could help to improve instruction. Sixth, PD is more effective when it involves opportunities to use, practice, or apply what has been learned (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021, pp. 48-49). These six characteristics emphasize and support the role and work of teachers. Teachers must buy-in to and be involved in PD as a collective group for it to be effective. This reflects the claim that if teachers have a voice in what they need, it will ultimately lead to a better school environment overall. If PD is mandated among all teachers in turnaround schools, they must have a say in what PD would be most beneficial to them. According to Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021), PD must also be relevant to the teaching staff; otherwise, it will not be effective. If teachers do not feel they have a say in deciding on PD events, or if they do not deem selected PD relevant, it will not be effective in changing their schools.

Professional Development and Teacher Efficacy

Professional development has also been linked to teacher efficacy, which Liu and Liao (2019) defined as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (p. 448). In their study, Liu and Liao used survey data to determine whether PD was statistically correlated with teacher efficacy (p. 492). They found that there is a strong correlation between PD and teacher efficacy when PD offered were in a

format that helped with teachers' daily practices and supported their collaborative learning (p. 501) such as teachers working together to reach a common goal. This study is important because the findings suggest that if PD is teacher-focused and helps teachers improve their instruction, it could lead to improvements in student academic achievement, which ultimately allows a school to improve overall. However, researchers did not indicate how much of the PD was teacher driven, representing another gap that needs to be explored further. A PD opportunity may be relevant and engaging and it may help increase teacher efficacy; however, if it had no teacher input, it may not be as effective as it could be. Teachers should voice what they need from their PD to best support their work and advancements in the school. This is especially critical in a turnaround setting, as each school may need different or multiple PD supports.

Professional Learning Communities

In addition to professional development opportunities, considerable literature has suggested that professional learning communities (PLCs) are another way to empower teacher leaders. PLCs can take the form of PD (Turner et al, 2017), with the goals of promoting and sustaining a learning environment for teachers in the school community and improving student achievement (Stoll et al., 2006). In their study, Turner et al. (2017) used PLCs to design PDs and found that when teachers were empowered as experts in their school communities and when they were provided a PLC, the latter made significant progress in improving their school. This is an important finding because, in this study, teachers felt empowered to make change that led to the success of their schools. This reinforces the fact that when teachers have a voice in making decisions, it can lead to positive outcomes for school improvement. Teacher leaders who work in turnaround schools need to have this

sense of empowerment to be effective change makers. Establishing PLCs in turnaround schools as a means of professional development may be one solution to impact change.

The literature on professional development presents gaps that are important to recognize in examining the role of teacher leaders in turnaround schools. Many studies have pointed out that effective professional development must be relevant for teachers. The literature has also suggested that when teachers have a voice in determining PD, that PD is more effective. The literature has also shown that many PD opportunities do not always empower teacher leaders, and some studies have found that PLCs may be one option for empowering teachers and improving professional development. This could be one solution for improving the outcomes associate with turnaround high schools. That is, if teachers receive PD that is relevant and useful for them, it will lead to improvements in the school. Thus, when teachers have a voice and some autonomy, it will help to empower them and alter the climate of the school. And since PD is required in turnaround schools, it should be teacher-led.

Role of Administrators in Turnaround Schools

While this literature review focuses on the role of teachers and teacher leaders in turnaround schools, it is important to also discuss the literature regarding school administrators. Administrators are the main figureheads of turnaround schools, so it is crucial to understand their role. There are certain leadership qualities that principals and administrators in these schools must have to be successful. Hitt et al. (2018) found that principals need to exhibit a set of leadership characteristics to positively impact the school reform and turnaround process. The first characteristic is to initiate and persist, meaning the principal can tackle the challenges of the school and persevere in handling the problems. The

second is to inspire and motivate others. Principals need to inspire and motivate their staff to want to become better teachers so they can provide their students with the best instruction that will help them increase their academic achievement. The third is to elicit intended responses, meaning they can work with their staff closely to determine how they feel about certain decisions. Principals should know what the school's needs are, and they should be able to respond to any staff member with questions they may have. The fourth characteristic is to build capacity through accountability and support. In turnaround schools, the principal needs to hold students and teachers accountable for their work and support those who need guidance. The fifth is to commit to the students. Principals need to work with their students to provide them with the support they need to succeed. The sixth is to create solutions to the school's problems. Principals need to be aware of the problems in the school. They need to work with staff to identify problem areas and create solutions. The last characteristic is to use inquiry to frame and solve problems. New principals need to understand what the problems are in the school, and they need to be creative and help find solutions to the problems (Hitt et al., 2018, p. 67). These leadership qualities have been shown to have positive impacts on turnaround schools. However, Hitt et al.'s study was limited in that it only included leadership qualities of 19 principals working in turnaround schools. This list may be a good start to identifying some leadership qualities, but other literature has suggested that there are even more qualities that have proven effective in the role of a principal or administrator.

Role of the Principal in Turnaround

Myers and Hitt (2017) identified other qualities of principals, including needing to have a strong vision focused on high expectations (p. 9). These scholars also suggested that turnaround principals need to effectively lead their teachers in providing critical instruction

for their students (p. 10), though they did not define critical instruction. Myers and Hitt implied that it focuses on making changes to teachers' schedules to best support student needs; however, it does not include teachers in making these decisions. Finally, the researchers did mention that principals need to secure "significant, purposeful opportunities for teachers to develop and grow" (Myers & Hitt, 2017, p. 11). Importantly, this ties back to the purpose of offering relevant and meaningful professional development. If principals listen to their teachers' needs, they can provide PD opportunities that are both relevant and beneficial to the staff. This has been identified repeatedly in the literature around professional development for educators. If administrators do not provide these meaningful opportunities for teachers, then change will not occur.

According to Meyers and Sadler (2018), in addition to effective principals, there needs to be a focus on the district's effectiveness in supporting quality instruction (p. 91). Other scholars have claimed that if there is not a district-wide investment in instructional leadership focusing on quality instruction, using data-driven strategies to improve instruction, creating a professional learning community, and improving communication between district leadership, there will be no changes in the school reform process (Anderson, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Meyers & Sadler, 2018). These scholars have emphasized the importance of district leadership in the turnaround process. Principals report to district leaders, including the superintendent or a local school board. If the school district does not support or respond to all the turnaround needs and initiatives, there will be no effective change in the schools. There must also be clear communication between district leaders and school leaders for turnaround initiatives to be effective. Additionally, as mentioned in Chapter 1, district leaders need to contribute to writing turnaround plans to

show specific ways they support a turnaround plan that is best for the school. In theory, clear communication between district leaders and school leaders is important; however, there have been so few successful turnarounds at the high school level that there is a further need to investigate this relationship further.

Leadership Programs for Turnaround Settings

Since the emergence of turnaround schools, graduate programs in educational leadership have been created to prepare administrators to work in turnaround schools (Reyes-Guerra et al., 2017). These master's-level programs prepare teachers in curriculum and instruction. Reyes-Guerra et al. (2017) examined whether and how some of these graduate programs in educational leadership increased administrators' cognitive agility (p. 401), or "the ability to use the multiple thinking skills of systems thinking, reflecting, and reframing—when engaged in their professional work and solving problems" (p. 401). These scholars suggest that turnaround leaders need to be able to have multiple thinking skills when trying to solve the problem of turnaround. Their research found that the curriculum of these programs does include instructional practices that seem to be effective for aspiring principals, and graduates of these programs receive quality internships in urban schools to help prepare them for jobs in turnaround schools (p. 413). However, this study was limited in that there was no follow-up once these leaders graduated and worked in turnaround schools. The graduates may have felt ready to tackle the challenge of being a turnaround school principal, but it remains unclear whether their job training transferred to actually improving these schools.

Goals and Priorities for School Leadership

In the realm of principal leadership for turnaround schools, many scholars have studied principals' specific goals and priorities (Huber & Conway, 2015; Mintrop et al., 2001; Van Gronigen & Myers, 2018). In more recent studies, most scholars in this field have found that principals' main priorities focus on improving student achievement. Van Gronigen and Myers (2018) found that principals also focus on collecting data and using data to improve instruction (p. 26). However, the researchers suggested that there are other priorities that need attention, including revising the school's master schedule and updating school discipline policies before these updates could eventually lead to improving student achievement (p. 37). Van Gronigen and Myers raised an excellent point: If a school's master schedule does not align well with the needs of students and if there is not a sound discipline policy, these interruptions could impede improvements in student achievement. Thus, it is crucial to further examine how creating a master schedule and a discipline policy could improve student achievement.

Understanding the roles of administrators is important in turnaround research. Principals and administrators lead these schools, and it is their job to help drive the turnaround plan and improve the school. However, as the literature suggests, principals alone cannot be the only change makers. Teachers also play an important role in school improvement. The literature implies that teachers and administrators need to work together to achieve their goal of getting the school out of turnaround status. There is a need for continued research in this area.

Role of Students in Turnaround Schools

Understanding the students who attend turnaround schools is a major part of the turnaround process. According to Losen and Orfield (2002, as cited in Pazey & DeMatthews, 2019), students who attend low-performing schools experience instability because of the turnaround process (p. 923). In turnaround schools, students see major changes occurring in front of them, such as seeing new teachers and administrators with whom they are not familiar. When the school is taken over, there is an entire new staff—that is, new teachers and administrators that are unfamiliar to the students. Many of these students lose teachers with whom they have built relationships (Pazey & DeMatthews, 2019).

There is a need to include students in the turnaround process since they are the ones attending these schools every day. Pazey and DeMatthews (2019) also found that "student voice needs to be at the forefront of our educational research and discourse, particularly at the high school level" (p. 948). Students in high school are young adults, many of whom are already becoming productive members of society. When students have a voice at the table, it empowers them to not feel oppressed or ignored (Lewis & Porter, 2007). Just as teachers need to have a voice in these schools, the same is true for students. Including students in decisions would also apply to a distributive leadership model. Allowing the students some autonomy in the schools they attend could lead to increases in academic performance.

Student Voice in Turnaround

Mitra (2005) described three types of student voice, using a pyramid as a model to demonstrate the different levels. The base of the pyramid represents students being heard by school staff such as teachers, counselors, and administrators. The middle of the pyramid represents collaboration with adults in the school, and the top of the pyramid represents

building capacity for leadership (Mitra, 2005). For students to find their voice, their schools need to foster youth–adult relationships and collaborations. According to Jones and Perkins (2004, as cited by Mitras & Gross, 2009), "Youth–adult partnerships are defined as relationships in which both youth and adults have the potential to contribute to decision making processes, to learn from one another, and to promote change (, p.530).

This connects with a distributive leadership model, as students are key players in the school community. This also highlights another gap in the literature: The relationships between students and teachers working together as change makers need to be further explored. If students and teachers work together, they can make decisions that promote change for their schools—which would be extremely beneficial during a school's turnaround. Since the school is re-starting during this process, fostering these types of relationships could be impactful in promoting change.

Giraldo-García et al. (2021) studied high schools that created opportunities for student voice and found that student advisory committees were beneficial in making positive change in the school (p. 63). More specifically, the researchers investigated the implementation of student advisory committees in 22 urban schools in the United States. While in many schools these committees helped develop student voice, other schools did not see major impacts (p. 60). According to Voight and Nation (2016, as cited in Giraldo-García et al, 2021), allowing students to have a voice in student government helps improve student perception of their school climate (p. 53). For example, creating a student government body in which students can make decisions that impact their school climate could benefit both the students and the school. This is an approach that needs to be further explored in the context of turnaround schools. If students have opportunities like student advisory committees, it

could lead to the development of a more cohesive school climate or culture, which in turn could lead to increases in academic performance.

Parent and Community Involvement in Turnaround Schools

Parent and community involvement represents another key area of turnaround school research. According to Lopez (2003, as cited in Watson & Bogotch, 2015), parent involvement is "a key mechanism for educational change and improvement, particularly in schools that enroll a large percentage of children of color" (p. 258). In Massachusetts, all public school teachers are required to be in regular communication with parents and guardians. Parent communication is also one part of all teachers' yearly evaluations (Lane et al., 2016). Many scholars have noted that an increase in parents' involvement in their children's schools increases student learning (Boutte & Johnson, 2014; LaRocque et al., 2011; Watson & Bogotch, 2015). In light of this perceived correlation, it would be helpful to determine if successful turnaround schools engage with parents on a regular basis. This is another gap in the research on successful leadership practices in turnround schools.

Parent Communication in Turnaround Schools

While parent communication is a requirement for all teachers, there are many barriers that prevent this from occurring. Watson and Bogotch (2015) identified the following challenges to parent communication in a study that looked at parent involvement in urban schools: "(1) culture and language; (2) poverty; (3) overemployment, and (4) access and literacy with respect to technology" (p. 265). These challenges must be taken into consideration when implementing strategies to engage with families. Communicating with families should be a high priority if it will help improve student learning, which would in turn help improve the school. Therefore, teachers and administrators should work together to

implement ways to better reach families. For example, having resources to translate messages to families in their native languages could be helpful. Schools could also become active in their local communities to get the word out about events and activities happening at the school. The more efforts to include parents and families, the better off turnaround high schools will be.

Though parent involvement appears to impact student achievement, Reynolds et al. (2015) found that there is very little research demonstrating why parents become involved or how parents and teachers perceive involvement at the high school level (p. 751). In their study, they surveyed both parents and teachers from a local urban high school to identify the effectiveness of family communication and involvement. They found that both parents and teachers would prefer a more "systematic, organized, and institutional approach to involvement that could establish common expectations, patterns, and protocols to facilitate parent–teacher interactions" (p. 767). They also found that the expectation to involve and communicate with parents and families was not clear to both the teachers and the families. Clarifying such expectation is the responsibility of school leaders like the principal, and they need to set early in the year so that all teachers understand the expectations. There also needs to be effective communication with families to let them know ways they can become involved with the school and how they can communicate with the school. This represents another gap in turnaround research. Communication between the school community, families, and teachers needs to be clearer, and more resources are needed to allow families, teachers, and administrators to be in regular communication.

Parental Support in Turnaround Schools

Other scholars have found that when parents support their child's learning, it leads to more positive student attitudes, increased school attendance, improved self-esteem, and greater student motivation to learn (Curry & Hotler, 2019; Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005; Kreider et al.,2007; Sheldon, 2007; Tan & Goldberg, 2009; Topor et al., 2010). All these impacts can help improve the general culture of the school. This is particularly important in turnaround schools because many students perceive the turnaround process in a negative way (e.g., staff turnover, new rules, new expectations, etc.).

However, as Williams and Sanchez (2012, as cited in Curry & Hotler, 2019) stated, "A better understanding is needed of the factors that influence parent actions and attitudes toward their child's education" (p. 537). In their study, Curry and Holter (2019) found that when parents have no communication with the school, they feel they do not have enough resources to help their children (p. 549). In addition, they found that families who speak another language were uncomfortable attending school activities due to language barriers (p. 550). It is important to research these barriers further. If schools do not provide adequate means of communication, parents will be left out of the loop, which could impact student learning. Also, schools that do not provide translation services alienate parents who may want to be involved but do not feel comfortable because of language barriers. Encouraging parents and families to attend school functions and being in frequent communication should be high priorities for both teacher leaders and school leaders. Curry and Holter's (2019) study also found that parents who were involved tended to support their children in both reading and homework help (p. 549). This study offers significant insights into ways that schools can better support parents, which ultimately helps improve the school.

Parental Involvement in Turnaround Schools

Since parent and community involvement is a big factor in the improvement of schools, other scholars have explored how schools engage the community. Marschall & Shah (2020) found that "predominantly Black and Latino schools achieve significant gains in parent involvement as the number of policies in place to support and encourage participation increases, but that not all programs achieve the same results within or across racial contexts" (p. 699). Their study indicated that when support structures are put in place, parent involvement increases. They found an increase in parent involvement when schools aided parents, such as through childcare or transportation, and when parents visited the school (p. 719). These are important supports to consider because of the external factors that impact parent involvement. Moreover, if schools implement a distributive leadership model, all school faculty can work together to find ways to enhance parent involvement.

Very few studies have looked at the relationship between parent and community involvement in turnaround schools specifically. However, many urban schools have studied this phenomenon. The literature suggests that if schools make parent and family communication and involvement a priority, it will lead to better student outcomes. This notion connects with turnaround schools because it is a primary goal. If student learning increases due to an increase in parent and family involvement, then this should comprise a high-priority area of research. The link between teachers and families is also important. Teachers need resources to adequately communicate with and involve parents and families. School leaders, teachers, and families need to work together to improve communication and family involvement. This is another link to helping improve turnaround schools.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I used distributive leadership theory, which was developed by James Spillane in 2001. Spillane "view[ed] distributed leadership as a social distribution of leadership where the leadership function stretches over the work of numerous individuals and the task is achieved through the interaction of many leaders" (Leithwood and Jantzi., 2006). When applied to a school context, the leader of any school is usually an individual principal. The principal frequently assigns other leadership roles to other administrators, teachers, and school personnel. According to Spillane et al. (2001), the type of leadership that the principal executes and how they perform their job functions is usually the focus of turnaround school studies. However, distributive leadership theory focuses on the summation of *all* the practices within a school or organization (Spillane et al., 2001). Therefore, understanding how principals make their decisions and whom they include in making those decisions is essential to understanding whether they are successful in their efforts to improve turnaround schools.

According to Harris (2009), distributive leadership theory should consider leadership expertise at all levels of the school, including teachers. Harris also argued that more opportunities for change should be built based on the expertise of all school personnel, not just school administrators (Harris, 2009). In the contexts of school turnaround, this, too, is a collective effort. School turnaround involves many different community members. Hence, including the perspectives of teachers within these schools can offer insights into why schools are not exiting turnaround at a greater frequency in Massachusetts.

Further, applying distributive leadership theory to turnaround high schools is a more practical approach to looking at the practices implemented in these schools by school leaders. For example, it is essential to examine how a school leader delegates tasks to other members

of the school. Applying distributive leadership theory would allow for an analysis of how teachers as a collective whole execute important decision-making processes. It would help understand how teachers react to and comprehend the tasks given to them by their school principals. It would also offer insights into how teachers decide to divvy tasks among themselves. This approach is aimed at including the entire teaching faculty as a whole, not just individual teachers.

Understanding how teachers process and enact turnaround practices in and outside the classroom is essential for the growth of turnaround schools. Leithwood et al. (2010) found that when teachers have a voice at the table and they know their voices are being heard, they tend to have more faith in their administration and continue to work at these schools. This suggests that applying a distributive leadership model could be one way to help improve a failing school. Teacher input cannot be ignored, since educators have a crucial impact on the students they teach and on the school as a whole. Without teachers, there would be no schools, so the need to understand their perspective is imperative to the advancement of further turnaround research.

The distributive leadership framework guided my study because I view it as an effective model for helping a school turn around. During this research, I sought to determine if there were any distributive leadership practices being used within the school of study. I also applied the framework to analyze how distributive leadership practices could be implemented within the school. I interviewed participants about distributive leadership to ascertain if teachers knew what it is and how it could be implemented. In addition, I used this framework to identify power dynamics within the school, to determine how decisions were

made, and to discover if this posed a potential barrier between teachers and school administrators.

Summary

There is a need to fill a major gap in the literature to enhance understanding around the needs and challenges of turnaround schools, namely the ways that distributive leadership focuses on turnaround school teachers in improving turnaround outcomes and achievements. I advocate that this research of the role of teacher leaders is essential since there is no other member of the school community to lead this work, given all the spaces teachers occupy both inside and outside the classroom. Teacher leaders play so many roles in turnaround schools that they can have a major impact on school improvement. While more research is needed on the role administrators, students, and parents and families can play in turnaround schools, there needs to be a larger focus on the teachers. Teacher leaders drive this work, and teachers have much to offer regarding their experiences in these schools.

As a turnaround high school teacher, I want to continue advocating for teachers to have a voice. I see all the hard work teachers perform and endure in these schools, and I see all the inequities that plague schools. However, if teachers do not have the opportunity to advocate for change, they will never be able to participate in promoting effective change. Thus, schools will get stuck in a constant cycle of reform with high teacher and principal turnover. Teacher leaders offer a unique perspective that needs to be further explored. Teacher leaders must have a voice so they can work with school leaders, students, families, and the greater school community to continue advocating for change. This is a collective effort, and learning more about the role of teacher leadership offers additional insights for turnaround school research.

I hypothesize that there is a relationship between the availability of teacher leadership and the improvement of student success within a school. If teachers have more leadership roles, they can positively impact pedagogy and ultimately improve student academic performance. In this study, I used distributive leadership theory as a lens to analyze the impact teacher leadership has on improving turnaround high schools. Based on the gaps in the literature, a mixed-methods research approach seemed the most appropriate for examining the role of teacher leadership in turnaround high schools. In Chapter 3, I detail my research methodology for exploring this phenomenon.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous two chapters outlined the major gaps in school turnaround research. One of the largest gaps relates to identifying the roles of teachers and teacher leadership during the turnaround process (Cucchiara et al., 2015). Nearly all the existing literature regarding school turnaround has focused on the role of administrators in these schools (Anderson, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004; Myers & Sadler, 2018) and on the students who attend these schools (Giraldo-Garcia et al., 2021; Mitras & Gross, 2009; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Pazey & DeMatthews, 2019). However, very few studies have centered on how teachers perceive leadership opportunities in turnaround schools.

I argue that teachers need to play a more critical role in the turnaround process. I hypothesize that the availability of teacher leadership roles in a school could help improve the turnaround process. For example, teachers could grow their expertise in implementing pedagogy through teaching and learning. In addition, if teachers were able to have more say in school decisions, they could have a more positive impact on the school. Teachers can help each other grow pedagogically by learning from each other—if they are granted time to do so. Empowering teachers to become leaders within a school could also improve school culture, which would in turn help improve student outcomes. Thus, there is a great need to examine how teacher leadership could help improve turnaround schools and how teachers

currently perceive leadership opportunities in their schools. It is also critical to understand the roles of teachers and teacher leaders who work in turnaround schools. Their voices will highlight important insights needed to further understand the role of turnaround and its impacts on a school and the school community. In this chapter, I present my research design for examining the role of teacher leadership in urban turnaround high schools.

Research Questions

This study looked closely at the role teacher leadership plays in urban turnaround high schools. The following questions guided the research:

1. How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?
2. In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of student performance in turnaround schools?

The major focus of this research was on identifying ways that an urban turnaround high school fosters an environment that supports and provides teacher leadership during the turnaround period. In addition, I wanted to find out what teachers thought teacher leadership "looked like" in a turnaround school. Many scholars have expressed different views on what teacher leadership is (Chingos et al., 2014; Hanushek, 2010; Rivkin et al., 2006; Wright et al., 1997). In addition, I sought to understand if teacher leadership affects and informs school improvement during the turnaround process. Many scholars have also identified that strong teacher leadership is essential to improving outcomes in a turnaround school (Bush, 2020; Curtis, 2013; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Sawchuk, 2011). This research built on some of the aforementioned work by taking a deep dive into a school that, at the time of the study, had been in turnaround for several years.

Research Positionality

As stated in Chapter 1, I acknowledge that I was recently employed at the turnaround high school that served as the study site. I was an "insider." Many of my participants were former colleagues. As a former insider to the school, I acknowledge the biases I may have regarding my position of teacher leadership. In other words, I recognize that while I may have taught in this particular school, my intention was to learn more about the role that teacher leadership plays in the school turnaround process. The goal of this research was to uncover information that had not previously been sufficiently examined.

I am a white male urban public school educator at a turnaround high school in Massachusetts. Teaching is my passion. I knew I wanted to become a teacher ever since I was a little kid. I love school, and I enjoy teaching others about a subject I am very passionate about. However, I did not know exactly where I would end up teaching. If one had asked me 10 years ago, I would probably would have said at a suburban school like the one I attended. For me, everything changed when I went to college in a major urban area and experienced a whole new world of public education. The schools were very different from the ones I had attended during my time in high school. I also experienced teaching in an urban district. I think it is very important to disclose my positionality, as I recognize that as a white male, I have a level of privilege that others may not, and I want to advocate for these issues so that policies can change to better support communities across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Through my undergraduate coursework, I had opportunities to make observations within the public schools of the city where I was living. This is when I first glimpsed the realities of urban education. As a white male from a suburban town, I was so naive to think I

had any idea what inner-city schools were like. I thought they would be similar to the schools that I went to. I thought they would have the same resources to which I had access. I never really thought about what they were like, as I had attended a private Catholic high school. On my first day observing my supervising teacher, my eyes were opened to the fact that I was no longer in the small town where I grew up. The first school I observed was in an old building. There was a lot of broken furniture in the classroom, whiteboards that were unable to be written on, and a leaky roof. I thought to myself, “This isn't right. How can somebody learn in this type of room?” I was also able to talk to the teacher, who told me he could not teach any labs because the school had no money in the budget to purchase supplies.

My eyes were open, and I knew change needed to happen. It took one day to realize that our students are being placed at a disadvantage. They are being denied the quality education they deserve. Based on my experiences in college, I knew I wanted to pursue my master’s degree right away. As soon as I graduated, I immediately went on to pursue a master’s in education, focusing specifically on urban education since I had a lot to learn—and I am still learning today.

Seven years later, I am still passionate about teaching and working with my students. I am still a biology teacher in an urban district. While I no longer work in a turnaround school, I understand what it means to work in that environment. During my time at the turnaround school, I saw all the amazing things my students were accomplishing, from working in internships at a major pharmaceutical company to being admitted into the local electrical union. I am so lucky to have been a teacher at that school. More broadly, I see all the exceptional accomplishments of students who attend these urban, so-called “failing” schools. I also see the potential our students have and continue to advocate for them and push

for change. Students in urban schools deserve an exceptional quality of education that should not be denied based on their socioeconomic status.

All these factors have motivated me to return to school to earn a doctorate in urban education. My passions have led me to conduct research focusing on the role teachers can play in "failing" or turnaround schools to help improve student performance. Having been a part of a turnaround school for 7 years, I see many of the issues that plague our schools. Sadly, teachers' voices are often left out of important conversations. Yet, teachers play such a major role in schools that it is critical to understand and value their perspectives on what is needed for school improvement. I want to use my voice to advocate for increased opportunities for teachers to make decisions to help improve school structures.

Currently, many school directives come from the administration, the district central office, and even the state. Consequently, teachers are left out of the picture in creating systems to help advocate for school change. I argue that teachers have the most expertise in what works well for students. Therefore, teacher leaders should have more of a role in creating systems to improve academic performance.

This research is important because it highlights that the ways turnaround schools are evaluated are not equitable. Moreover, some decisions regarding school improvement do not best support students. In fact, many of the decisions harm students and prevent them from reaching their full potential. Teachers are students' biggest advocates, and they deserve to have a voice in making decisions that will help their schools. That is why I conducted this research, and it is my hope that it will make a difference for the students and teachers who attend and work at turnaround schools.

Research Paradigm

This study adhered to a constructivist epistemology. According to Crotty (1998), constructivism takes the view that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essential social context" (p. 42). The participants of this study were current and former teachers from one urban turnaround school. This study helped uncover how teachers made sense of their role during the turnaround process and whether the availability of teacher leadership was integral to improving the failing school. Each participant had their own experiences within the school, and they offered their meanings of their own realities. Their experiences and stories were essential to understanding how teacher leadership can improve turnaround schools.

Indigenous research methodologist Bagele Chilisa (2020) articulated, "The constructivist mixed methods researcher is guided by an ontological stance that perceives reality as multiple and an epistemological assumption where knowledge is perceived as subjective" (p. 154). She argued that a constructivist mixed-methods researcher should be a responsible healer in their interactions with their participants and should address the issues emerging from the research site (Chilisa, 2020). In this study, I took the stance that knowledge is subjective. This study uncovered new knowledge that had not been discussed in previous turnaround school literature. I also wanted to advocate for my participants, many of whom were exhausted from the challenging demands of working in a turnaround school (Cucchiara et al., 2015). I sought to offer suggestions to help improve the conditions of

teachers who work in turnaround schools, with the hope that this research will aid in reevaluating best practices for turnaround schools.

Research Design

Concurrent Mixed-Methods Design

To gain a better understanding of the role of teacher leadership in an urban turnaround high school, I conducted an instrumental case study. According to Stake (1995), an instrumental case study focuses on one bounded case (Creswell, 2017. In this study, I focused on one urban turnaround high school in Massachusetts. A case study was the most appropriate approach for this research because it helped provide a detailed understanding of how teacher leadership can impact a turnaround school. According to Hartley (2004, as cited in Njie & Asimiran, 2014), a case study "consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context, with the aim being to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied" (p.36).

This mix-methods case study examined several pieces of data. Creswell and Clark (2011, as cited in Almeidai, 2018) defined "mixed methods research [as] a research design (or methodology) in which the researcher collects, analyzes, and mixes (integrates or connects) both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a multiphase program of inquiry" (p.138). Specifically, this study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated, "Concurrent mixed method data collection strategies have been employed to validate one form of data with the other form, to transform the data for comparison, or to address different types of questions" (p.118). In particular, I used a concurrent triangulation design to assist in the research. According to Hanson et al. (2005),

> In concurrent triangulation designs, quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time. Priority is usually equal and given to both forms of data. Data analysis is usually separate, and integration usually occurs at the data interpretation stage. Interpretation typically involves discussing the extent to which the data triangulate or converge. These designs are useful for attempting to confirm, cross-validate, and corroborate study findings. (p. 229)

Adhering to these design components, I prioritized both the quantitative and the qualitative elements of the study. The results fromm both helped validate each other and assisted in addressing the research questions.

Rationale for Using a Case Study

I chose to conduct a concurrent mixed-methods study because the study site had been designated a low-performing school for over 10 years (Lane et al., 2016) and had also been in turnaround for over 7 years. In addition, the school had seen constant leadership changes over the past decade. In the 6 years I was employed by this institution, there had been five different principals. Each principal had brought their own leadership values, which differed greatly. This school had also been scrutinized by the local media for years, and it had been given a bad reputation by people who had never been inside the building or taken the time to understand what occurred daily there.

I believe that a concurrent case study was the most appropriate means of researching this school because of how long the school had been stuck in turnaround. The case study allowed me to focus on a single school, which was helpful because the school had struggled to keep and retain teachers. The study results can be used to inform other urban high schools that are also in turnaround. In addition, the constant turnover of leadership offered a unique

critical perspective on why the school may have struggled to exit turnaround status. By conducting a concurrent mixed-methods study, I was able to simultaneously interview teachers and collect quantitative survey data. The concurrent triangulation helped me address each of my research questions.

Research Process

The data gathering for this study took place completely outside the school. To maintain compliance with my university's Institution Review Board (IRB), I had to conduct all research outside of school hours and not on any school property. However, the participants all came from the same school, located in an urban district within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in a neighborhood where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line. At the time of study, the school had been in turnaround for 7 years. The demographics of the teachers within this school ranged from new teachers to veteran teachers, though all the teachers in the study had worked at the school for a minimum of 1 year. In addition, they all worked at this school while the school was in turnaround.

Quantitative Survey

This first phase of this research employed quantitative research methods. Creswell (2018, as cited by Sukamolson, 2007) defined quantitative research as "a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)" (p. 2). More specifically, I utilized survey research, which, according to Sukamolson (2007), "uses scientific sampling and questionnaire design to measure characteristics of the population with statistical precision" (p. 4). I administered a survey that asked participants about their views on teacher leadership and the availability of teacher leadership from the school being studied. I created the survey

instrument without consulting any other teacher surveys. Before I left the school, I reached out to every teacher there to obtain their personal email address. I explained my study and asked if they would be interested in participating. Those interested gave me their personal email addresses so I could send them the survey outside of school hours. The survey was live for over 5 weeks, and I sent reminders weekly about completing the survey. By the end of the survey period, 44 participants had responded.

Recruitment of Participants

As noted, this study focused on one urban turnaround high school located in Massachusetts. However, I did not conduct the study physically within the school; that is, the research was conducted outside the school, not on school property and not during contractual hours. To recruit teachers, I sent every teacher at the school a personalized email detailing my research and explaining why I was asking them to consider volunteering to be a part of the study. The survey also asked if participants would be interested in being interviewed, and I used that data to select my qualitative interviewees.

Once my research proposal was approved by IRB, I asked teachers for their personal email addresses to stay in contact with them regarding this research. I noted in my email that their responses would be kept confidential, and no names would appear in my findings. I also let teachers know that they could meet with me prior to agreeing to participate in this study so that I could provide more information about why I was conducting the study. Since I had worked with the research participants, I was transparent about protecting their identities throughout the study. When the teachers agreed to voluntarily participate, a survey link was sent to their personal email address. All communication occurred via the staff's personal email addresses; no emails or correspondences were sent via school email or during school

business hours. As an incentive for staff members to participate in the survey, I raffled off ten $10 gifts. I sought 50 teachers to complete the survey; in the end, 44 responded.

Instruments

The first phase of this research project began with a survey questionnaire, which I created on my own, relying on my experience working at the school to gauge how teachers felt about leadership and the availability of teacher leadership roles. According to Appendix B, there are background information questions regarding the teachers' teaching experience in a turnaround school. The second and third sections of the survey included 22 Likert-scale questions that inquired about the availability of teacher leadership opportunities and teachers' experience working in a turnaround school. The survey concluded with three open-ended questions that asked about teacher leadership and the availability of leadership opportunities at the school. See Appendix B for a complete list of survey questions.

I created the survey using SurveyMonkey. It was designed to take 15 to 20 minutes for a respondent to complete. At the beginning of the survey, there was a page that outlining the objectives of this research and a consent form for participating. If participants wanted to participate, they were able to give their consent on the form, or they had the option to decline. All the results were kept on a password-secure server using UMass Boston's OneDrive. All responses were confidential and anonymous. No names of survey takers were recorded. Once the survey was complete, the data were analyzed.

Qualitative: Interviews

A mixed-design study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative portions. The purpose of incorporating interviews was to get a first-hand account from teachers who have been working at this particular turnaround school. While the survey was live, I actively

sought interview participants for the second phase of my study. To be considered for an interview, teachers had to have taught at least one year in the turnaround school.

Recruitment of Participants

To recruit participants for the second phase, the survey included a question that allowed the respondent to indicate if they were interested in sitting for an interview. As the responses came in, I reached out to potential participants individually and invite them to be interviewed. The participants were able to enter their personal email address in the survey, so it was easy to reach out to them all. All the participants had worked at Commonwealth High School for at least 1 year. Fifteen survey respondents volunteered to be interviewed. Once I received the 15 responses, I sent them another letter informing them that the research would be confidential. I also mentioned that their names would not be included in the findings and that their participation was completely voluntary. I had participants choose a pseudonym to conceal their identity. In my recruitment letter, I informed participants that all interviews would occur via Zoom during afterschool hours so it would not impact their workday. I conducted only one interview a day, and I anticipated each interview lasting 20 to 30 minutes. As with the quantitative portion, the responses were confidential, and all recordings were kept on a private server using UMass Boston's OneDrive. As a token of appreciation, I offered a $5 gift card to those who volunteered to participate in the interviews. Prior to the interview, all participants signed a consent form, which I kept on file on OneDrive.

I did receive over 15 teacher responses about sitting for an interview. In selecting participants, I wanted to make sure every department of the school was represented, along with a range of teaching experience. I wanted the participant sample to be as diverse as

possible, so once I selected the 15 participants, I sent them an email about participating. Table 1 offers a brief description of each teacher who participated in the study.

Table 1

Teacher Participants

Teacher Pseudonym	Department	Years of Teaching
Vinny	Science	7–10
Sara	Science	1–3
FR	Computer Science	4–6
Anne	English	4–6
Jasmine	Special Education	10+
Brittany	English	7–10
Sarah	ESL	1–3
Hope	History	1–3
Jada	Science	4–6
Jamie	Math	7–10
Marie	History	10+
Olga	English and ESL	4–6
Zoey	Special Education	4–6
Darius	Special Education	10+
Leah	Science	1–3

Instruments

The second phase of this research utilized semi-structured interviews of teachers and teacher leaders from the school. The interviews asked questions about the school and the teachers' experience working at that school. Consistent with a concurrent mixed-methods study, the interviews occurred while the survey data were being analyzed. The interviews

took place in the evening between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Each interview lasted approximately 20 to 30 minutes. They were all recorded using Zoom, and the recordings were stored on UMass Boston's OneDrive. I then used Temi software to transcribe each interview. The transcriptions of interviews were also stored on OneDrive. Upon completion of the study, all the files were deleted.

Data Analysis

Upon completion of each portion of the study, the data were analyzed using specific methods.

Quantitative Research Analysis

Once the survey was administered, all the data from the survey were collected via SurveyMonkey and then uploaded to SPSS, statistical software that provides several measures of analysis. Using SPSS, I ran statistical tests, including descriptive statistics, a t-test, and a one-way ANOVA, to review the results of my survey. Fisher and Marshall (2009) defined descriptive statistics as "the numerical and graphical techniques used to organize, present and analyze data" (p. 95). For this study, I looked at the measures of central tendency, including mean, median, and mode. In addition, I reviewed the frequency distribution, range, and standard deviation, and I used descriptive statistics to summarize the major data points from the survey. The other statistical tests were inferential and required more analysis.

The second level of analysis involved performing a t-test on the data. A t-test measures whether two groups of a continuous variable are different from one another (Stockemer et al., 2019, p. 101). In this study, a t-test was used to help determine whether teachers felt that teacher leadership was an essential aspect of turnaround school reform

practices. The data from the survey helped address this question. In addition to running a t-test, a one-way ANOVA was run. One-way ANOVA hypothesis testing is an extension of the t-test in that dependent variables are compared with independent variable groups. A one-way ANOVA involves analyzing one independent variable with two or more levels (Yan, 2010). For the survey responses, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences between teachers with different years of teaching experience and their beliefs about the effectiveness of teacher leadership. These data helped determine whether the perceived impact of teacher leadership correlated with teachers' years of experience.

After the survey responses were collected, all three statistical tests were run using SPSS. Once the results were calculated, the data were displayed in charts, tables, and graphs. All hypothesis testing was recorded and analyzed using the numbers that arose from the survey results. These data points helped point to correlations between years of teaching in a turnaround school and age to determine if there was a need for teachers who wanted to take part in leadership opportunities. The data from this portion of the research were also useful in identifying major themes about how teachers felt about leadership opportunities. The survey offered insight into how teachers felt about working at this one turnaround school.

Qualitative Research Analysis

For the semi-structured interviews, I used memoing as a method for retaining information. After each interview, I wrote a memo about the time, location, and my own thoughts regarding what I had just heard or experienced. Birks et al. (2008) suggested that memoing is one way to enhance qualitative research as it helps the researcher understand how their own subjective influences could affect the collection and interpretation of the data

(p. 69). I wanted to remember what happened during each interview. The more that I documented about what I heard, the more reflexive I could be in interpreting the data. Taken together, the memos recounted all the individual interviews, so when it came time to analyze the data, I could recount the experience with each participant. This assisted in increasing the accuracy of my data analysis.

In addition to memoing, I used coding as a technique to analyze what was said during each interview. According to Linneberg and Korsgaad (2019), "Coding in its most basic form is the simple operation of identifying segments of meaning in your data and labeling them with a code" (p. 6). Each of the interviews I conducted was recorded via Zoom. I then transcribed each Zoom recording using Temi transcription software. Once all the interviews were compiled, transcribed, and checked for accuracy, I then coded words and information according to categories of common themes. One coding technique I used was template coding, which is used when codes are defined by the researcher and are aligned with current literature and theory (Blaire, 2015). For this research, I identified teacher leadership, school working conditions, and professional development opportunities as major themes related to teaching in a turnaround school. Template coding also allowed me to be more reflexive considering my position in the study due to my personal involvement with this school (Roberts, 1997).

Method of Coding and Reliability

For this study, I used content analysis to code my data. While reading through interview transcripts I sorted words and phrases into categories based on emergent themes. I used tagging and thematic analysis to sort the data and create my explanatory schema. According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), "The advantage of the conventional approach to

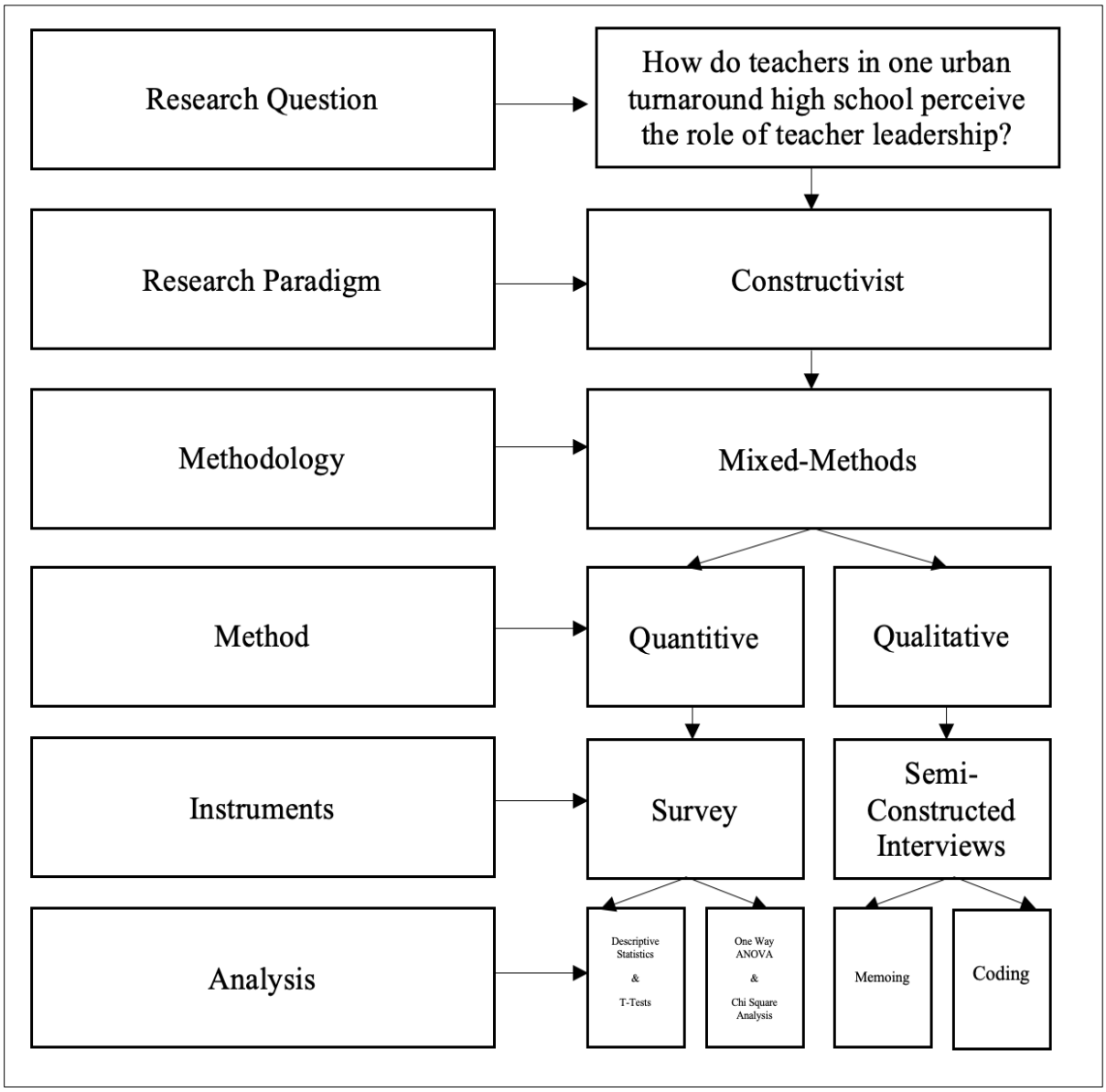
content analysis is gaining direct information from study participants without imposing preconceived categories and theoretical perspectives" (p. 1280). Each transcript was thoroughly read several times before codes were identified. After repeatedly reading each transcript, I was able to identify categories of words and phrases from which themes emerged.

To maintain the reliability of the data, each transcript was sent to the participants for review to ensure it was an accurate account of what was said. If there were any mistakes, the participants informed me and corrections were made. In this case, no changes were made to any transcripts after participants reviewed the data. I also debriefed with each participant after the interviews to find out if there were any additional pieces of information they wanted to include in the transcript.

The themes that arose from these analytical techniques helped inform a more detailed discussion about whether teacher leadership is an important aspect of improving a turnaround school. These themes and findings contributed to the turnaround literature by adding teacher-specific perspectives. The goal was to find solutions for improving turnaround school conditions, particularly for teachers, and these qualitative instruments were one way to uncover new information that is potentially transformational for turnaround research and scholarship.

Figure 2

Methodological Flow of the Study



Note. This figure was used as a template as I conducted this study.

Validity and Reliability

Since this was a mixed-methods study, it is important to discuss issues related to validity and reliability. Heale and Twycross (2015) defined validity as "the extent to which a

concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study" (p. 66). In this study, the survey was used to understand teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership and how they processed school turnaround. According to Kitchenham and Pfleeger (2003), it is important to have a plan for inconsistent or incomplete surveys (p. 24). For data validation, I did not consider surveys that were incomplete or not correctly filled out to avoid introducing any systemic bias.

Chilisa (2020) stated, "Validity also speaks to the question of whether the people feel that what has been produced is relevant to them, to their problems and to their challenges" (p.136). The perceptivity of this research informed my participants of ways they could help improve the school overall. This school had been academically underperforming for several years, so the findings may help to drive change. As a former member of the school that was researched, I needed to ensure that my study had credibility. I used triangulation as a means for enhancing my credibility. According to Krefting (1991, as cited in Chilisa, 2020), "There are multiple ways to eliminate biases as a researcher using triangulity including methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation, triangulation of data sources or theoretical triangulation" (p.214). For this study, I used methodological triangulation by comparing the data from both my survey and my interviews as well as my memos. I used triangulation of data sources by recording when and where my interviews took place, and I was mindful of the space where they were observed.

In addition to validity, I considered the reliability of this study. As Joppe (2000) wrote,

> The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study

> can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. (p. 1)

For this study, the survey was designed so it could be replicated with teachers in any turnaround high school. According to Golafshani (2003), qualitative research is not always considered reliable because it does not use measurements (p .600). However, Eisner (1991) maintained that a good qualitative study helps to understand a situation that has been otherwise confusing or unclear (p. 601). This research used semi-structured interviews to learn more about how teachers perceived teacher leadership in a turnaround school. This is a topic that has not been thoroughly studied.

Ethical Considerations

According to Fisher and Anushko (2008), "Social researchers should strive to establish relationships of trust with research participants, the scientific community, and the public" (p. 97). This research was conducted at a school in which I was a former member of the community, having once worked at the school being studied. I had a moral and ethical obligation to protect my former colleagues during and after this study. Since this research uncovered many insights regarding the impact teacher leadership has on turnaround schools, I ensured that the data remained confidential. To that end, pseudonyms were used in place of real participant names: I also assigned a pseudonym to the school: Commonwealth High School. All the data from my recordings were stored in a secure password-protected location on UMass Boston's OneDrive. At the completion of the study, all recordings and data were destroyed, following strict guidelines for privacy.

I wanted to maintain trust with my former colleagues during the entire research process, and I made every effort to ensure that my colleagues felt comfortable during the

research process. All participants had the right to leave the study at any point, and if they wanted any information removed from the record, I did so. I did not conduct any interviews on school property; all interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom outside of working hours. All surveys were sent to the personal email addresses of the participants, not school-based accounts. This way, the school district could not track any responses, thereby maintaining confidentiality.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was that it only focused on one urban turnaround high school in Massachusetts. Therefore, the results related to the turnaround school in this study may not be generalizable to other urban turnaround schools in different states, or even in the same state. Every state has its own adapted turnaround policy. It is important to understand that this study referred to the policies and guidelines set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for turnaround schools. As such, the policies that Massachusetts has adopted may not be applicable to other states.

Another limitation of the study related to my role as a former insider of the school being studied. I recognize that some may question my participation in this study, considering that I was previously employed by the school. However, I took multiple steps to ensure that I limited my biases. For example, I left the school during my data collection period and was no longer employed there during the remainder of the research.

On the other hand, some may see my role as a former insider as a strength of this study. The school I studied had been in turnaround for over 7 years and I was part of the turnaround process for 6 of those years. I saw much of the process unfold during my tenure at the school. I am very familiar with Massachusetts law regarding turnaround and the policies

that impacted the school. I recognize what it means to be a teacher in a turnaround school, as I lived those experiences every day. However, for this study, I stepped out of my role as an insider and gathered and analyzed other people's perspectives on what it was like working at this school. This research uncovered insights that could help the school move forward in its turnaround journey, and I am happy to share any of these insights with members of the district of which this school is part. This research could also help other schools in the district that in turnaround, as this district is currently working on improving conditions in all turnaround schools.

Summary

This study adopted a concurrent mixed-methods design, focusing on one urban turnaround high school. The quantitative portion of the study consisted of a survey distributed among the entire teaching staff at Commonwealth High School. The survey was designed to gauge how participants conceptualized the role of teacher leadership and how teacher leadership influenced and contributed to the improvement of the turnaround school.

The second phase of the study included semi-structured interviews with 15 participants from the school. The interview results were transcribed and coded to determine an explanatory schema. The results of the survey were analyzed to help address the following research questions:

1. How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?
2. In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of turnaround schools?

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the ways teachers conceptualize teacher leadership and how teacher leadership can influence the improvement of a turnaround high school.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

As described in Chapter 3, this research comprised a concurrent mixed-methods case study that focused on a turnaround school (Commonwealth High School). In this chapter, the data are divided into two categories: (1) quantitative data collection and analysis and (2) qualitative data collection and analysis. The data within each category were analyzed and cross-analyzed to address the research questions. The results are discussed in detail in this chapter.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

The survey developed for this study was distributed to the entire Commonwealth High School teacher community. Out of about 100 teachers, 43 responded to the survey. The survey data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, a t-test, and a one-way ANOVA to address the research questions. The descriptive statistics centered on the teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership in relation to high school turnaround practices and working in an urban turnaround high school. A 5-point Likert scale was used as a measurement tool for survey items: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 =disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly disagree. Descriptive statistics from the 43 responses in the survey are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
I have an understanding of what teacher leadership is.	43	1.65	2.0	0.68	1.00	4.00
I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is.	43	1.62	2.0	0.72	1.00	4.00
I consider myself a teacher leader.	43	2.25	2.0	0.92	1.00	4.00
I feel there are many opportunities for teacher leadership at my school.	43	2.79	3.0	1.12	1.00	5.00
Teacher leadership opportunities are encouraged for all teachers at my school.	43	3.32	4.0	0.91	1.00	5.00
Teacher leadership is beneficial to the overall improvement of the school.	43	1.58	1.0	0.79	1.00	4.00
My school administration encourages teachers to engage in leadership opportunities.	43	3.13	3.0	0.96	1.00	5.00
My school administration regularly involves teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices.	43	3.34	3.00	1.17	1.00	5.00
I believe that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities is essential to the success of the school.	43	1.58	1.00	0.69	1.00	3.00
I have an understanding of what distributive leadership is.	43	2.20	2.00	1.01	1.00	4.00
My school administration uses a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities.	42	3.35	3.00	0.95	1.00	5.00
I think that a distributive leadership model is beneficial to the success of this school.	43	2.23	2.00	0.92	1.00	5.00

Variable	N	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Teachers have a voice in major decision-making processes at my school.	43	3.88	4.00	1.00	2.00	5.00
Teachers at this school are provided sufficient training and professional development opportunities to help improve the school.	43	3.34	4.00	1.00	5.00	

Using SPSS, I computed the central tendency and variability for each of the 43 responses from the 14 variables. The following discussion is based on the data tables, charts, and calculations generated according to the group's responses to the Likert-scaled survey questions. The study participants ranged from teachers who had just started teaching to those who have worked as teachers for more than 10 years. The majority of respondents had taught for 4–6 years or for 7–10 years.

Table 3

Number of Years Participants Had Worked in the Urban Turnaround High School

Number of Years Teaching	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
0–3	6	13.6
4–6	24	54.5
7–10	12	27.3
10+	2	4.5
TOTAL	44	100

Descriptive Statistics Findings

Based on the survey data, a little more than half of the participants had been working at Commonwealth High School for 4–6 years (n = 24). This is notable considering that the turnaround period lasts for 3 years, so nearly half the study participants had worked in the school for at least the duration of a normal turnaround period. By contrast, only two of the participants had taught in the school for 10+ years. This is significant because, of the entire school population surveyed, only about 4% had been here for a long period.

In addressing the first research question—"How do teachers in one urban turnaround high school perceive the role of teacher leadership?"—it appears that 90% of the participants had an understanding of what teacher leadership is. Nineteen participants strongly agreed with I have an understanding of what teacher leadership is and 21 agreed. Thus, it appears that most of the surveyed population had a basic understanding of what teacher leadership.

Similarly, approximately 88% of the participants understood what a teacher leader is. However, it is important to note that about 59% of the participants surveyed considered themselves teacher leaders. This is significant because more than half of the surveyed population considered themselves teacher leaders in the school. In addition, close to half (48%) of the participants felt there were many opportunities for teacher leadership within Commonwealth High School, while 22% neither agreed nor disagreed with I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is, and 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that some of the participants were unclear about the teacher leadership positions available in the school.

It is also notable that exactly 50% of the surveyed population disagreed that teacher leadership opportunities were available to all teachers. However, by contrast, 89% of the participants felt that teacher leadership was beneficial for the improvement of the school.

The next finding from these data was that 41% of the participants felt that the school administration did not encourage teacher leadership opportunities, while 23% agree with the statement about the administration encouraging teacher leadership. Thirty-six of the participants were unsure about the statement. This suggests that the school's administrators most likely did not engage all teachers in participating in leadership opportunities. In addition, 48% of the teachers surveyed disagreed that the school administration involved teachers for their input on major school improvement initiatives. Only 20% agreed with this statement, and 32% were undecided.

Another finding from these data was that 86% of the participants either strongly agreed or agreed that the availability of teacher leadership is essential for the success of the school. This indicated that teachers felt that teacher leadership opportunities are essential during turnaround to help improve the school. The survey also asked participants about their understanding of distributive leadership. In the school, 68% of the participants possessed an understanding of what distributive leadership is. However, only 13% felt that a distributive leadership model was used in the school. Thirty-six percent disagree with this statement, and 51% were unsure. Since more participants were unsure or disagreed, this suggests that a distributive leadership model was not used in the school. However, 64% of the participants felt that a distributive leadership model would benefit the school's improvement.

The last major finding from these data was that 66% of the participants felt that teachers did not have a major voice in making decisions at the school. This is important

because while most teachers felt there were teacher leadership opportunities at this school, the majority did not feel they had any voice in making important decisions.

T-Test

To help address my research question about how teachers perceived teacher leadership opportunities in the school, I performed a t-test to identify any statistically significant differences between the sex of the teachers and the perceived availability of teacher leadership opportunities. My null hypothesis was that there were no statistically significant differences between the sex of teachers in this turnaround high school and their perceptions on the availability of teacher leadership. My alternative hypothesis was that there were statistically significant differences between the sex of teachers in this turnaround high school and their perceptions on the availability of teacher leadership.

Table 4

Summary of Descriptive Statistics and T-Test Results Regarding Perceptions of Teacher Sex and Their Perception of the Availability of Teacher Leadership in an Urban Turnaround High School Measured by the 13 Statements

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P Value
I have an understanding of what teacher leadership is.	Female	24	1.54	0.58	-1.182	0.244
	Male	19	1.78	0.78		
I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is.	Female	24	1.58	0.65	-0.449	0.656
	Male	19	1.68	0.82		
I consider myself a teacher leader.	Female	24	2.08	0.97	-1.38	0.174
	Male	19	2.47	0.84		

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P Value
I feel there are many opportunities for teacher leadership at my school.	Female	24	2.87	1.22	0.548	0.587
	Male	19	2.68	1.00		
Teacher leadership opportunities are encouraged for all teachers at my school.	Female	24	3.50	0.83	1.41	0.164
	Male	19	3.10	0.99		
Teacher leadership is beneficial to the overall improvement of the school.	Female	24	1.45	0.58	-1.147	0.258
	Male	19	1.73	0.99		
My school administration encourages teachers to engage in leadership opportunities.	Female	24	3.29	1.08	1.16	0.250
	Male	19	2.94	0.77		
My school administration regularly involves teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices.	Female	24	3.37	1.13	0.162	0.872
	Male	19	3.31	1.24		
I believe that the availability of teacher	Female	24	1.45	0.58	-1.310	0.197

Variable	Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	P Value
leadership opportunities is essential to the success of the school.	Male	19	1.73	0.80		
I have an understanding of what distributive leadership is.	Female	24	2.16	1.09	-0.307	0.761
	Male	19	2.26	0.93		
My school administration uses a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities.	Female	24	3.45	1.06	0.787	0.436
	Male	18	3.22	0.80		
I think that a distributive leadership model is beneficial for the success of this school.	Female	24	2.00	0.83	-1.918	0.062
	Male	19	2.52	9.96		
Teachers have a voice in major decision-making processes at my school.	Female	24	4.16	0.86	2.164	0.036
	Male	19	3.52	1.07		

T-Test Findings

Tests for significance were run for male and female teachers in all 13 tests. A t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between teachers' sex and their understanding of what teacher leadership is. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I have an*

understanding on what teacher leadership is. The p-value of 0.244 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A second t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their understanding of what a teacher leader is. The data indicated there was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in relation to the variable *I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is*. The p-value of 0.656 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A third t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their considering themselves to be teacher leaders. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I consider myself a teacher leader*. The p-value of 0.174 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A fourth t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that there were many opportunities for teacher leadership opportunities at the school. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I have an understanding on what teacher leadership is*. The p-value of 0.587 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A fifth t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that teacher leadership opportunities were encouraged for all teachers at the school. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in relation to the variable *Teacher leadership*

opportunities are encouraged for all teachers at my school. The p-value of 0.161 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A sixth t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that teacher leadership benefitted the improvement of the school. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *Teacher leadership is beneficial to the overall improvement of the school*. The p-value of 0.258 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A seventh t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that the school administration encouraged teachers to engage in leadership opportunities. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *My school administration encourages teachers to engage in leadership opportunities*. The p-value of 0.250 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

An eighth t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that the school administration regularly involved teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *My school administration regularly involves teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices*. The p-value of 0.872 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A ninth t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities was essential to the success of the school. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I believe that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities is essential to the success of the school*. The p-value of 0.197 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A 10th t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their understanding of what distributive leadership is. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I have an understanding of what distributive leadership is*. The p-value of 0.761 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

An 11th t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their understanding of whether the school administration used a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities. The data indicated o statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *My school administration uses a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities*. The p-value of 0.436 was greater than $\propto 0.05$; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A 12th t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that a distributive leadership model was beneficial for the success of the school. The data indicated no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *I think that a distributive leadership*

model is beneficial for the success of this school. The p-value of 0.062 was greater than ∝ 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

A 13th t-test was calculated to determine the observed level of significance between male and female teachers and their belief that teachers had a voice in major decision-making processes at the school. The data indicated there was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers regarding the variable *Teachers have a voice in major decision-making processes at my school*. The p-value of 0.036 was less than ∝ 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This indicated that females (M = 4.16) did not perceive that teachers had a voice in making major decisions at the school compared with males (M=3.52) who felt that teachers did have a voice in making major decisions.

In conclusion, the null hypothesis was maintained for the following 11 variables ($p < 0.05$):

- I have an understanding of what teacher leadership is.
- I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is.
- I consider myself a teacher leader.
- I feel there are many opportunities for teacher leadership at my school.
- Teacher leadership opportunities are encouraged for all teachers at my school.
- Teacher leadership is beneficial to the overall improvement of the school.
- My school administration encourages teachers to engage in leadership opportunities.
- My school administration regularly involves teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices.

- I believe that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities is essential to the success of the school.
- I have an understanding of what distributive leadership is.
- My school administration uses a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities.
- I think that a distributive leadership model is beneficial to the success of this school.

The null hypothesis was not maintained for the statement "Teachers have a voice in major decision-making processes at my school" ($p < 0.05$), showing a statistical difference in perception between male and female teachers in the school. These results indicate that females ($M = 4.16$) did not perceive that teachers had a voice in making major decisions at the school compared with males ($M = 3.52$) who felt that teachers had a voice in making major decisions.

These findings suggest that males and females who taught in this school differed in their beliefs about teachers making major decisions for the school. Female teachers in the school felt they did not have a major voice in making important decisions in the school, while male teachers felt they did have a voice in making major decisions in the school. The results also suggest that males and females did not differ in their perceptions of teacher leadership within the school.

One-Way ANOVA

In addition to the t-tests, a one-way ANOVA was run to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the number of years teachers had taught in the school and their belief that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities was essential

to the success of the school. The null hypothesis was that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers and their years of teaching in the turnaround high school and their belief that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities were essential to the school's success. The alternative hypothesis was there was a statistically significant difference between teachers and their years of teaching in the school and their belief that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities were essential to the school's success.

Table 5

Summary of Descriptive Statistics and One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Teachers' Years of Teaching in the School and Their Beliefs About the Availability of Teacher Leadership Opportunities

Variable	0–3 years M (SD)	4–6 years M (SD)	7–10 years M (SD)	10+ years M (SD)	F	P
I believe the availability of teacher leadership is essential to the success of the school.	n = 6 1.66 (0.51)	n = 23 1.47 (0.66)	n = 12 1.83 (0.83)	n = 2 1.00 (0.69)	1.197	0.323

Table 6

Post Hoc Bonferroni Results Summary of One-Way ANOVA Results Regarding Teachers' Beliefs About the Availability of Teacher Leadership Opportunities and the Success of the School

Number of Years Teaching	How Many Years Teaching at the Turnaround School	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Sig.
0–3 years	4–6 years	0.188	0.31	1.00
	7–10 years	-0.16	0.34	1.00
	10+ years	0.66	0.56	1.00
4–6 years	0–3 years	-0.18	0.31	1.00
	7–10 years	-0.35	0.24	0.950
	10+ years	0.47	0.51	1.00
7–10 years	0–3 years	0.16	0.34	1.00
	4–6 years	0.35	0.24	0.950
	10+ years	0.83	0.52	0.741
10+ years	0–3 years	-0.66	0.56	1.00
	4 - 6 years	-0.47	0.51	1.00
	7 - 10 years	-0.83	0.52	0.741

One-Way ANOVA Findings

The null hypothesis for the variable *I believe the availability of teacher leadership is essential to the success of the school* was rejected. $F(3,39) = 1.197$, $p^{***} < 0.001$ indicated a significant difference between teachers who had taught at the school for a different number of years and their belief that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities were essential to the success of the school. In general, it appears that teachers who had taught at the school

4–6 years felt that teacher leadership was more essential for the success of the school than those who had taught for 0–3 years ($M_{0\text{-}3} = 1.66$ vs. $M_{4\text{-}6} = 1.47$).

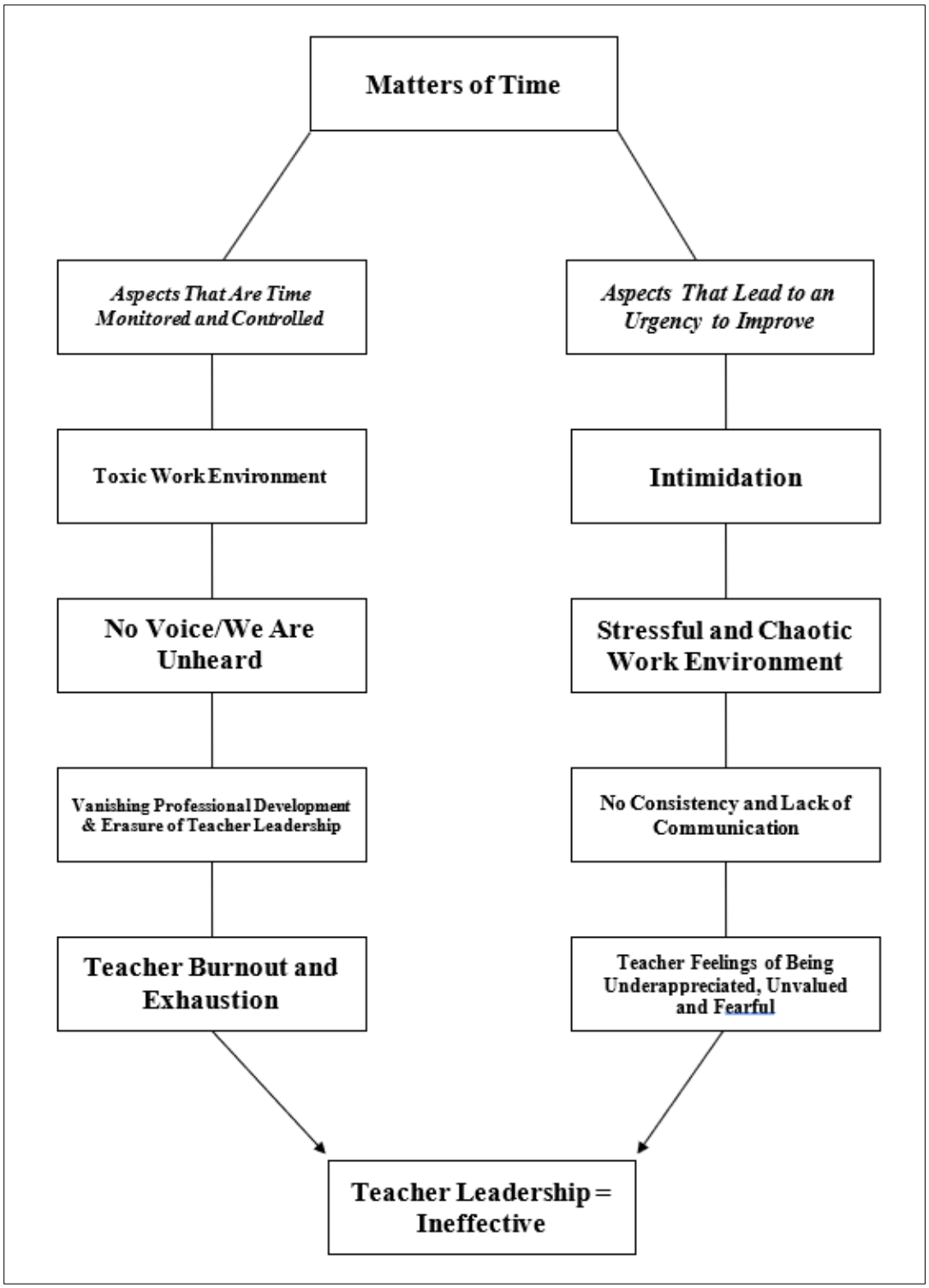
In addition, in general, it appears that teachers who had taught at the school for 10+ years felt that teacher leadership was more essential to the success of the school than those who had taught for 7–10 years ($M_{7\text{-}10} = 1.83$ vs. $M_{10+} = 1.00$). It is also important to note that those who had taught for 10+ years felt that teacher leadership was more essential than those who had taught for 0–3 years ($M_{0\text{-}3} = 1.66$ vs. $M_{10+} = 1.00$). This indicates that teachers who had been at Commonwealth High School for a longer time felt that leadership opportunities were essential for the success of the school.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

The second phase of this study included 15 semi-structured interviews with a variety of teachers from Commonwealth High School. The teachers ranged in years of experience and their current employment at the school. Every teacher who was interviewed had taught at the school for at least 1 year while the school was in turnaround status. The results of the semi-structured interviews provided some insight into teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership at the urban turnaround high school. Several themes emerged from the interview data. Figure 3 illustrates the exploratory schema of themes from the interviews. Each theme demonstrates a key concept related to teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership.

Figure 3

Explanatory Schema of Themes From Semi-Structured Interviews



Time is the most crucial element that impacts teachers working in a turnaround school. In a turnaround high school, teacher activities are always measured according to a timeframe. In Massachusetts, turnaround schools have 3 years to make major improvements to their school under the current turnaround law. This theme emerged as central to my study. I coded this them "matters of time." There is an urgency around making drastic changes because once a school is in turnaround, the clock starts.

From this main theme, my schema branches off into two different columns. One column represents aspects that are time-monitored and controlled. The themes that appear under this heading include a toxic work environment, teachers feeling they have no voice, and teachers feeling they are unheard. This leads to an erasure of teacher leadership and vanishing professional development (PD) opportunities. In turn, this leads to teachers feeling exhausted and burnt out.

The other column of my explanatory schema focuses on aspects of turnaround that create an urgency to improve. One of the major themes that emerged from this category was intimidation. Teachers feel intimidated by administrators. This engendered a stressful and chaotic work environment—the direct consequence of having no consistency in the school and lack of communication from school leaders. The lack of communication and consistency led to teacher disinvestment and reduced funding for the school. This led to teachers feeling underappreciated, unvalued, and fearful for their jobs. Both columns feed into the same outcome: ineffective teacher leadership in the school.

Interview Themes

After coding the data, the following interview themes were identified:

1. Matters of Time

2. Toxic Work Environment
3. No Voice, We are Unheard
4. Vanishing Professional Development and Erasure of Teacher Leadership
5. Teacher Burnout and Exhaustion
6. Intimidation
7. Stressful and Chaotic Work Environment
8. No Consistency and Lack of Communication
9. Teachers' Feelings of Being Underappreciated, unvalued and fearful

Each of these themes comprises the overarching theme of ineffective teacher leadership at Commonwealth High School.

Aspects That Are Time-Monitored and Controlled

Matters of Time. As mentioned earlier, all aspects of working in a turnaround school involve some timeframe or time component. Making dramatic improvements to a school in only 3 years is undeniably a daunting task. Schools must put together a plan quickly and execute it immediately to begin the turnaround process. Many participants noted time in their interviews in a variety of ways. For instance, some participants commented on the extra time teachers and staff needed to stay after school for professional development—one of the requirements of being in turnaround schools. In addition, the majority of the participants noted that time was wasted. For instance, one participant noted that she felt that many of the opportunities to help the school succeed were a waste of time: "During the last 2 or 3 years of my time at this school, professional development opportunities were just, uh, wasted opportunities there; the time was not used in a very efficient manner." Another participant noted that required professional development felt rushed and unhelpful:

> The assistant principals were asked to design the professional development for teachers and staff. Um, and it just felt very rushed, it did not feel like a whole lot of effort and thought had been put into designing these opportunities … and by and large they were not helpful, they were wasteful

One participant noted that the administration would even acknowledge that professional development was not planned, so they would return that time to them to get things done in their classrooms:

> Well, it seemed like a lot of, especially actually both years I was there, um, like nothing would be planned, and then it would be like, "Oh, we're returning the time back to you," and it's, like, time that I don't want <laugh>. Yeah, I would rather go home and have that time, or I would rather have professional development to support, especially coming in as a new teacher feeling like I didn't have a lot of support. I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing, and I didn't understand the expectations.

Here, it is clear that this teacher needed support from PD to help with the school improvement efforts, but due to the lack of planning for the required PD, it became another waste of time—and more lack of support.

One participant noted that teachers did not have much say about PD offerings:

> I don't think that teachers had a lot of say. Uh, there were a couple highlight instances that I can recall where we tried to set up—like there was one PD session where we tried to set up teacher choice. The implementation of it was a little bit rough…. I was placed unwillingly into the new teacher PD, and I had, at that time, been teaching for

like 7 years … I felt it was unfortunate ‘cause I was missing out on some other PD opportunities that I would've been more interested in.

This teacher noted that they had a choice, but they were unwillingly placed in a new teacher PD since they were new to the building but not new to teaching. This teacher's time was wasted since they could have been placed in another PD group that would have been more relevant to their professional training.

Many of the participants noted that they felt like time was wasted on PD opportunities that could have been used for improving pedagogy and teaching. In fact, these participants noted that PD was the most significant waste of time. Since additional professional development is a required component of working at a turnaround school, it appears that this area needs to be improved at Commonwealth High School. Some teachers noted that they were placed in PD groups that were not helpful to their professional practice, while others said that they felt they had no support in improving teaching and learning during this PD time.

Since time is a critical factor in these schools, many teachers noted that they experienced stress from all the additional requirements of working in this school. Teachers shared that the long workdays could be difficult and that not receiving relevant PD support in made them feel unheard and unappreciated. Regarding teacher leadership, many participants felt they did not want to take on a leadership role because their time was not honored and they did not want to put a lot of work into a new initiative only for it not to be valued by the administration.

Toxic Work Environment. The central theme of Matters of Time can further be broken down into other categories. In my explanatory schema, I acknowledge aspects that are

time-monitored and controlled. The first theme in this category is A Toxic Work Environment. A toxic work environment is one in which staff feel uneasy due to harsh working conditions perpetuated by, in this case, school administration and a lack of support for teachers. Many of the participants noted that working in the turnaround school was toxic, primarily because of the school leadership and administration.

I asked the participants, "What do you believe are the top priorities for this school to be able to successfully turnaround?" I received many different responses. One of the first participants, Vinny, a former science teacher, said,

> Fire the current principal. I think that's where it starts. Um, if the person who is there who is wildly toxic is going to be there and continue to do things in the way that they're happening, um, he has to go.

Another teacher named Olga noted, "If I'm being completely honest, I think the top priority is a change in school leadership. I do not believe that the present school leader is qualified to lead the school…. I think that's harming the school community."

Darius, a former science teacher, explained that the high turnover in leadership led to chaos, which is a trait of a toxic school environment. I asked, "What were the working conditions like in this school?" Again, I received many different responses, but administration came up frequently as a problem. Darius shared,

> Um, when I was there, there were, um, several administrators going in and out of that school. Um, it caused chaos. Um, it confused the students. Um, teachers were overwhelmed. Administrators, new administrators had no clue what they were getting themselves into. Um, there was no control. It was not the teachers that were causing

the chaos. It was the administrators causing the chaos due to lack of understanding, lack of empathy.

Darius noted that the lack of empathy from school administration made her feel like she was in a state of chaos.

I also asked a question about how teachers can get more involved in the school improvement process. One teacher responded, “I mean, I don't know if it's anything teachers are doing wrong because, I mean, from my experience there, a lot of teachers want to be involved, um, and tried to be involved, and it wasn’t welcomed,” implying that the school leadership did not want teachers to get involved.

Several of the teachers who were interviewed were no longer working at Commonwealth High School because of the toxic work environment. The role administration played came up frequently, and it was evident that the administration was not creating strategic or helpful conditions to help the school improve. One participant even noted that when teachers wanted to get involved, it was not welcomed. Other participants noted that when they did get involved in helping to improve teaching and learning conditions, the changes were not rolled out properly. In one instance, teachers were asked to lead groups of PD based on their expertise. However, the administration did not feel this was effective, so that teacher voice was lost, and instead, teachers were provided ineffective professional development. This appears to be a factor that led to the work environment feeling toxic.

Throughout their interviews, several participants shared that the biggest change needed to improve the school was removing the current school leader. One participant noted that the current leader made decisions that did not benefit the well-being of the staff or students. Teachers were fired for no reason. Teachers felt they were walking on eggshells and

were afraid to ask for help. A first-year teacher, Leah, commented that she was petrified to ask for help because she felt that she was not supported by the school's administration. Ultimately, this teacher chose to leave because she felt the school did not provide a supportive environment for new teachers—another factor perpetuating the school's toxic work environment. Under these conditions, teachers did not want to take advantage of leadership opportunities because they were worried that if they said or did anything wrong, their jobs could be on the line. The fear and intimidation they felt were evident throughout the participants' experiences.

No Voice, We Are Unheard, We Are the Problem. Teachers felt they had no voice in the school and felt they were labeled as the problem—partly because they had no voice to advocate for what was best for the school. The notion of feeling unheard came up several times throughout the interviews. One participant, Melissa, who had worked at the school for several years during the turnaround, noted that teachers were never given a platform or an opportunity to really influence change. She also shared her belief that teachers should be an important part of the turnaround process. To her knowledge, no teachers were asked to participate in writing the turnaround plan, which is required by law. It should be noted that none of the 15 participants had ever been invited to be a part of writing the turnaround plan—reinforcing the sense of being unheard in an important process designed to improve their school.

Another participant, Sarah, came to the school after the turnaround plan was put into place. She mentioned that after the third year of the original turnaround plan expired, a revised plan was implemented. However, she mentioned that no teachers were asked to help write the revised plan. She said that teachers had no input into important decisions regarding

the school. All decisions, she noted, were top-down; the district controlled all major decisions, and teachers were just expected to do what they were told. This is another instance of teachers feeling unheard. Teachers should have a prominent place in creating and revising turnaround plans because it is a legal requirement. In this turnaround school, this did not occur.

Another participant expressed that they felt as if teachers at the school were on different team from the administrators. They said they had worked at other turnaround schools in their career, had been a part of making important decisions for the school, and had seen a lot of successes. However, when they started working at Commonwealth High School, they felt that teachers had no voice: "It became more like the teachers were the problem and were not valued…. It felt like we were labeled as the problem."

Vinny, a former science teacher at Commonwealth High School, explained that they left the school because they felt unheard, and they felt they had no voice to help drive change in the school: "To be completely frank, that's why I left. I had no voice." Vinny also explained how much they had loved working at the school, but after constant changes in leadership and teachers being silenced, it did not feel like the same community they had started in. They saw that teacher leadership was not being valued, and they wanted to be a teacher leader. They realized that this school was not the place to work if one wanted this leadership role because it had no value.

Another participant mentioned that working in the turnaround school felt like a setup: "It kind of seems like the way turnaround is set up is contradictory to what, you know, having teachers be a part of the solution." They felt that so many teachers working there were

just trying to survive each day. They had little support, they had no mentorship, and they felt unheard—and therefore decided to teach elsewhere.

Vanishing Professional Development and Erasure of Teacher Leadership. The study participants felt that the professional development they were offered was not helpful. I coded this as "vanishing professional development" because while PD is a requirement, there was no useful learning to be gained from these sessions. I link this with the erasure of teacher leadership because teachers felt they should have been able to lead PD but were denied the ability to do this. The practice of professional development was frequently discussed throughout the participant interviews. Many teachers perceived PD as a way to get involved in teacher leadership. Teachers did not feel valued as leaders because when they want to take on a leadership position, it was often unvalued. Teachers in the school felt that professional development was a primary outlet for teacher leadership opportunities. However, the study participants felt that PD opportunities were vanishing in relation to teacher leadership roles; consequently, poor professional development opportunities were leading to the erasure of teacher leadership at Commonwealth High School.

Darius, a former teacher, noted that she defined teacher leadership was when teachers do more work than the administrators: "To me, teacher leadership is when teachers and administrators come together and find a solution or hearing teacher input and validating that, um, but I feel like that is not what happens there." This sentiment was validated by another participant, Sara, who shared that she wanted to participate more in leadership and to work together with administration to find solutions to help the students improve: "I tried to talk with my supervisors [administration] with some constructive proposal, but it went nowhere again and again."

This erasure of teacher leadership was also felt through a lack of support from the administration around setting priorities. Melissa, a current teacher at the school, stated, “If we can have one or two big priorities that we focus on, um, that teachers agree with administration on, then we won't feel like we are fighting them.” However, getting support from administrative leadership appeared to be a constant battle, leading teachers to feel they were unclear about what teacher leadership means. Jamie, a former teacher, felt that she was unclear about what teacher leadership is when asked what it looked like in her school. She responded, “Tough question, uh, teacher leadership. Let me think about it. I feel like I don’t see it much. That is why it's hard to talk about.” This was also followed up by another participant, Vinny, who said that their voice was never heard when trying to work with the administration on creating solutions to help the school improve.

Jasmine, another former teacher, had a different response to what teacher leadership is. She stated,

> Um, for me, I think teacher leadership is about empowering teachers. I think it's about recognizing the fact that all of us have different talents and different knowledge base[s] and different expertise. And I think teacher leadership is about really focusing on what do different teachers bring to the table and allowing them an opportunity to share that expertise with others.

However, when asked if there was teacher leadership at Commonwealth High School, she stated that it varied because of an inconsistency in school leadership: “I think because of the fact that we had such inconsistent administrative leadership and a lot of chaos at the top, so to speak, I think it was varied. So, it would depend kind of on who was, like, the principal at the time.” The constant change in administrative leadership highlights the importance of

consistency for teacher leadership. Other participants responded similarly. One teacher, Marie, said that there were teachers who wanted to impact change, and at one point, the principal supported them. However, that principal was gone by the next year, so nothing was implemented. This led teachers to question the value of participating in teacher leadership at all.

Not one participant in the interviews felt that the administration was supportive of teachers acting as leaders to help the school improve. Teachers were left feeling exhausted, mentally drained, and unresponsive to teacher leadership because they did not feel it existed. The vanishing effective professional development had led teachers to skip or not pay attention to the poorly planned professional development that the administration currently presented them. One teacher even noted that if there is no PD plan for that day they leave because it is just a waste of time.

Teacher Burnout and Exhaustion. Another common theme within this category was Teacher Burnout and Exhaustion. In the context of turnaround, teacher burnout occurs when teachers feel there is nothing else they can do to help improve the school. They have given it their all but are unsatisfied with the results, and they see there is no way for the school to change. It was evident from the interviews that teachers did want the school to improve, and they noted how hard they had worked to improve learning outcomes for their students. However, the school environment prevented many teachers from wanting to continue working in this environment. Many participants felt that they were burnt out and exhausted as a consequence of working at the school.

Vinny, who was a major advocate for teacher leadership at the school, said they left because they were a “textbook example of teacher burnout.” Vinny shared that they wanted

to impact change and to ask the hard questions of administrators but noticed, after working for 5 years in the building, that change was not happening:

> In, like, my 4th or 5th year at this institution, I started to sound like the teachers that I was really upset by in my first couple of years being like, "I just don't want you to go through this and at the end be like brutally rebuffed."… I had the energy necessary to kind of push for change, but as time went on I just literally burnt out.

Leah, another former teacher, felt the same. She was denied support when she asked for it as a new teacher. She stated, "It's really, you know, leaving that building was a very, very difficult thing for me. And I do miss it, but I also feel like it was the right thing to do. I just felt I could not do anything more." Another teacher, who went by FR, felt exhausted by all the extra requirements. He also noted that he had two extra hours of PD each week plus an hour of tutoring once a week after school. He felt that all this extra work outside school meant he did not have much of a personal life: "It's exhausting, I think that to have all of that extra time on top of adding all of the things they want to be implemented is exhausting, and it kind of takes, I feel like it takes away from, you know, like the goal of turnaround." Of the 15 participants interviewed, nine no longer worked at Commonwealth High School as a direct result of all the factors mentioned previously.

Marie, a former teacher, brought up the fact that the school was lacking personnel to do certain jobs due to burnt out:

> Classroom management at the school was particularly difficult in part because there were not enough support staff to deal with the student, the needs of the student population, and the support staff that we did have was rather tired and burned out. So, they, even those who were available, were not likely to respond to your needs, um, or,

> like, help, help you to uphold the, the stated expectations of the school. Um, so that part was very challenging. Um, cuz there was really no higher level or, like, place to refer, um, students for, for, you know, maintaining a, a safe and effective like learning environment for everybody. Um, but, you know, those are not things that are guaranteed to us in a contract. I guess those are just things that make our jobs, um, a lot easier, is when you have, like, … schoolwide expectations for behavior and schoolwide enforcement of those expectations. Um, and that was definitely not the case.

Marie noted that support staff also felt burnt out when dealing with certain student behaviors and that there were no established schoolwide expectations on how to handle these behaviors. This lack of expectations and procedures was another factor that led to burnout and exhaustion.

Aspects That Lead to an Urgency to Improve

The other column of my explanatory schema focuses on factors that led to an urgency to improve. Matters of time were still intertwined; however, these factors held a greater sense of urgency that made teachers feel intimidated, stressed from working in a chaotic work environment, like there was no consistency in administration, leadership, and communication, and underappreciated. These factors also contributed to the school being underfunded, leading to a disinvestment in the school to truly improve, which ultimately could lead to the same outcomes described in the other column of the explanatory schema: ineffective teacher leadership.

Intimidation. Intimidation occurs when teachers feel undermined by their school leaders and are afraid to speak up because they fear losing their job. The school

administration at Commonwealth High School used intimidation as a means of keeping teachers complacent. Fear of the administration was evident in comments from several of the study participants. Since there were four different leaders over a span of 6 years, this heightened teachers' fears of losing their jobs. At the time of this study, the current principal used fear and intimidation as means of leadership. This led to many teachers hiding and staying under the radar to avoid disciplinary action or termination. Brittany, another teacher at the school, stated that she wanted to avoid speaking up because of fear of being let go from the school. It is important to remember that teachers can be let go for no reason in turnaround schools. At this school, during the time of the study, more than 30 teachers were terminated without explanation. When I asked Brittany how teachers could get more involved in the school process, she responded that it was a hard question to answer:

> Um, because when I start thinking about that, I think about last year and I think about people speaking up and people getting fired. Um, and my kind of mentality this year has been, you know, everyone's flying under the radar. Um, so in this specific instance I have, I'm like a, any type of, like, teachers banding together, speaking up for themselves, proposing something, I'm like, that's, they don't need any grounds to fire people. And that's what they do

Brittany mentioned that 30 teachers had been let go the previous year, and another 30 teachers left the school willingly due to the fear and intimidation instilled by the leader of the school.

Another current teacher at the school, Melissa, said that she felt teachers had become scapegoats. She noted that when teachers took on responsibilities and things did not go well, then it fell on the teacher to take the blame and potentially be let go:

> I think that, I think that once teachers at the school have that extra responsibility, it's a way for administrators to wipe their hands of anything. Um, and then, um, and then it all falls on that, on that teacher. Um, so rather than, you know, providing support and uplifting that teacher for taking on a new role, um, I, I still think there's, like, a sense of like, "What are they up to?" Um, it's like a constant worry that they're, um, um, trying to undermine something that administration is doing. Um, and I think that that can lead to limiting the opportunities that teachers might want, even though they can be, um, beneficial to the school.

In this situation teachers were given opportunities but had the constant fear that if their efforts failed, they were to blame and had no job security.

Anne, another current teacher, had similar feelings regarding intimidation. She noted that the administration did not like dissent and shared that teachers who spoke up were punished and pushed out. She said that the administration's response teachers who had ideas was punitive. This teacher also wanted to be more of a teacher leader; however, seeing what was going on in the background prevented her from speaking out or asking for more leadership roles. Intimidation kept teachers quiet; consequently, there was a major lack of teacher leadership at the school. This is another example of ineffective teacher leadership at a school that needed more support.

One participant noted that the way they were treated by the administration was inappropriate. The administration expected teachers to do work outside of contractual hours, and if this work was not done at the speed the administration wanted, the teachers would be reprimanded:

> She's, like, our new administrator, and she's like, she's pretty abrasive in her emails and, like, she, like, doesn't approach, like, there's, like, no relationship. She's not formed a relationship, not with me at least, but, like, yet her emails to me are very abrasive and demanding. Like, she emailed me at 1:26 p.m. and said to have something done by 8:00 a.m. the next morning when I have a last period class and I have a first period class and there's no way that I'm gonna, like, you cannot, you can't demand that anybody do something while they're—my responsibility is to teach my class. I don't have time. Yeah. It like, I'm not even gonna read this. I wasn't even gonna read the email until my contract time was done, and then the next day I'm not getting whatever she needed done before my contract time starts and I have students in my room. And it's just like this unrealistic expectation that your position as a leader allows you to, like, make demands rather than communicate. Um, and I see that, I see that as a, I see that as a sign of a beta who is mistaken themself or an alpha…. And it's not to say that a beta can't be a leader, but I see, I see that attempt at, like, that is not, that's not communication—that is like, it's just disregard for humans, like intimidation.

This teacher felt that the administration did not even try to form a relationship with the teachers; they just made demanding requests that made this teacher feel intimidated.

Stress and Chaotic Work Environment. Working at Commonwealth High School appeared to be stressful for many of the teachers, who noted that it was a chaotic work environment. The stress teachers endured resulted from all the extra responsibilities they were expected to take on—teaching longer classes, working a longer school day, attending mandatory professional development every week. These added responsibilities made teachers

feel stressed and that the work environment was chaotic, due mainly to constant changes in school leadership. As noted earlier, teachers felt that the school was a toxic work environment; however, the stress made teachers feel that the school was chaotic as well.

Brittany mentioned how much she wanted to take on leadership roles. However, when asked what teacher leadership looked like in the school right now, she stated,

> Stress and chaos. Like, it looks like something I don't wanna be a part of because even though I think that I have, I have plenty of capacity to lead, I have plenty of capacity to be a leader, but I'm just so not interested in it because it's, it's so thankless. Like, there it is, it's not being used in a way that is necessarily effective or efficacious, depending on who is deciding what the teacher leader should be doing. Um, but if I were to create the definition or the job description, then I would say that what it looks like in our school, it's not efficacious.

Similarly, another participant stated,

> Um, when I was there, it was, um, several administrators going in and out of that school. Um, it caused chaos. Um, it confused the students. Um, teachers were overwhelmed. Administrators, new administrators had no clue what they were getting themselves into. Um, there was no control. It was not the teachers that were causing the chaos. It was the administrators causing the chaos due to lack of understanding, lack of empathy. They just didn't care. It was, “We have to give you this information, deal with it,” and it put a lot on the teacher's plate. Um, behavioral problems [were] not solved. Um, they were bringing students into the school that should not be there, that did not wanna be at that school. Um, anytime you're at a school, you must want to be there. You cannot just be placed in there. Um, because you came out of a

facility because you were in a gang, it caused fights, um, amongst students, students attacking teachers, parents not supporting the, the school, not supporting the teachers. It became, um, it was overwhelming. It was very overwhelming.

Darius, another former teacher, stated,

[The] administration was treating us as if we were in person, it was, it was chaos. So, when I was a teacher there, it wasn't a happy "we're gonna do this and we're gonna have fun and, you know kumbaya," it was more of taking [a] role for yourself.

Likewise, Leah shared,

Horrible. I mean, just, um, I mean at, uh, at the forefront, unsafe. It was my biggest concern. And not unsafe in terms of like, I was afraid of the kids, just like the building felt unsafe, and I felt unsafe. Like, in my position and in everyone's confidence in me as an educator, I felt like I was constantly walking on eggshells. I was constantly waiting to be, like, written up for something or told I wasn't doing what I was supposed to be doing or whatever it might be. So, definitely not ideal conditions to be working in.

Zoey stated that, at one point, things at the school were good. During her first 3 years, there was a lot of support from the administration. However, when the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, the leader was forced to leave the school, thereby leaving the school without a head. She noted that, eventually, when the current leader was brought in, the environment started feeling chaotic:

Then they brought in someone whose values were very different from the majority of the staff. Um, and [they] started causing a lot of harm, um and not listening to any

> teacher input at all. Um, and I know I wasn't the only person who said "I've had enough and, um, I'm going to go do something different."

These teachers' voices made clear that stress and chaos played a role in the school environment, impacting teachers' willingness to stay and work there. This notion of feeling stressed and chaotic came up repeatedly in the interviews. These feelings mirrored conclusions from the literature about working in turnaround schools: Teachers do not feel supported; rather, they feel stressed and surrounded by chaos, which does not foster a healthy work environment.

No Consistency of Leadership and Lack of Communication. At Commonwealth High School, there was no consistency in school leadership. The school had seen five principals over the last 10 years. Each school administration drastically changed how communication was presented to staff. At the time of the study the staff felt there was not enough communication from school leaders. In light of the urgency around turnaround school improvement, there needs to be consistency and clear communication regarding the turnaround plan. At Commonwealth High School, this notion of inconsistency and lack of communication from administrators and the district led many teachers to avoid teacher leadership opportunities. As stated earlier, within 6 years of the turnaround, there had been four different leaders. This lack of consistency led to many changes each year within the school. Darius noted that many of these leaders had no idea what to do in relation to the school district of which Commonwealth High School was part. Others noted that lack of communication from school leaders left them confused and puzzled about the plan for teachers with respect to improving teaching and learning.

I asked teachers how the current and previous administrations had engaged teachers in leadership opportunities. The one observation that kept coming up was that the administrations were not consistent. Melissa expressed that previous administrations were more direct and would communicate directly with the team about what needed to be done. However, under the current administration, she noted, there was a lack of communication and consistency. She stated,

> There's, like, actually a huge lack of communication. I know that you aren't familiar with some of our new administrators just because you're not here, but I think it's … almost like the opposite of communications. It's not the opposite of communication in terms of, like, lack of communication or non-existent communication, but it's, like, almost like a trying to, like, choose my words carefully, but, like, there's, like, I feel like there's, like a, an attempt to, like, intimidate.

Melissa felt that when administration did communicate, it was in the form of intimidation to get something done.

Similarly, in her interview, Zoey stated,

> Working with the kids was, that made the working conditions, like, the best thing always. It was more, um, that the, like, day-to-day bureaucratic, the additional work hours, the unrealistic expectations of how often we were phoning home, what we, like, what were responsible [for]. Um, not just that, but the lack of communication, clear communication around what that is. So, it's just kind of a lot of confusion.

She noted that the students made the job worth it. However, the lack of clear communication around additional non-teaching expectations made the job difficult. Likewise, Vinny noted

that the students made the job worthwhile. However, he also commented that the frequent changes in leadership had forced teachers to move around a lot:

> When you start thinking about, like, the environment and the working conditions, like, emotionally, um again, it was wild. I mean, it's so hard, and I'm sure we're gonna get to talking about this, but there was such a drastic turnaround of, of administrators that, like, there was no consistency.

Each new leader had their own expectations of what they wanted, but it seems evident that the expectations were not clear to the teachers at the school, leading teachers to perceive a lack of communication and a lack of consistency around expectations.

Teachers Feeling Underappreciated and Undervalued. Teachers at the school were expected to do so much, and though many of them wanted to help improve the school, they felt their work was underappreciated and undervalued, and they did not see the purpose of their work. This last theme that emerged was due to all the other factors mentioned. The urgency to improve was too much for many of the participants. They felt stressed and intimidated, and they did not receive clear communication or expectations from the administration. All these emotions and feelings led teachers to conclude that they were underappreciated and undervalued. Many participants described their work as thankless.

One teacher understood that working in a turnaround was tough work, but they viewed turnaround schools as a system problem. They noted feeling undervalued and that their work was thankless:

> And so it's like, and then the district is being looked at by the state. And so, it's just this trickle-down effect, and the teachers are the last to get it. But it's like this tension that has existed for so far beyond us, but like, regardless of where the tension starts or

> where the tension, how far the tension has stretched, it doesn't change the fact that that is incredibly stressful, especially for a new teacher. Especially for a teacher who does not have the capacity to look at the bigger picture and say, “Okay, I'm being blamed for system-level failure. That's not actually my fault, but that's probably a result of this trickle-down effect. Like when I was in my first year teaching, I could never have, like, had that bigger thought because I was so worried about what everybody thought about me. And so, like, that, that's not necessarily conducive to, like, in terms of working conditions, that's not conducive to people doing their best work when people are pouring their heart into everything they do, and it's thankless, like it's thankless on so many levels.

Turnaround is a systemic issue and, as the literature has highlighted, is not an effective way to improve student learning and outcomes.

Jamie noted that she felt that teacher leadership was undervalued and underappreciated as well. When she started teaching at the school, she noted that teachers held some leadership positions, but she was not sure how they secured them. She stated,

> Well, my first year, obviously I came in new, so people were already in those positions. Uh, and I'm not real sure how they got there. And then I remember, like, end of the year, um, it was like the end of year, and they were like, all right, they decided that teachers were gonna lead CPTs [common planning times], and it was just basically like, “Who's gonna volunteer their time to do this extra duty?” Uh, that had no kind of guidance compensation or it just felt very, like, “Who's the sucker that's gonna take on this position?” Um, and unfortunately some people got stuck with that position.

Jamie noted that there was no compensation for taking on extra responsibilities. At the school, each department had a teacher leader lead CPT meetings; however, participants noted that there was no compensation for this task. Jamie's comment—"Who's the sucker that's gonna take on this position?"—shows how undervalued and underappreciated teachers felt regarding this type of teacher leadership.

Sara, a newer teacher, noted that she felt as if teachers were not part of the solution. "We are not part of, I feel like a lot of times we're not part of the solution. It just gets thrown at us once they've made the decisions." She went on to say that she was responsible for securing her own supplies as the school did not communicate about how to get basic teaching materials:

> Like, I have to provide them, like, with pencils, things like that. They've tried this year to give us some extra supplies, but still, like, with the toner, that's something that's been going on for a while. We have four different machines and just our floor and all of them all week have been out of toner. And that's something to be complaining about a lot. Like, they have to order more so when we run out, we have extra right there to do. So, this week, um, I can't even make copies, or, like the internet sometimes goes out. They don't tell us. We have no internet to teach, so we kinda kind of have to figure out on our own.

Sara noted that was difficult to make copies and provide students with instructional materials. When she asked for supplies or materials, she was left with no communication. As a result, she felt underappreciated and undervalued in doing her job.

Jazmine was a teacher who had worked at the school before the turnaround and after the turnaround and had many perspectives on the school. She stated,

> I got to see when the school was functioning. And then during turnaround, it was the complete opposite. So, I noticed that, you know, first of all, teachers were leaving, right? Like, there, there was no longer this feeling of camaraderie, of teamwork of all the teachers knowing each other, and you have these veteran teachers that people lean on and, you know, that was what it was like before. And then by the time it got into turnaround, it just seemed like chaos. It seemed like there was always, you know, new educators every other day. Um, people were constantly leaving. You'd get an administrator, uh, that would be like in a position for like a year. And it's like, every time we got a new admin, I would just know in the back of my mind, "Well, they'll be here for, you know, maybe a year. We'll see."

Prior to the turnaround, Jazmine had seen a lot of teamwork and support, but then when turnaround happened, it changed the culture of the school. Those supports were missing, and teachers, feeling undervalued and underappreciated, would not stay.

Jada, another current teacher, felt that teachers knew what should be done to help the school improve but that they were not given the opportunity:

> I think we know firsthand what needs to be worked on. So, I think if we even have the opportunity, just, like, to do any type of surveys or things that we can give our input and if they actually take that completely into consideration, um, I think that would be a good way about going, you know, about doing this, um, or even taking some of the PD time to kind of discuss some of the needs of the school and working together to come up with a plan. Um, because instead of just having a plan given to you and then you just have to figure out how to make it work, even though it might be a similar plan to something you've seen before in the past.

If teachers had this opportunity, they would, in a sense, feel more valued. Jada mentioned that teachers knew what needed to be worked on but that the PD they were provided did not support those causes. Greater teacher voice would allow them to feel valued in pushing the needle to improve school outcomes.

Jamie, who had previously worked for another turnaround school, noted that she felt undervalued at Commonwealth High School:

> I felt like, for most of my time at that school, that the teachers and the administration were on two separate teams; it didn't feel like they were working together. Um, and I've had experiences at other schools, uh, to compare that to that made me feel that way. Um, I've worked at another turnaround school and now at another school that's not turned around but [in] transformation, and it's more like a team effort between administration and teachers. And I would say, except for that first year, that was really good. After we lost that headmaster, it became more like the teachers were the problem and not like we were valued, uh, for the work that we were doing or that we had any insight on how to make things better. It felt like we were labeled as the problem.

Jamie reiterated that teachers felt like they were the problem and had to battle with the administration. She believed there needed to be a team effort, but unfortunately at this school, that was not happening. Teachers' efforts were not valued.

Qualitative Study Conclusions

As shown in my explanatory schema, both thematic columns—aspects that were time-controlled and aspects of urgency—lead to the conclusion that teacher leadership was ineffective at Commonwealth High School. The data revealed elements of a toxic work

environment at the school, with teachers feeling that decision making was top-down and that they did not have any input or voice in important decisions. The data also showed that the required professional development that was offered was ineffective in improving teaching and learning at the school. It also appeared evident that the lack of useful PD discouraged teachers from taking on leadership roles. When teachers are not provided opportunities, there is no benefit from them, and often their ideas are replaced with administration's. Many teachers at the school felt burnt out and left willingly, while others were let go. Teachers felt intimidated by certain administrations during the turnaround period. That intimidation led to teachers feeling stressed from working in such a chaotic environment. The chaos was exacerbated by the many inconsistencies among the school leadership throughout the turnaround period. There were several instances of a lack of communication between school leaders and teachers that led to ineffective expectations. All these urgencies to improve left teachers feeling underappreciated and undervalued for the work they had done at the school.

These factors led teachers to perceive that teacher leadership was ineffective at the school. While it was evident throughout the data that teacher leadership opportunities existed, there was no conclusive evidence that it had been effective in turning around this particular school. While this study ended in December 2023, the school remains in turnaround status, with no clear evidence it will exit this status. On the contrary, the quantitative data showed some evidence that teacher leadership is effective. Those data are discussed in the next section.

Analysis of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The results of the quantitative portion of this study indicated both similarities and differences from the qualitative phase. Regarding similarities, it appears evident that teachers

at Commonwealth High School wanted the school to improve: 87% of the teachers who responded to this survey indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that teachers wanted such improvement. In addition, 87% of the survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that teacher leadership opportunities were essential for the school to improve. This was also verified in the teacher interviews, with 100% of the interviewees agreeing that teacher leadership was imperative for a turnaround school to improve.

The quantitative data showed that 21% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the school administration regularly involved teachers in leadership decisions, whereas 46% disagreed, and 33% were unsure. The qualitative data indicated that the majority of the teachers interviewed felt that the administration did not involve teachers in leadership decisions. Only three (20%) of the 15 teachers interviewed indicated that the administration involved them in teacher leadership opportunities. From these data, it appears that the majority of the staff did not feel the administration involved teachers regularly in leadership decisions.

Distributive leadership was covered in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The quantitative data showed that 52% of participants were unsure if distributive leadership was applied at the school; only 10% agreed or strongly agreed, while 38% disagreed. It appears that it was unclear whether distributive leadership was occurring at the school. The qualitative data also suggested that it was unclear if distributive leadership was being applied at the school. None of the interviewees mentioned that distributive leadership was being directly at the school, though one participant did mention that it could be an effective model. This could also indicate that teachers were unclear about what the

distributive leadership model is. This was verified by the quantitative data showing that more than half (52%) were unsure if it was being applied.

The survey data also indicated that more than half (62%) of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that teachers had a major voice in making decisions at the school, with only 12% of participants agreeing that they did. This suggests that the majority of the staff did not feel that teachers had a voice. This was also confirmed through the qualitative data: 87% of the participants interviewed mentioned that they did not have a say in making decisions for the school. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the staff did not feel they had any role in school-related decision making.

According to the survey data, 40% agreed or strongly agreed that Commonwealth High School will turn around, while 35% disagree or strongly disagreed, and 25% were unsure. This indicated that the majority of the staff surveyed felt that the school could improve. This was also verified in the teacher interviews, with 100% of the interviewees mentioning that the school could improve if changes were made. Each teacher interviewed gave their advice on how this could be accomplished, and the majority shared that the changes needed to start with the school leadership and administration. The survey data also supported this, as 46% of the staff disagreed or strongly disagreed that administration involved teachers' input for school initiatives around turnaround practices. Only 21% of the staff surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that administration involved teachers for their input.

Another finding in the quantitative and qualitative data was that the majority of the teachers at the school did not feel they were provided sufficient training and professional development opportunities to help the school improve. Fifty-nine percent of staff surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were provided sufficient training and PD. This was

also confirmed by the teachers interviewed, with 87% believing that PD was not effective in helping teachers improve.

Summary

Overall, both the quantitative and qualitative data offered some insights in addressing the research questions. The first research question asked, "How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?" Based on the data, it appears that the majority of the staff felt that teacher leadership is important for turnaround schools. However, the data suggest that many felt that teacher leadership was ineffective at this school. The second research question asked, "In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of turnaround schools?" Participants offered many responses that related to, for instance, teachers leading common planning time meetings, participating on instructional leadership teams, planning professional development opportunities, and helping other teachers improve teaching and learning practice. In addition, the study data informed the conclusion that teacher leadership is imperative for change, though it was inconclusive whether teacher leadership opportunities at this school were effective.

It is important to note that some of the data from the quantitative phase did not fully align with the data from the qualitative phase of the study. In fact, there were some stark differences in between the survey data and interview data regarding the role of teacher leadership. Chapter 5 offers further analysis of these data in connection with the theoretical framework and literature review.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers in an urban turnaround high school perceived the role of teacher leadership. The study was conducted using distributive leadership theory as the theoretical framework to help address the following research questions.

1. How do teachers within an urban turnaround high school conceptualize the role of teacher leadership?
2. In what ways does teacher leadership influence and contribute to the improvement of student performance in turnaround schools?

Discussion of Findings

This study explored one urban turnaround high school in Massachusetts, referred to pseudonymously as Commonwealth High School. This school was designated a turnaround high school in 2016 and currently remains in turnaround as of February 2024. The study examined how teachers in the school perceived the role of teacher leadership during the turnaround period. The study participants had all worked in the school for at least 1 year during the period. Some are still employed there, while others have left. The purpose of the study was to determine if distributive leadership was applied at the school and if teachers perceived teacher leadership to be effective in helping the school exit turnaround status.

Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher Leadership

My analysis of the data indicated that the teachers perceived that teacher leadership was imperative to helping the school improve. Many areas in which teacher leadership could be improved included improving professional development opportunities to help teachers enhance teaching and learning for their students. Many teachers also provided recommendations for helping to improve working conditions within turnaround schools. Finally, the findings also suggest that distributive leadership could serve as one approach to improving the overall success of turnaround high schools. The results also indicated that if teacher leadership opportunities are available and are valued by school leaders, they could lead to more successes within these schools. The data from this study verified many of the findings described in the literature review. However, it is evident that more research is needed on how teacher leadership and distributive leadership can be applied to turnaround schools to help them exit turnaround status.

Some nonsignificant results from this study included teachers' perception of school leadership and years of teaching. The majority of the teachers who had taught at the school for 4–6 years believed that there was a need for teacher leadership. However, data collected during the qualitative phase showed that many of the teachers who had taught for only 1–3 years also felt strongly about the role of teacher leadership. There seems to be an inconsistency between the survey and interview data. One reason for this may be that teachers filled out the survey before taking part in interviews, and they might have developed a different opinion after the discussion. Another reason could be there were fewer teachers who had taught for 1–3 years than there were teachers who had taught for 4–6 years.

Notably, teachers who had taught at the school for 7–10 years seemed to perceive that teacher leadership was not as essential as those who taught had taught at the school for more than 10 years. This is important because the data from the qualitative phase showed that teachers who have been at the school for a long time seemed less likely to take on leadership roles. However, the survey results indicated that they wanted to. One explanation could be that those teachers who perceived that leadership was essential were not interviewed. This also suggests that those who had been teaching for 7–10 years disagreed that leadership was effective because they felt burnt out—which was validated by the qualitative data.

In addition, males and females tended to differ in their beliefs about teachers making decisions in the school. The majority of the female teachers indicated they were not able to make decisions regarding the school, while most of the male teachers surveyed said they did make decisions for the school. This indicates there may have been a preference from the school administration to seek guidance from male teachers over female teachers. Yet, this school does have more male than female teachers, which could also explain this difference.

As discussed, I used distributive leadership theory as the theoretical framework for this study. Again, distributed leadership "implies that the practice of leadership is one that is shared and realized within extended groupings and networks, [and] some of these will be groupings will be formal while others will be informal and, in some cases, randomly formed" (Harris, 2009, p.175). The study results indicated that distributive leadership was not practiced within Commonwealth High School. Brown and Littrich (2008) argued that if distributive leadership is applied within a school setting, it can lead to empowerment among the staff and foster a sense of strategic change. The data from my study support this argument. Teachers wanted this school to improve, as evidenced by survey results showing

that 86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities were essential to improveing a turnaround school. In addition, 87% of the interview participants indicated that if there were effective leadership opportunities, they would help the school to improve.

Distributive Leadership in Turnaround Schools

Naicker and Mestry (2013) indicated that when schools use distributive leadership, it gives teachers more of a voice in making decisions. The study data indicated that teachers at the school did not have a voice in making major decisions impacting the turnaround process, and thus it appears evident that distributive leadership is not occurring within this particular turnaround school. However, if a distributive leadership model were implemented at this particular school, it likely would have changed teachers' perceptions of leadership.

Compensating Teacher Leaders

According to Curtis (2013), teacher leadership does not take one form. He found that teacher leadership can include a commitment to differentiating instruction or compensating excellent teachers. The findings of this study indicate that teachers preferred additional compensation for teacher leadership opportunities. One participant mentioned that there was no additional compensation for the extra leadership roles teachers could take. Other participants noted that they did not want to participate in leadership opportunities because they required a lot of extra work that was not valued or supported. Had the school provided additional compensation, that may have altered the ways teachers perceived leadership within the school.

Teacher Leadership and Collaboration

Muijs et al. (2013) found that for teacher leadership to be effective, all teachers and staff must collaborate with all members of the school community. This study's findings showed that there had been no consistency in the school. School leadership changed four times throughout the turnaround, and each time, new expectations were put into place. Teachers expressed that the lack of consistency and communication from administration discouraged them from pursuing leadership opportunities. Teachers also felt intimidated by school leaders if they spoke up, for fear of being let go. This prevented many other teachers from participating in leadership. The data suggest that because all staff were not effectively communicating, teacher leadership was ineffective. This also relates to the findings of Sebastian et al. (2017), who studied the relationship between principal leadership and teacher leadership. They found that if principals and teacher leaders work together, there appears to be beneficial outcomes for student achievement. The results from my study indicate that, at one point, there was a school leader who worked effectively with teacher leaders; however, that leader was let go, and now the current leader was not actively working with the teachers. These results suggest that when there is effective communication between leadership and teachers, there are more teacher leadership opportunities.

Teacher Leadership and School Administration

Blackwell and Young (2021) found that teacher turnover rates are high when teachers are dissatisfied with the school administration. This appears to have been true in my study as well. Several of the teachers who were interviewed noted that their decision to leave was based on the leadership of the school. Many teachers felt intimidated by leadership and did not want to continue working in that environment. One study participant noted that in one

year, 30 teachers had willingly left the school due to poor leadership and a toxic work environment. Tubin (2017) found that teachers needed to be empowered to want to engage in leadership. My research confirmed that teachers at Commonwealth High School did not feel empowered; rather, they felt stressed, underappreciated, intimidated, and burnt out. If conditions were different and the teachers had felt empowered, this could have facilitated more positive changes in the school.

Simpson (2021) found that developing teacher leaders is not an easy task because there needs to be trust between school leaders and teachers. My study supported this finding. Based on the study results, the majority of the teachers believed that teacher leadership was imperative to helping the school succeed. However, many teachers were hesitant to take on leadership roles because they felt underappreciated or undervalued. One participant stated that if they failed in their teacher leadership, the administration would get rid of them. This suggested that there was little trust between the school leadership and teachers at the school. Van Roy (2021) maintained that teachers need to challenge the status quo. The data from this study indicated that teachers wanted to do this but chose not to because of fear and intimidation by the administration. Several teachers shared that they wanted the school to improve and they wanted to take on leadership roles, but the current climate of the school and relationships between administration and teachers did not make this possible. This also connects with Lamber (2003), who found that teachers must work collaboratively with the administration to improve a school. Since such collaboration was not evident in Commonwealth High School, this was likely another barrier discouraging teachers from leading. Duncan (2014) defined teacher leadership as having a voice, and my study indicated

that since teachers did not have a voice within the school, teacher leadership was not effective.

Teacher Leaders and Involvement in the Turnaround Plan

Thompson et al. (2016) maintained that facilitators and writers should play equal parts when creating the turnaround plan. However, my research indicated that 82% of the teachers at Commonwealth High School did not have any say in writing the turnaround plan. This was also verified by the teachers who were interviewed, none of whom was asked to help write the turnaround plan. Teachers mentioned that they had heard about the plan, but not one who was interviewed played any role in writing it. Some teachers were unaware of what the turnaround plan even was. Since teachers were not on equal ground with those writing the plan, this could be another reason why teacher leadership appears to have been unsuccessful at the school. This study illuminates that many teachers are often left out of this process, even when they are publicly encouraged to be a part of it.

In the turnaround literature, several scholars have investigated the poor working conditions at these schools (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2014; Klassen et al., 2011). My data confirm their findings. Every teacher who was interviewed indicated that the working conditions made it hard to do their job, including not having adequate supplies, not having windows, teaching in freezing classrooms, and having to buy materials with their money to support instruction. Other scholars have shown that poor working conditions lead to high teacher turnaround (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2014; Klassen et al., 2011). The participants in my study indicated that this was the case at the school. Several had left because the school perpetuated a toxic work environment that was both stressful and chaotic. The increased demands on teachers also impacted their decision to stay at the school

and engage in leadership opportunities. Due to these negative factors, teacher leadership was not successful at Commonwealth High School. The data verify this conclusion, suggesting that poor working conditions not only impact a teacher's decision to take part in teacher leadership, but can also force teachers to have to purchase their own supplies to support instruction.

Impact of Professional Development

Another prevalent topic in my study was the role of professional development. Several scholars have indicated that meaningful and supportive professional development helps teachers improve teaching and learning (Borman et al., 2005; Collett, 2017; Taylor et al., 2005). My study confirmed that the majority of the staff did not feel that professional development was effective at the school. Several participants said that professional development was so poorly planned that teachers began skipping it. Teachers indicated that they wanted effective PD, and though the administration attempted to give teachers some say, there was never any follow through. Fifty-nine percent of the survey participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were provided sufficient training and PD. Thirteen of the 15 participants who participated in the interview indicated that professional development was also ineffective. This indicated that the school needed to refocus PD in a way that it empowered teachers to want to improve and become leaders. There needed to be less of a discrepancy between what supports the teachers needed and actually getting that support and those resources from the administration. This confirms what Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) found in their study of the characteristics of effective professional development. They argued that teachers need relevant PD for it to benefit them. At Commonwealth High School, this appears to be true because teachers felt they did not have

any say in what their PD was. This research suggests that if teachers have more voice in creating PDs, more teachers would be enticed to want to stay for the mandated PD.

In addition, several scholars have highlighted the benefits of professional learning communities with a goal of improving student achievement (Stoll et al., 2006). The results of the qualitative phase of this study indicated that teachers wanted to collaborate and receive PD that helped improve instruction. Yet, they repeatedly noted that this was not happening and that it did not enhance their teaching; rather, it had become a waste of time. If Commonwealth High School implemented more PLCs, then perhaps they would help to improve teaching and learning and improve the school overall. This research suggests that using CPTs and ILT more effectively could potentially be one way to increase teacher voice and leadership opportunities. These PLCs did exist at the school but were not working to their full abilities to impact more positive change at the school. Thus, the foundation is there for them to build upon and implement more change.

Impact of School Leaders and Teacher Leadership Roles

In much of the literature on turnaround schools, the main focus has been on the school leader. Hitt et al (2018) found that successful principals inspire and motivate their staff, and Myers and Hitt (2017) found that effective principals have a strong vision and high expectations. In addition, Meyers and Sadler (2018) recommended that there needs to be clear communication between leadership and staff. The results of my study indicate that none of the preceding characteristics is prevalent in the school. One of my main findings was the inconsistency and lack of communication from the school leadership. The school saw several principals over the 7 years of the turnaround process. Participants noted that one of these leaders was effective in communicating, while the others were not. This inconsistent

leadership and expectations lead teachers to avoid engaging in leadership opportunities. None of the participants noted any administrator having a strong vision for the school. However, several interview participants noted that for the school to improve, they needed a strong leader.

Impact on Students

In my literature review, I explored the role of students in turnaround schools and the role of parental involvement. During the study, participants mentioned students in some of the interviews, but there was not enough data to verify any findings from prior research regarding these topics. A few interview participants did mention that there should be more parental involvement in efforts improve student success; however, the lack of data in this area prevents me from drawing any conclusions.

Overall, my study found that teachers perceived teacher leadership in many ways. Some defined teacher leadership as going above and beyond and taking on extra responsibilities. Others linked teacher leadership to running common planning time meetings or being part of the school instructional leadership team. Still others perceived teacher leadership as teachers running professional development sessions to help others improve. My data indicated that teacher leadership can take many forms—which aligns with Duncan's (2014) definition of a teacher leader. The data also indicated that teachers at the school wanted to be teacher leaders. Teachers felt that teacher leadership was imperative to the school's improvement. The results of my study help illuminate ways teachers can be leaders, including leading common planning teams, participating on the school's instructional leadership team, and helping to lead professional development sessions.

Overall Findings on Teacher Leadership

However, based on the findings, it appears evident that at Commonwealth High School, teacher leadership was ineffective. There were so many factors that led to this conclusion. First, the majority of the participants felt that the school fostered a toxic work environment. That left the majority of the participants feeling like they had no voice and that they were the problem. This led to ineffective professional development and erasure of teacher leadership opportunities, as there were no effective leadership roles that positively impacted change. This erasure of leadership and poor PD led to teachers feeling burnt out. In addition, teachers felt fear and intimidation from school leadership. This prevented many of them from taking on any leadership roles, for fear they would lose their job if they spoke up or offered suggestions. This intimidation created stress and a sense that they worked in a chaotic work environment. This was due in part to the lack of clear communication and the inconsistency of leadership over the duration of the turnaround process at the school. Finally, teachers felt underappreciated and unvalued, leading them to conclude that teacher leadership at Commonwealth High School was not effective. Teachers perceived that leadership was essential, but it was not successful at this school.

The study results also suggested that teacher leadership did not affect and inform turnaround school improvement at this school. Since there were very limited teacher leadership opportunities, there were not enough opportunities to make meaningful change. Most teacher-led activities were undervalued and unappreciated by school leadership. This lack of respect between teachers and school leaders blocked teacher leadership from positively impacting the school. It also prevented teachers from wanting to be engaged in leadership. In addition to the lack of effective leadership, poor working conditions and

increased expectations associated with the turnaround process limited the role of teacher leadership. Teachers needed to feel empowered and supported for this to be effective at Commonwealth High School.

Since the school is still in turnaround, my recommendation for this school to improve include making major changes to current practices. First, the school community needs to revisit the turnaround plan. It would be helpful to engage more teachers in helping to modify the plan by clarifying goals around exiting turnaround status. There need to be more teacher voices making important decisions for the school. School leaders need to empower their teachers and work together to create solutions to improve the conditions of the school. This is currently lacking. There also needs to be trust between teachers and administrators. Without trust, distributive leadership cannot happen. I argue that moving to a distributive leadership model would be a more effective way to empower teachers and improve the conditions of the school.

Finally, professional development at the school needs to be revamped. Since additional PD is mandated for these schools, there needs to be a plan in place to make it more effective. PD needs to support teachers in instruction. Currently, it appears that PD is more of a time waster than an effective means of promoting change. There needs to be more teacher leadership in PD whereby teachers can share their expertise with others, and everyone can learn from each other. PD needs to be planned, not thrown together at the last minute, which is what appears to be happening. If teachers have more say and do not feel intimidated about speaking up there, is a chance that it will lead to better and more relevant PD. PD cannot feel like wasted time because the school is already under intense time limits to improve. These recommendations could dramatically change the current culture of the school and put it on a

path to success. The students at the school are those most impacted, but if teachers are not provided opportunities to improve and lead, there will most likely be few or no changes at the school. Most schools fail to exit turnaround status—a harsh reality for all parties involved. The turnaround success rate in Massachusetts is only 8% at the high school level. There need to be changes in the ways these schools function if there is any chance of exiting turnaround status.

The results of this study help redefine the problem of turnaround. Teachers continue to be excluded from important decision-making processes. Teachers need to have more voice and more leadership opportunities to help move the school forward and exit turnaround status. The policy surrounding turnaround needs to be revisited and changed. The data from my study show that even after being in turnaround for 7 years, the school has not improved in significant ways. Commonwealth High School is still currently in turnaround after 8 years. It is on its third turnaround plan. This suggests strongly that it is impossible for a school to quickly turn around. Policies regarding how schools are evaluated need to be revised and teachers should have a prominent voice in impacting the policy.

Distributive leadership, in theory, appears to be one of the most beneficial ways for a school to exit turnaround. If the model is applied effectively, it could empower teachers and the administration to work together to solve the problems the school is facing. What prevents this model from being implemented are power dynamics that impact decisions making. It is evident from this study that very few teachers had any say in making important decisions for the school. Many participants noted that most decisions were top-down, and it appears that the administration did not want teacher input when making decisions. This reflects a power dynamic preventing teacher leaders from having a voice. There also needs to be more respect

and collaboration between administrators and teachers within these schools. Based on the study data, it is clear this is not happening at this school. If teachers and administrators work together and share decision-making responsibilities, it could lead to a more positive outcome for the school. The school has great potential, and more collaboration between school leaders and teacher leaders could help establish better systems for improving teaching and learning. This will ultimately benefit the students who attend this school, as they are the ones suffering the most from these harsh turnaround policies.

In turnaround schools, race and class play a major role. As mentioned, schools that are in turnaround tend to be in areas where people are living below the poverty line. This was evident at Commonwealth High School, where the majority of the students live below the poverty line. These systemic and oppressive mechanisms impact the success of a turnaround school. The results of this study indicate that this school is struggling to exit turnaround status. The harsh policies of the turnaround process continue to label the school as failing. This then trickles down to the students who attend these schools because all they see and hear is that there school is failing—and there ,therefore, they are failing. This study suggests that the policies set forth in the Massachusetts turnaround law keep low-income schools in this designation. While additional funding is given to these schools to "help" them improve, it does not change the fact that their schools are targeted. In Massachusetts, there are no suburban school even close to being in turnaround. The only schools in turnaround are found in urban areas where people live below the poverty line. This is a form of oppression that continues to be perpetuated in Massachusetts. Lawmakers have recently increased what qualifies as a passing score on the state assessments, creating even more challenges for students in low-income schools. These systems need to be recognized as punishments, and a

new system of evaluation needs to take place for schools that are struggling. Turnaround is not the solution to the problem; it only makes things worse for these communities.

Implications

The results of this study can help inform and modify Massachusetts turnaround policy. The study data indicate that teacher leadership is necessary for the improvement of turnaround high schools. Participants explained that there is a need for teacher leadership, but they felt that the administration did not follow through on ideas that teachers posed. In this study, teachers shared that they did not speak up or offer suggestions for fear of losing their jobs. Teachers also said they had the capacity to lead but chose not to because they felt their leadership was undervalued and underappreciated. Policymakers need to take this information into account as they revise turnaround law and policies, which currently do not focus much on the role of teachers. This needs to change in Massachusetts because, as this study highlighted, teachers can act more as leaders and help to further improve school conditions. Specifically, teachers in this study emphasized how little their professional development opportunities helped improve their instruction. Teachers should have more say in the types of PD they receive, and that should be evident in a school's turnaround plan. However, when teachers are not invited to help write the turnaround plan, which was the case in this study, their voice gets left out.

Implications for Massachusetts Turnaround Law and Policy

Massachusetts policymakers should consider adding a clause or new amendment to the turnaround policy law that promotes and advocates for more teachers having a say in helping to improve the conditions within a turnaround school. The current policy mentions that teachers should help write a turnaround plan for the school; however, the results of this

study indicate that very few teachers had any say in helping to write the turnaround plan for Commonwealth High School. While this may be mandated by law, it does not appear that it is being executed (or enforced) within this school. This leads to speculation that this is the same for other turnaround schools and that teachers really do not have a voice in helping to craft turnaround plans. The majority of the participants in this study did not help write the plan; in fact, many had no idea who was asked or how this opportunity presented itself. The law needs to specify how many teachers should participate in the writing of a turnaround plan. The law should also indicate clearly the procedures for how teachers can get involved in this process, which should be fair and equitable, allowing any teacher who works at a particular turnaround school to have a voice in helping to make the decisions that inform the plan.

Massachusetts turnaround policy also needs to incorporate more opportunities for increasing teacher leadership, which should be an essential element within a school's turnaround plan. To entice more teachers to lead there should be extra compensation for teacher leaders. Teachers are putting in a lot of extra hours already as part of working in a turnaround school, so increasing compensation for leaders would encourage more teachers to step up and lead. Teacher leadership opportunities should be made available throughout the turnaround plan. Many study participants were unclear about teacher leadership roles. Clear descriptions of teacher leadership opportunities should be written into a school's turnaround plan. There should also be a clear procedure for how teachers can apply for teacher leadership roles. Greater clarity regarding the available roles and ways to obtain these roles will enhance the turnaround process by encouraging teachers to apply for a leadership role. This will increase equitability and fairness, as many of the teachers in this study were unclear

about how teachers secured some of these roles. This would be helpful to any school entering turnaround status.

Implications for Professional Development in Turnaround Schools

This study also offers insights into how professional development in turnaround schools can be enhanced to improve teacher pedagogical practice and, in turn, teaching and learning. Teachers in this study overwhelmingly felt that professional development was ineffective and a waste of their time. Many of the PD topics addressed neither were relevant to their teaching nor helped advance pedagogical practices. Additional PD is currently a legal requirement for turnaround schools. However, there is no expectation about what that professional development needs to be. This is an area that should be clarified and tailored to individual schools based on their current needs. Additional funds should also be made available for turnaround schools to bring in outside professional organizations to help lead effective PD. Based on the study data, it appears that the school leadership team was responsible for planning PD, but often they did not have a concrete plan and PD activities were thrown together last-minute. This needs to be a high priority area for helping teachers improve, so it would be helpful to hire a full-time coordinator to plan PD and ensure it is more effective and relevant to the teachers' needs.

Implications for Teacher Working Conditions

The study results also confirm previous research findings regarding teachers' working conditions. Teachers in this study indicated that the increased workload and difficult and toxic working conditions led many to feel burnt out and undervalued. In this study, teachers were denied basic school supplies for use in their classrooms. Teachers spent their own money to provide students with materials. Many teachers indicated that their classrooms

were kept in poor condition, often lacking adequate heating or cooling. Teachers also indicated that they felt exhausted by the additional working hours and mandated PD they needed to attend. Policymakers should be made aware of the conditions within these schools and should note that teachers are going above and beyond what is expected of them to provide for their students what the school cannot. Turnaround schools receive a lot of extra money for materials and resources. However, within this particular school, it does not appear that funds were adequately spent on instructional materials. Schools should have to disclose how and how much money is spent, and this should be made public for the sake of accountability. This needs to be written into Massachusetts turnaround law so that schools' decisions are transparent to all members of the school community.

Another area of study should be on the role teachers' unions play in the involvement with and advocacy for turnaround schools. In the district where Commonwealth High School was located, the local teachers' union provided these schools with a limited version of their collective bargaining agreement. For example, the teachers in these schools had the basic rights other schools do, but job security in turnaround schools was not protected by the union. In non-turnaround schools, permanent teachers have more job security. It is very difficult to remove a permanent teacher under the collective bargaining agreement. However, in turnaround schools, staff can be let go for any reason, so there is no job security. It would be helpful to know how other teachers' unions work with turnaround schools and how they help improve working conditions for teachers.

Implications for Distributive Leadership

Though I believe that distributive leadership theory is essential within a turnaround school setting, this study's findings support the potential value and importance of distributive

leadership theory. It was evident that distributive leadership was not executed within this school. There was a significant divide between teachers and administrators, and those power dynamics made for a toxic and unhealthy working environment. Teachers wanted the school to improve, but they felt they did not have any voice in making decisions that would impact positive change. Distributive leadership theory holds that there must be a level of trust among all members of the community, and power dynamics need to shift. In this school community, the participants agreed with this notion; however, the administration did not see this as a viable option for success. It appears that teachers felt afraid to speak up and offer suggestions regarding school decisions. Massachusetts turnaround policy needs to outline clear guidelines for how teachers and administrators can work together to help improve the conditions within turnaround schools. The fears of retaliation and loss of job security seem to be factors limiting teacher leadership and teachers working with their administration to help inform decisions. Turnaround policy should comprise more opportunities for teachers to be leaders and more opportunities for administrators and teachers to work together.

These research findings have significant implications for the future of turnaround high schools because they highlight changes that need to happen now. So many schools are at risk of entering turnaround status. With this trend on the rise, it is essential that policymakers and practitioners know what is really happening within these schools. Particularly, the roles of teachers need to be further examined. Teachers need a voice in these schools, and they cannot feel threatened by leaders for speaking up when they know how to effect positive change. Teachers need to be able to work in an environment that is not toxic, and they need to feel valued and empowered if there is any chance for a school to successfully exit turnaround status. The results of this study showed that several staff felt burnt out. Being

stuck in the turnaround designation for nearly nine years had put considerable pressure on the teachers. Teachers were tired, but teachers also still cared about their students and wanted them to succeed. The teachers at Commonwealth High School knew what needed to change but were denied any chance to make this happen. Power dynamics between school leadership and teachers prevented this change from happening. Teachers were given false promises and given extra work to help solve problems, but their solutions were unheard.

This research also illuminated how distributive leadership could help address the problem of school turnaround. The teachers in this study indicated that they believed distributive leadership could help the school improve. While they were denied the chance to be part of this model, if they had been given a chance, the school environment and culture would likely have dramatically changed for the better. The teachers in this school indicated over and over that they wanted to assume leadership roles but chose not to because they knew their work was not acknowledged or supported by leadership. This also indicated that this may be a common theme among turnaround high schools. The literature did not focus on how teachers could be more impactful in these schools. This is still a major gap in the scholarship, but this study indicated that if teachers are given a chance to impact change and be leaders, it could help improve the school. This study also suggested that teachers need to be supported by school leadership for them to fully succeed. It was evident that during one principal's regime, this was happening and teachers were feeling empowered. However, when a new leader took over, the dynamic changed, and teachers felt scared to speak up. This study showed how the relationship between school leadership and teachers impacts the culture and climate of the school and, as a result, impacts the change that happens.

So many urban high schools are considered failing. However, the official focus is only on the metrics of student performance. Nobody is looking at how teachers can impact positive change through teacher leadership. The results of this study suggest that teachers could be the solution. Teachers are constantly growing and learning as educators, and they want to impact change—and this is something that needs to be embraced by the entire school community. If teachers are given the chance to impact change and participate in effective teacher leadership opportunities, then these schools could have a fighting chance to improve. In Massachusetts, only one high school has ever exited turnaround status. No other schools have achieved this since, which raises many questions about why. I argue it is because teachers are not given a voice and are denied effective leadership opportunities—conclusions supported by the results of this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations that may have impacted the outcomes. First, the data from this study came from only one urban turnaround high school. The study could have been enhanced by comparing multiple turnaround high schools in the same urban district to provide more information on how different turnaround schools work. Second, the sample size of this study was low compared with the number of staff who worked there. The school employs around 100 teachers, and only 43 teachers participated in the survey, and only 15 teachers agreed to participate in an interview. Regarding the survey data, not all 43 respondents answered every question, so that also impacted the results of the data. Some participants skipped questions which led to incomplete surveys. It would have been more impactful if every teacher at the school participated, offering a full picture of how teachers in this school perceived leadership.

I chose this particular school because I was previously employed there, and I wanted to get the teachers' insights into how they perceived teacher leadership. Since I worked at this school for several years during its turnaround process, my experience posed some internal biases, though I was not employed at the school when the study was conducted. I did feel that some participants during the qualitative phase of this study were hesitant to provide a lot of information even knowing that their names and the school would not be identified. One of the themes that emerged from study was fear of intimidation from leadership, so I inferred that some staff may have been hesitant to be completely transparent. If I had waited a few more years to conduct this study, the results may have been different.

This study focused on only one case—an urban turnaround school. If I had used more cases from additional turnaround high schools, it may have provided some differences in the outcomes of the study. Within the area I conducted this study, there are several other urban turnaround high schools. If I looked at all the urban turnaround schools within this area, it may have provided more insights into how teachers perceive teacher leadership. This suggests an area of future research.

A final limitation includes my limited background and training in certain areas, including using SPSS to interpret quantitative data. I have limited training using SPSS for interpreting data. I had taken only one quantitative methods course to prepare me for my study. If I had more training with SPSS, the quantitative portion of the study would likely have been more descriptive. I may have misinterpreted some of the quantitative data. I chose to limit my study to only a few statistical tests due in part to being inexperienced with using SPSS and also due to my relatively small sample size for the study. If my sample size were

larger, I could have run additional tests to draw more conclusions about how teachers perceive teacher leadership in urban turnaround high schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is imperative that future research look more closely at the role teacher leaders can play in urban turnaround schools. Since very few schools exit turnaround status, one area of future research would be schools that were successful in turning around. It would be helpful to identify similar patterns in other urban schools that successfully turned around. It would also be useful to know what practices were used during the turnaround period and how much input teachers had in making decisions. This would help to verify that teacher leadership is effective in these schools, and how. In the location where this study was conducted, one school has exited turnaround status. That school would be an ideal site to conduct another case study to compare practices between them and Commonwealth High School.

Another area for potential research is looking at more schools that use a distributive leadership model. Based on the current research, there are very few schools that use this model. Looking at what these schools do and how decisions are shared among all staff would be helpful to determine if this is the right model for turnaround schools. Many of the schools that have successfully turned around used some form of distributive leadership, so this may be the key to helping all turnaround schools. It would be useful to know how power dynamics between school leaders and teachers work in these schools. Do teachers have an equal say, and if they do, what are the benefits and what are the challenges?

This study also highlighted the importance of school leaders and their role in empowering teachers. Since this study demonstrated that this was not the case for Commonwealth High School, it would be helpful to examine how other leaders empower

teachers in a turnaround setting. With so many external factors impacting a teacher at these schools, it would be helpful for school leaders to empower teachers to create more solution-oriented practices fot schools in turnaround.

The working conditions of turnaround schools are difficult. Much research has focused on this; however, an understanding of how it impacts teachers and their capacity to be leaders is lacking. It would be helpful to identify how schools engage teachers in more leadership roles with all the extra teaching responsibilities that occur in a turnaround school. It would also be helpful to see if teacher leadership practices are sustainable, considering everything they entail as a teacher in a turnaround high school. It would also be helpful to determine if teacher leadership has a direct correlation with improving student achievement in turnaround schools. Future research should examine schools where working conditions are manageable and how that promotes the growth of teacher leadership.

Another area of research would be looking at effective professional development opportunities for teachers in turnaround schools. Professional development came up several times throughout my study. I concluded that the PD opportunities at Commonwealth High School were not empowering teachers or helping to improve teaching and learning. Future studies need to focus on how turnaround schools can implement effective PD where teachers are learning new strategies to improve their pedagogy and ultimately improving student outcomes. So many teachers at Commonwealth High School indicated that they wanted effective PD but were denied I; therefore, researching a model that is effective would help improve these practices. A study into what effective professional development looks like would help guide turnaround schools when they are planning for and implementing professional development to their teachers. Schools that invest a lot of time and money in

professional development would be a great place to start to examine how these practices improve PD for teachers.

Finally, the policies surrounding turnaround need to be studied more. The research continues to show that turnaround is not an effective model. The results of this study indicate that turnaround practices are not helping Commonwealth High School to exit turnaround. More research needs to go into why this model continues to fail and how policies can be changed to provide more practical solutions to these schools. If these schools continue to fail, a new model of school reform needs to be implemented. Scholars need to review schools that have been stuck in turnaround status for several years and gather data indicating why these schools fail to exit so that the results can help inform and change the current policies. The students in these schools deserve more, and the policies in place now are hindering the success of these schools. I hope that the policies regarding turnaround here in Massachusetts will change and that there will be a more equitable and solutions-oriented vision for turnaround schools. I am hopeful that teacher leadership will become a valuable asset to help these schools exit turnaround status and become the functional and effective schools they deserve to be.

Conclusion

This study provided deep insights into the role of teachers working at an urban turnaround high school. It also helped to determine how teachers perceive the roles of teacher leadership within an urban turnaround high school. The quantitative phase of this study indicated that the majority of the teachers within this turnaround school believed that teacher leadership was beneficial to the overall improvement of the school. However, teachers did not feel that teacher leadership opportunities were encouraged for all teachers at the school.

The majority of the participants believed that the school administration did not engage teachers to participate in leadership opportunities. The majority of the teachers also believed that teachers did not have a major voice in making important decisions at this school.

The qualitative phase of this study provided additional insights into how teachers perceive what teacher leadership is within a turnaround high school. The results of this phase indicated that teachers felt a pressure of time impacting their jobs. Schools in turnaround have 3 years to make drastic improvements. This was validated by the teachers who participated in the interviews. Teachers felt this urgency to improve led to intimidation from school leadership, which prevented teachers from speaking up and providing ideas to help impact change. This also led to teachers feeling that this school had a stressful and chaotic work environment. Teachers were being asked to do too much, and the work was not sustainable. Teachers also indicated that there was no consistency in the school and that a lack of communication prevented leadership opportunities for teachers. Throughout this turnaround period, this school saw a change in leadership five different times, and each time there was a leadership change that impacted the work environment differently. This constant turnover led to teachers feeling underappreciated and undervalued, which ultimately led to teacher burnout.

In addition, teachers indicated that a toxic work environment was present during some of the leadership changes, which led to teachers feeling unheard and having no voice. Teachers indicated that they wanted to impact change and get more involved, but they chose not to because everything they said went unheard and was not valued. One area of teacher leadership that became evident was professional development. Increased weekly professional development is a requirement of turnaround schools. However, teachers felt that these PD

sessions were unhelpful and not well planned. Teachers indicated that the administration wanted teachers to get more involved, and when opportunities became available, they did not follow through, so teachers felt that it was an erasure of teacher leadership. This also leads to teachers feeling burnt out and exhausted. The main conclusion was that teachers believe teacher leadership is important, however, in this school it was ineffective.

This study validates much research regarding turnaround schools. Teachers feel overworked and underappreciated and have unideal working conditions. These factors impact the availability and impact of teacher leadership. This is consistent with the current literature. However, the results of this study indicate that there is an area in which teacher leadership could be improved. This includes having teachers be more involved in their professional development opportunities. This is one area where teachers can impact change which could ultimately help to improve the school and increase leadership opportunities for teacher leaders.

The findings of this study are helpful to any other urban turnaround high school. There is a clear connection between school leaders and teachers. These two parties need to work together and more closely to help improve the outcomes of the school. The teachers in this study indicated that the administration did not have trust with their teachers and that prevented many leadership opportunities from occurring. This study also emphasizes the importance distributive leadership could have for turnaround schools. This breaks the barrier and power dynamics between school leadership and teachers and has everyone working together to help solve the problem of school turnaround. The results of this study indicate that distributive leadership could be a solution for other urban turnaround schools. There is

hope for turnaround schools to improve, and this study validates that teachers need to have a voice and need to be able to take on leadership roles for this to happen.

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION

University of Massachusetts at Boston
Graduate College of Education
Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Principal Investigator: Matthew McCarthy

Introduction and Contact Information

You are being asked to participate in a dissertation research project aimed at understanding the role of teacher leadership in urban turnaround high schools. My name is Matthew McCarthy and I am the principal researcher as well as a current teacher in an urban high school. I am a doctoral candidate in the Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Please read this form carefully and feel free to present any questions or concerns you may have. If you have further questions, or do not feel comfortable asking them at this time, I can discuss them in private at a later date. I can be reached anytime via email at Matthew.McCarthy002@umb.edu or by phone at 978-758-5205.

As a doctoral candidate, this research study will serve to meet the requirements for a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D). My research is being conducted under the supervision of Wenfan Yan, Ph.D., Professor of Urban Education, Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. You may contact Dr. Yan at the above address, via telephone at 617-287-7601, or via email at WenFan.Yan@umb.edu.

Description of the Project

This study, which will be conducted during the 2022-2023 school year, attempts to understand the role of teacher leadership in an urban turnaround high school through both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in a survey (quantitative) that measures your understanding of teacher leadership and your role as a teacher in a turnaround high school.

The survey is expected to take no more than 20 minutes and will be conducted outside of school hours. In addition the interviews are scheduled to be 30 minutes and will take place during non-school hours.

Risks or Discomforts

This study is considered to be of minimal risk, not exceeding the risk you would experience in normal, everyday activities. The only discomfort that can be associated with this study would be the surfacing of stressful feelings in completing the research activities. If you feel any risk or discomfort over the course of this study, you may speak with me at any time during the process.

Benefits

This study will reveal whether or not the impact of teacher leadership helps to improve urban turnaround schools. The hope is that findings from this study will help influence policy, specifically the Massachusetts turnaround policy. The findings may also aid in improving the conditions at the turnaround school that is being studied.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your participation in this research is confidential. The school name will not be revealed in the study, as I will employ the pseudonym *Commonwealth High School*. Individuals who participate in the follow-up interview process will be asked to choose a pseudonym in the place of their name. To the very best of my ability, I will attempt to omit or alter any details which may lead to the identification of a specific participant. All research materials and data that I collect will be stored on a password protected drive through the UMass Boston One-Drive. Once this dissertation has been accepted, all research materials, including data, notes, audio-tapes, and emails will be destroyed.

Voluntary Participation

The decision whether or not to participate in either phase of this study is completely voluntary. If you do initially decide to participate, you may terminate this participation at any point during the process. Refusal to participate in the study, withdrawal at any time during the study, or the skipping of questions during the study will have absolutely no bearing whatsoever on your standing or employment status in the Boston Public Schools System.

Rights

You have the right to ask any questions about this research prior to the signing of this form or during the study itself. Please contact my research supervisor, Dr. Yan, or me at any time using the aforementioned contact information. If your concerns are related to your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. This department is responsible for the oversight of research involving human participants. The IRB may be reached at the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives & Dean of Graduate Studies by phone at 617-287-6055 or by email at Bala.Sundaram@umb.edu.

Signatures

I HAVE READ THIS CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM INDICATES THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Printed Name of Participant _____
Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Printed Name of Researcher _____
Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Consent form adopted from Exhibit 3.7 from Check & Schutt (2011)

APPENDIX B

SURVEY

Research Question:

How do teachers in one urban turnaround high school perceive the role of teacher leadership?

Section # 1 Background Information:

1. What is your gender?

   Male Female Non-Binary Prefer Not to Say

2. How many years have you been teaching?

   0 - 3 4 - 6 7- 10 10 +

3. How many years have you been teaching in this turnaround school?

   0 - 3 4 - 6 7- 10 10 +

Section # 2: Knowledge of the Turnaround Process

1. As a teacher in a turnaround high school I am aware of the laws and regulations regarding turnaround in Massachusetts.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. I have read my school's turnaround plan.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. I was invited to participate in writing my school's turnaround plan.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. I chose to teach at this school because I wanted to teach in a turnaround setting.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. My school administration has clearly defined the goals and expectations for working in this turnaround school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. I believe that turnaround is an effective way to improve a school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. I believe that this school will turn around and improve.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Section # 3: Knowledge of Teacher Leadership and Distributive Leadership

1. I have an understanding of what teacher leadership is.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. I have an understanding of what a teacher leader is.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. I consider myself a teacher leader.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. I feel there are many opportunities for teacher leadership at my school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. Teacher leadership opportunities are encouraged for all teachers at my school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. Teacher leadership is beneficial to the overall improvement of the school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. My school administration encourages teachers to engage in leadership opportunities.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. My school administration regularly involves teachers for their input on important school initiatives regarding school reform and/or turnaround practices.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. I believe that the availability of teacher leadership opportunities is essential to the success of the school.

   Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. I have an understanding of what distributive leadership is.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. My school administration uses a distributive leadership model to divide up leadership opportunities?

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. I think that a distributive leadership model is beneficial for the success of this school.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. Teachers at this school want this school to improve.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. Teachers at this school are provided sufficient training and professional development opportunities to help improve the school.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. Teachers have a voice in major decision making processes at my school.

    Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Section # 4: Open Ended Questions

1. Why did you decide to work at the school you are currently at?
2. Do you want to take on the role of teacher leader at your school? Why or why not?

3. What ideas do you have for new ways in which teachers could be involved in leadership opportunities at your school?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your role in this school?
2. How many years have you been teaching?
3. How many years have you been teaching at this school?
4. Why did you choose to teach at this turnaround school?
5. What does turnaround mean to you?
6. What are the working conditions like at this school?
7. What does teacher leadership mean to you?
8. What does teacher leadership look like in your school?
9. How does a teacher get involved in leadership opportunities at your school?
10. How does the school administration engage teachers in leadership opportunities?
11. What roles do teachers have in decision making processes at the school?
12. What role do teachers have in professional development opportunities at this school?
13. How can teachers get more involved in the school improvement process?
14. What changes would you like to see in your school's turnaround plan?
15. What do you believe are the top priorities for this school to be able to successfully turnaround?

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