

JOB SATISFACTION AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHER RETENTION IN THE
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

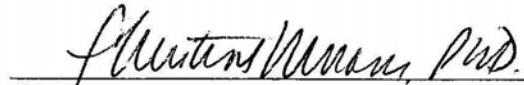
A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
Immaculata University
by Elizabeth Keating Sands

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education

TITLE OF DISSERTATION:

Job Satisfaction and Its Impact on Teacher Retention in the Independent School

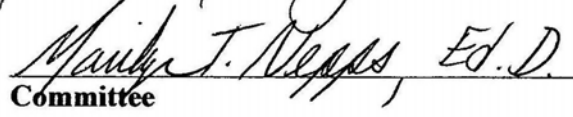
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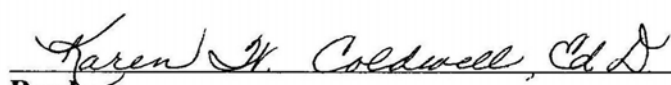
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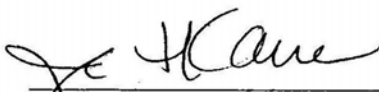


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention in the independent school. This case study was completed at a National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) member school and utilized the NAIS Independent School Satisfaction Survey (2007). Survey data were collected from 44.8% of the teacher population to fulfill Part I of the study. Data from the survey instrument incorporated the use of the Likert Scale and open-ended questions. Additionally, 25.2% of the full time faculty members participated in focus groups which were designated as Part II of the study. Critical factors such as work environment, leadership, work and life balance, compensation and benefits, and mentoring new teachers were explored in an effort to assess their impact on teacher retention.

Results from these two methods of data collection indicated that while teachers highly valued small class sizes, autonomy in the classroom, designing and implementing the curriculum, and the joy derived from close relationships with the students, there was a large faction of teacher participants who were disappointed in the environmental factors of their jobs. Data show that almost half of the participants who participated in this study anticipate retiring, changing jobs or migrating to other institutions within the next five years. Results from this study suggested that each independent school challenge the internal perceptions of their own cultural environment in an effort to retain their most valued teachers.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Overview

In order for independent schools to be successful, the retention of qualified teachers must be a priority for school administrators as it is anticipated that 37% of them will leave the profession by 2016 either through retirement, or through seeking other careers either within or outside of education (Booth, 2007). While there are core similarities between teaching in the public and private sector, there are also differences. Historically, independent schools have been able to attract and retain quality teachers by offering small class sizes, active participation in curriculum development, and autonomy in teaching (Booth). However, while these factors have been enough to attract and retain teachers over several decades, they are no longer sufficient as salary and benefits have become more of a driving force for recruitment and retention efforts (Zubay, 2006).

More recently, independent schools have tried to address this problem by offering more competitive salaries and benefits packages, thereby making these schools more attractive and competitive to prospective employees (Gow, 2003). While that has been at least in part successful, salaries continue to lag behind the public schools even as benefits have become more competitive. Indeed, this is substantiated by the *National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey*, which indicated that while teachers were satisfied with their benefits they professed a significant disapproval rating with salary (Booth, 2007). According to Booth, there is a need to stay competitive, and compensation is only part of a larger problem with teacher satisfaction and retention in the independent school. Gow suggested that, “While money does talk, it is the entire quality of the work experience that ultimately tells a teacher whether to stay

or go” (p. 34). Not unlike public education, the independent schools need to establish environments that attract and retain the best and brightest teachers and continue to help sustain their energy and productivity throughout their careers (Tye & O’Brien, 2002).

Evans (1997) spoke to the ambiguity of the term “job satisfaction” and in subsequent research substantiated the construct validity of two distinct terms: job comfort and job fulfillment. Evans suggested that these factors are actually determinations made by the teacher according to extenuating conditions and circumstances which impact their perceptions of the job. Such conditions and “factors affecting job satisfaction can be broadly categorized as *environmental* (the job itself or working environment), *psychological* (personality, behavior, attitude), or *demographic* (age, gender)” (Crossman & Harris, 2006, p. 30).

Demographics continue to pose serious challenges for schools as there are not only teachers who are poised to retire but there are current trends indicating that younger teachers are leaving education because they are disillusioned by the profession (Tye & O’Brien, 2002). Tye and O’Brien also cited other examples of challenges in retention suggesting that there are psychological factors which afflict teachers who stay in teaching because they feel worn out and trapped. This poses a more systemic problem to schools as these teachers are not sustaining the energy and commitment throughout their teaching careers. Consequently, for those who choose to stay in teaching, the profession must continue to offer the most attractive environmental options in terms of compensation, working conditions, and intrinsic rewards in order to satisfy the personal and psychological needs of teachers (Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006). This would be reflective of Evan’s (1997) suggestion to distinguish between job comfort and job

fulfillment. Continued exploration of environmental factors such as benefits, compensation, work environment, leadership, teacher preparation and support are critical to teacher job satisfaction and retention efforts (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005).

Independent School Management (ISM) (2004) insisted that successful schools with a sense of commitment to high performance cannot sustain quality and commitment if there is a high rate of teacher turnover. They further asserted that independent schools tend to lose novice teachers within the first five years and are losing their most seasoned and qualified faculty members, jeopardizing the schools' overall effectiveness. According to ISM, an attrition rate of over 10% during any given year can indicate underlying institutional dysfunction. Independent schools tend to require extensive interaction among their teaching staff and are "unusually dependent on commitment, continuity, and cohesion among employees" (Ingersoll, 2002, p. 19) for successful and sustainable outcomes. As a consequence, these environments can suffer from high rates of turnover. Such turnover can influence school climate and impact students' academic performance (Cohen, 2007). A key finding in literature is that "high levels of employee turnover are both cause and effect of ineffectiveness and low performance in organizations" (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 505).

Continuing to assess what teachers value will be important for administrators as they prepare for a changing workforce and attempt to retain their best employees (Booth, 2007). In an effort to address serious staffing and retention problems, schools need to examine the organizational or environmental sources of teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; 2002; Johnson et al., 2005). Ingersoll (2002) insisted that careful study in these areas enable schools to understand specific characteristics of institutional culture in an

effort to retain qualified teachers, the importance of which is directly linked to institutional performance and effectiveness. Booth has suggested that critical information for schools can be gleaned from current human resource business projections, trends in the workplace, as well as employee surveys. Sources from the business sector can also supply and generate employment strategies for the independent school sector.

Within the domain of employee job satisfaction, there are key issues which attract the attention of human resource personnel and administrators and require further attention and investigative inquiry (Booth, 2007; Schramm, 2006). Work and life balance has recently surfaced as a top trend for human resource managers in both business organizations and the school sector since employee job satisfaction can be impacted if people are unable to balance their personal and professional lives (Booth; Schramm). The *Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Workplace Forecast* (Schramm) ranked work and life balance fourth in importance behind compensation, benefits, and job security. Studies addressing work and life balance issues should be part of an on-going initiative in the retention of employees (McMillan, Morris & Atchley, 2008) as there are deeper issues with teachers that should be addressed to sustain energy, enthusiasm, and a sense of passion (Intrator & Kunzman, 2006).

According to the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007), respondents cited the importance of balancing their personal and professional lives as being very important to them; however, their rating of satisfaction in this area was quite low, resulting in the largest discrepancy in the survey and justifying the need for further exploration. As a result of these findings, Booth flagged work and life balance as a key issue of dissatisfaction among teachers. Additionally, the *NAIS Opinion Leaders*

Survey (2005) indicated that the workforce will be comprised of employees who seek flexibility in the workplace. *Balance* will become the watchword of the 21st century, according to the *NAIS Opinion Leaders Survey*, and employers will need to implement initiatives to support their employees' overall job satisfaction, boost retention, and support sustainability initiatives.

NAIS suggested that independent schools must stay current with research and workplace trends to attend to best practices for attracting and retaining employees (Booth, 2007; Gow, 2003). Additionally, Booth has suggested that channels of communication be opened so that administrators are actively seeking input from faculty. As part of this suggested action, a study on teacher job satisfaction has the potential to direct proposals for future retention initiatives and set the groundwork for understanding the impact of environment and school culture on teachers in the independent school. Deal and Kennedy (2000) stated that employees are often shaped by where they work and the cultural ties that bind them can give meaning and purpose to their lives. Whether the literature speaks to environmental factors, (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Johnson et al., 2005), organizational factors (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002) or cultural factors (Deal & Kennedy), these terms describe important elements which are critical to understanding teacher job satisfaction.

Need for the Study

Few issues have received more attention than staffing schools with qualified teachers; yet studies have not provided the necessary data from an organizational perspective (Ingersoll, 2002). Studies on turnover within diverse types of schools indicated that small private schools have the highest rate of teacher turnover at

approximately 23% which is cause for concern as these schools often epitomize close, community-minded schools (Ingersoll). Ingersoll insisted that few researchers have actually looked at the characteristics of schools or how the organizational climate can affect teacher turnover. Yet, when a school fosters a sustainable and positive school climate, teachers are more likely to feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe (Booth, 2007; Cohen, 2007).

“Schools are sites in which challenges, setbacks, and pressures are features of everyday life. In terms of school personnel, previous research has identified stress, disengagement, heavy workloads, little support, and high turnover in this challenging setting” (Martin & Marsh, 2008, p. 168). Information collected from the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) and the *SHRM Workplace Forecast* (Shramm, 2006) suggested that work and life balance is one of the top issues facing the workforce, yet, there is inadequate information currently available on what that actually means to teachers and how schools should implement initiatives to support the quest to achieve that balance.

Ingersoll (2002) claimed that elements of organizational culture can influence a teacher’s ability to attain personal and professional balance. This concept of balancing work and life requires further review as Booth (2007) cited in the *NAIS Teacher Satisfaction Survey* that there was a large discrepancy between how important this was to the respondents and their relative inability to achieve it. Thus, further study is needed to help independent schools develop a current understanding of job satisfaction in an effort to create initiatives and design strategies to support professional satisfaction and institutional commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Therefore, based on the previously stated issues regarding the importance of retaining quality independent school teachers to achieve successful and sustainable institutional outcomes, it was important that teacher job satisfaction be assessed to evaluate why teachers work in independent schools and if these initial attractors were enough to retain them. The study identified elements of teacher satisfaction while highlighting the issues of greatest concern for teacher retention. Research in this area isolated aspects of the school environment, organization, and culture that impacted teacher job satisfaction and assessed whether these factors negatively impacted the retention of teachers. According to Booth (2007), independent schools were initially able to attract teachers because they offered small class sizes, active participation in curriculum development, and autonomy in the classroom. Further examination assessed whether these factors were enough to retain and sustain teachers over the long haul. An examination of teachers identified by years of teaching experience attempted to clarify if independent schools were at risk for losing teachers due to dissatisfaction and determine when schools were in the greatest danger of losing their teaching professionals.

In 2006 an NAIS governance study was performed to assess boards of directors and their operations in several categories (Orem, 2006). NAIS attempted to evaluate the greatest challenges to boards of trustees and administrators to assess how closely aligned boards of trustees and heads of schools were in their appraisals of challenging issues. According to Orem, the results of the surveys revealed that there was a close alignment in priorities between the board chairs and the heads of schools signifying that “seventy-three percent of trustees and 74% of heads identified *recruiting, retaining, and compensating*

faculty as the top issue” (p. 92). Additionally, Orem suggested that the environment or organizational dynamics which included the climate and culture of individual schools emerged as a key concern for independent schools in retention efforts and a primary focus for boards of trustees and heads of schools as they mutually assess institutional sustainability. An exploration of environmental, psychological, and demographic issues will continue to be necessary for each independent school in an effort to understand the factors that have the potential to impact job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following definitions will be applied:

Board of Trustees – Members are charged with upholding the mission of the school and articulating its vision while representing the financial and operational health of the institution to all of its constituencies (NAIS, 2006).

Burnout – “Burnout is the culmination of a progressive disillusionment and lack of efficacy in which early enthusiasm and dedication ultimately yield to depletion and a loss of caring” (Farber, 1991, p. 25).

Independent School – Independent schools are primarily supported by tuition, charitable contributions, and endowment income. NAIS requires that schools are independently governed by a board of trustees, practice nondiscriminatory policies, be accredited by an approved state or regional association, and hold a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) status (NAIS, 2002).

Independent School Management (ISM) – A management support firm for private-independent schools in the United States and abroad which provides schools,

through research and development, the latest methods for leadership and management (<http://www.isminc.com>).

Job Satisfaction – “A state of mind determined by the extent to which the individual perceives her/his job-related needs to being met”; job comfort is defined as one’s comfort with the job and one’s satisfaction with the conditions of the job whereas job fulfillment is defined as one’s self-perception of achievement (Evans, 1997, p. 328).

NAIS – The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is an organization requiring membership. NAIS mandates that schools are independently governed by a board of trustees, practice nondiscriminatory policies, be accredited by an approved state or regional association, and hold a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) status (NAIS, 2002).

Quality Teachers – “...schools with high-achieving students tend to be those where the teachers have a deep knowledge base about the subjects they are teaching, where the teachers were themselves high-performing students in school and college, where the teachers are impassioned about their subjects, and where the teachers care about the kids they teach” (Bassett, 2003, ¶ 6).

Retention Strategies – Promoting mechanisms or methods to increase the attractiveness of teaching as a profession while also encouraging institutional commitment and loyalty (Guarino, Santibañez & Daley, 2006; Smethem, 2007).

SHRM Workplace Forecast – A published study by the Society for Human Resources Management which addresses key issues in the workplace based on completed surveys by human resources professionals (Schramm, 2006).

Stress – Stress in an educational setting can be perceived as a state in which teachers are afflicted in ways that “negatively affect their physical and mental health” (Porter, 2007, p. 52).

Turnover – The number of teachers per year who leave teaching altogether or the teachers who migrate to other schools or different jobs within education (Ingersoll, 2001).

Work and Life Balance – Work and life balance occurs when there is a “lack of conflict or interference between the work and family roles” (Frone, 2003, p. 145).

Limitations of Study

This mixed method case study replicated the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) to determine if job satisfaction impacted teacher retention at an independent school. This case study provided a compressed version of a research situation thereby causing some limitations as it is not longitudinal in scope. The results of the survey and focus group discussions are not meant to be generalized to other independent schools as individual independent institutions, by their very nature, operate under their own missions and philosophies and thus have their own organizational cultures. Additionally, although the survey asked where teachers intended to be in the next five years, teachers who left the field were not surveyed or contacted. Factors influencing retention which were not captured on the survey might potentially cause a limitation in the study; however the use of open-ended questions on the survey and follow-up focus groups were designed to provide important detail that may have been lacking in the survey portion of the research. Self-reporting could have been a limitation in Part I of the study, however this was addressed by limiting the descriptors thereby increasing the reliability. In Part II, the Focus Group portion of the study, an audio

recorder was utilized to minimize some of the potential limitations by supplying the researcher with the conversations that took place during the focus groups. Direct and accurate quotes which might have been missed during the actual manual recording of data helped to increase reliability in this portion of the study.

Research Questions

This case study will explore the relationship between teacher job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention. This examination will be directed by the following questions:

1. What are the key factors in teacher job satisfaction in the independent school?
2. To what extent do the factors of job satisfaction impact retention?

Summary

SHRM asserted that retention has surfaced as one of the top issues of concern for human resource departments (Schramm, 2006). Retention strategies will be crucial for holding on to teachers and, due to rising health care costs, benefits packages have the potential to be part of the initiative to keep employees in all sectors of the working population. Booth (2007) and Ingersoll (2001; 2002) substantiated those findings in their research in the education sector and suggested that there are other challenges facing schools as they attempt to attract and retain quality teachers. An examination of what teachers value is important for administrators as they prepare for a changing workforce (Booth; Ingersoll).

CHAPTER TWO – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Although there is some indication that there is or will be a future teacher shortage due to retiring and migrating teachers (Booth, 2007), Ingersoll (2001, 2002) has insisted that attention be placed on the characteristics of specific organizations in an effort to retain key talent. More administrative attention must be placed on job satisfaction and less on recruitment initiatives. Ingersoll discussed current evidence regarding conditions in the workplace noting that aspects of the culture can affect an employee's response to the work environment. Institutional conditions such as environmental, psychological, and demographic factors can potentially impact job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Younger teachers under 30 years of age and older teachers over 50 are most likely to leave the profession according to Ingersoll who suggested that demographic factors influence retention. Accordingly, high rates of turnover are often very disruptive to a community and thus have dire consequences for school effectiveness (Ingersoll).

Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005) reported that critical factors such as: a) leadership, b) benefits, c) salary, and d) compensation should be examined to decrease teacher attrition and create a healthier work environment. Booth (2007), in an independent school study, corroborated the public school findings reported by Johnson et al., further suggesting that environment often has a significant impact on teacher job satisfaction and personal efficacy. Booth noted in the independent school study that there were levels of dissatisfaction by teachers with a) leadership, b) work and life balance, and c) salary. In rating the work environment, teachers proposed that balancing their personal lives and their work lives was very important to them. In fact, the greatest discrepancy in

the study indicated that although teachers valued the balance of work and life, they were unable to achieve it (Booth).

Teachers in the independent school sector are a microcosm of the overarching societal problems as stated in the *SHRM Workplace Forecast* which noted an “increased demand for work/life balance” (Schramm, 2006, p. 33). Schramm noted that work and life balance should be counted as one of the top trends influencing the current workplace. This confluence of work and life is not unique to business organizations as stated by Booth (2007) but has recently surfaced as an on-going issue affecting independent schools, as well. Organizations (Schramm) and independent schools (Booth) will need to focus on the societal trends that influence employee satisfaction and the tensions created by environmental factors such as increased expectations of, demands on, and access to employees. Brock and Grady (2000) stated that factors for analysis in relation to teachers’ job and career satisfaction should be measured according to “organizational, personal, professional, and societal” (p. 124) trends and cycles. These factors are reflective of the environmental, psychological, and demographic categories proposed by Crossman and Harris (2006).

Balance is an issue that has been red flagged as a trend that should be analyzed by independent school administrators and boards of trustees (Booth, 2007). Teachers cited heavy demands on personal time with duties and other extras contributing to their workload. Respondents on the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) also remarked that the hours were exceptionally long and the compensation disappointing. A teacher on the NAIS Survey stated in an open-ended

question that jobs during the summer had to be secured to meet expenses, thus sacrificing important professional development work (Booth).

Assessment of teacher staffing needs and retention will continue to challenge all schools; as Ingersoll and Smith (2003) stated, "...it is that of a bucket rapidly losing water because of the holes in the bottom. Pouring more water into the bucket will not do any good if we do not patch the holes first" (p. 4). Ingersoll and Smith insisted that management, through sound organizational practice, can patch the holes and play a significant role in future staffing issues.

Teaching in the Independent School

Personal, professional, organizational, and societal components were found to influence teacher perceptions of their careers and provided a structure, albeit complex, for examination (Brock & Grady, 2000). By examining the fundamental differences that existed between the public and private schools, Thompson (1993a) uncovered some very basic institutional practices such as compensation and benefits that had the potential to influence job satisfaction. Thompson discovered that something as simple as salary and compensation had a significant impact on the esteem needs of teachers. While teachers were paid poorly in the United States, independent school teachers were paid even less than their public school counterparts and without unions, independent school teachers had considerably more difficulty negotiating salaries and lobbying for better working conditions (Thompson).

Additionally, there was an economic discrepancy between independent school teachers and many of the families who were the primary subscribers; as Thompson (1993a) suggested, this influenced teachers' perceptions of themselves thus impacting

personal and professional satisfaction. When considering the basic tenets of independent schools and taking into consideration that parents are paying customers and consumers, it was understandable how parents maintained considerable leverage over the schools and teachers while impacting the esteem needs of teachers (Thompson).

Teachers in independent schools often found it difficult to set limits with parents, administrators, and children and subsequently became overwhelmed with committee assignments as well as taking parent calls at home (Thompson, 1993a). Teachers and schools in this analysis of independent schools were asked to do too much and respond to the very high expectations of parents who were invested in their children's achievements and performance (Hallowell, 1993). When teachers were expected to do far more than teach then it becomes reflective of a society where the responsibilities are shifted onto the schools. American society is in transition, social networking is unraveling, and teachers are expected to pick up parental and societal slack (Hallowell).

While there are factors which negatively impact teacher satisfaction there are other factors which serve to attract and retain teachers in the independent school such as "innovation, flexibility, creativity, community, caring" (Friedman, 2005, ¶ 12) and a community of relative security. The notion of being independent from bureaucratic control and government regulation has helped to define the uniqueness of independent schools whose characteristics have attracted teachers (Esty, n.d.). These characteristics appeal to teachers by promoting a student centric environment.

Independent schools stress the individual student and channel their resources directly to student learning, counseling and growth. We do not support great bureaucracies, we have minimal superstructure, and our energy goes into our

common purpose instead of incessant political debate and factionalism (Esty, n.d., ¶ 54).

Setting high academic standards for students, stressing values and ethics, and instilling social responsibility were noted as hallmarks of independent school education. The guiding principles for independent schools, as reported by Esty (n.d.), described independent schools as beacons for reform, as ethical learning communities, and institutions that believed in moral leadership and whose resources were directed to the children and not to the bureaucrats. By focusing on the individual student and promoting character development as well as academic achievement, independent school teachers derived satisfaction from the role of teacher and leader in defining curriculum and teaching standards. Without the bureaucratic structure which is part of the public school enterprise, the independent school teachers had the ability to focus on the individual students (Esty). Being totally student focused was certainly an incentive for working in the independent school, as teachers not only directly impacted students but were instrumental in many of the decision making processes. Even as independent school teachers derived much satisfaction from these roles (Booth, 2007) teaching continues to be a very complex and demanding career which does not receive the respect that it should from our society (Esty). These independent school cultures, as reported by Powell (1996), required more from teachers than simply academic instruction:

Thus, independent schools put the difficulty of the national schooling enterprise in useful perspective. Many factors besides school affect human growth. Developing good skills, knowledge, values, habits, and interests in a person may be even more difficult than performing open heart surgery. Working in schools is tough and

intellectually complex under the best of circumstances. It is always a struggle, a process never finished. It demands more dignified treatment than Americans have ever given it. Prep schools have no magic bullets, but they have many sensible and usable ideas. They also, with few exceptions, invest uncommon dignity in the work they are about. (p. 248)

Powell's assessment of the satisfaction level of teachers in independent schools was consistent with Alt and Peter's (2002) analysis of the *Schools and Staffing Survey* (SASS: 1999-2000) which noted that teachers in private schools have a slightly more positive view of their jobs, 66% had a favorable view while 54% of the public school teachers had such a positive view.

Hallmarks of the Independent Schools

Field studies conducted between 1988 and 1993 supplied the foundation for the seminal work of Powell (1996) who wrote extensively about the independent school tradition. The subsequent use of Powell's research provided an important piece in understanding the history and background of the independent school. As Powell suggested, "Americans may love or loathe private schools for many reasons but still wonder which of their qualities might make their own schools better" (p. 6).

Policymakers and administrators during Powell's studies were cautioned to be cognizant of the common problems facing education and remain open to new possibilities while acknowledging the barriers and challenges in both the public and private sectors (1996). The quality education that independent schools have provided students for over one hundred years warrants further analysis to determine what positive organizational factors are transferable to other institutions and also what is sustainable for the future

(Powell). As part of an on-going commitment to quality education, independent schools are charged with the re-evaluation of current practices to determine if the attractions and trade-offs for teachers continue to be relevant and viable compared with the opportunities of working in business or in the public school sector (Powell).

According to Powell (1996) the hallmarks of the independent schools enabled educators to assess whether these schools are continuing to build upon the strong foundations which have made them feasible options for teachers looking for career fulfillment. Powell suggested that one such hallmark has been teacher participation in the creation and implementation of curriculum and instruction. Teachers derived respect, dignity, and ultimate job satisfaction when they were encouraged to be innovative and creative (Danielson, 2007; Powell). Powell noted that in the independent schools, there is an understanding that teachers are not equal partners in governance but they maintain a strong voice. However, the value placed on teacher participation can only be as good as the leadership in the institution. Selection and mentoring of administrators must be carefully executed as those who are self-serving can wreak havoc in any educational institution whether public or private (Powell).

Another hallmark of independent schools is the parent body whose emotional and financial commitment can fuel the success and support of the institution and yet can hinder its progress (Powell, 1996). Power wielding parents, as Powell suggested, can negatively impact a school rendering parent, teacher, board, and administrative partnerships as ineffective. Powell posited that until teachers are regarded as essential partners and the work performed as highly respected, the true dignity of the profession cannot be realized.

Independent schools, which have long enjoyed and marketed small class size, are finding that they are becoming increasingly more difficult to finance; however, since classes of 13 to 15 are virtually unattainable for the public schools, as suggested by Powell (1996), this becomes an attractive option for teachers looking for a more intimate teaching environment with more one-on-one student interaction. This individual instructional time between teachers and students in the independent schools often adds to the overall teaching hours, as suggested by Powell who insisted that public and private school teachers are comparable from an instructional standpoint, but differ in the overall teaching hours. Private preparatory school teachers tended to teach fewer hours than public school counterparts and the free time that was often available to them was used for conferencing with students (Powell). Powell also stated that more private preparatory teacher meetings take place outside the normal teaching day. Thus, Powell concluded that fewer hours of teaching with fewer students in the class may not reduce the total job hours for independent school teachers. In fact, Powell noted that having fewer students may actually increase job hours given the number of hours spent working outside the regular classroom.

The advising system was used as an example of an independent school program which placed high expectations on teachers while adding to the daily workload. Although the programs differed throughout independent schools, teachers were charged with the responsibility of monitoring the social, emotional, and academic well being of several students (Powell, 1996). Independent school teacher mentors provided students with the opportunity of connecting with an adult. As Powell suggested, advisory commitments often took place outside the regular classroom adding more student contact to the regular

teaching day. Teachers in the independent school have been required to perform other duties and assume other roles throughout the day, as well (Powell).

Independent school parents and administrators maintained high expectations, high standards, and excellence of teachers in the area of report and comment writing. This was another hallmark which further extended a teacher's time on the job and seemingly infiltrated time at home (Powell, 1996).

In the scope of an independent school teacher's job is the personalized written report or comment. Parents want comments to be individualized and insightful.

They are a symbol of what tuition buys. Many carefully scrutinize them for tone, interpretation and prognosis. They look closely at grammar, spelling and style. All become evidence of a teacher's and a school's competence. (Powell, p. 236)

Written comments accentuated the individual attention that parents expected and the academic and personal commitment that independent schools delivered. Powell suggested that this kind of commitment to the school population that the teachers served directly impacted teacher workload.

Building community was always at the core of the independent school tradition and teaching students went well beyond the academic requirements and rigors. As Powell (1996) suggested, independent schools viewed their collective mission as institutions which monitored and assisted students over the hurdles of the everyday experiences of life while supporting them as they forged the relationships necessary to meet those challenges. This kind of commitment on behalf of the independent school teachers encouraged students to further engage in personal learning while building character (Powell). Powell suggested that independent schools fostered student engagement

through academic commitment. By understanding the varying characteristics of individual student profiles, teachers supported each individual; however, this kind of commitment also added significantly to teacher workload (Powell). This fundamental personal attention and respect was often evident on every level of school community life and was the absolute minimal expectation of all independent schools. The tradition of independent schools held at its core “decent character and academic literacy” (p. 247) although Powell acknowledged that these have not been particularly trendy concepts. For over 100 years these characterizations have been the cornerstone of independent schools. However, the enduring qualities of great schools cannot be sustained without teacher time and commitment (Powell) and these could be eroding as suggested in the recent study by Booth (2007) in which respondents reported their subsequent dissatisfaction with elements of the independent school experience as well as their inability to achieve work and life balance.

Booth reported “academic freedom, classroom autonomy, and a feeling of effectiveness with students” (2007, p. 3) were reasons that teachers have been attracted to the independent school community in the past but, the factors that initially attracted teachers to the independent schools must be examined to assess if they are still enough to retain quality teachers. Ingersoll (2001) recommended that studies appraise the deeper organizational dynamics in institutions to understand the levels of job satisfaction that will help to retain teachers and sustain their commitment to the organization.

Key Issues Affecting Teacher Retention

Social Disconnection and Lack of Institutional Support

Charles (1999) posited that America is going through an anger epidemic which has impacted the work environment resulting in accumulated employee stress. Americans used to be far more social, leaving their doors open and unlocked for neighbors and friends, but over the past 50 years there has been a steady decline in these social connections. Technology revolutionized the home and influenced modern life but it has also been a contributing factor to the decline of relationship building in our society (Charles). “In this increasingly individualistic age, community spirit—once exemplified by the barn raising, the quilting bee, the fence-mending—seems almost a quaint anachronism” (Bogle, 2009, p. 190).

Traffic on the internet, which has provided shopping, chat lines, and competition from global markets has caused American society to connect to computers rather than to their friends and loved ones thus, impacting the ability to form and sustain personal and professional relationships (Charles, 1999). Hallowell (2006) described this as the “oxymoron of modern life: connected anonymity and social disconnection” (p. 34). Further, Hallowell noted that, “...while we have been miraculously connecting electronically over the past fifteen years, we have also quietly and unintentionally been disconnecting interpersonally” (p. 35). Since social disconnection can lead to dysfunction in organizations, forging positive relationships is highly desired for better organizational outcomes (Wheatley, 2002). Schwartz (2007) claimed that by setting the tone for positive relationship building, organizations can focus on investing more in the employees rather than trying to get everything out of them. Consistent with the studies on Human Capital

Management (HCM) in the educational setting, schools were monitored to identify and analyze the leadership practices which had the most significant impact on student achievement (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007). According to Booth (2004) becoming human-centered in the independent school through governance and employee relations will pose a challenge for administrators and boards of trustees.

Stress, Burnout and a Compromised Work Environment

The ability to build relationships and help one another manage stress lay at the center of a healthy work environment and was inherent in the independent school culture according to Porter (2007). Porter stated that stress has become very much a part of the independent school culture, impacting teachers, students, and parents. However, part of this 'stressed out' culture has not only been accepted but encouraged. Porter has insisted that to some independent school communities 'stressed out' means that the community is being productive. Schwartz (2007) asserted that elements of society are often reflected in organizational culture which was consistent with Porter's assessment of current afflictions facing the independent schools.

Most of us respond to rising demands in the workplace by putting in longer hours, which inevitably take a toll on us physically, mentally, and emotionally. That leads to declining levels of engagement, increasing levels of distraction, high turnover rates, and soaring medical costs among employees (Schwartz, p. 63).

Studies regarding teacher stress are not a new phenomenon as seen in Pettegrew and Wolf's (1982) seminal study. Teacher stress has been considered an occupational hazard for several decades. In an effort to fully analyze the stress phenomenon, Pettegrew and Wolf's empirical research measured aspects of teacher stress. Role related stress,

task-based stress, and environmental stress were explored. The most intriguing discovery was the impact of management practices on stress and the need for focusing interventions aimed at the administrative level (Pettegrew & Wolf). Clearly, efforts directed at the improvement of management practices substantially impacted teacher stress. “The locus of teacher stress prevention/intervention most clearly rests with school administration” (Pettegrew & Wolf, p. 390).

Brock and Grady (2000) suggested that the organizational structures of independent schools often impacted a teacher’s feelings of job security and satisfaction. Yet another factor of school governance often overlooked were the parents who occupied a very different role than in the public sector and, as educated consumers, had a more visible and vocal position within the school decision making processes, which greatly influenced school choices and governance. Parents were often vocal members of the community and this was a component that often added to the stressors within the independent school community (Brock & Grady).

Schwartz (2007) noted that rising demands in the work environment has put health and productivity at risk because time and people are limited commodities. Employers need to become cognizant of managing employee energy to boost productivity. Increased medical costs and high employee turnover are key indicators of depleted energy and low productivity in an organization. Job stress can be costly and is cited as a cause of absenteeism, productivity loss, and turnover costs. The repercussion on organizations implied that the culture and rituals change in order to tap into the “body, emotions, mind, and spirit” (Schwartz, p. 64) of employees, for increased job satisfaction.

Porter (2007) claimed that stress was not necessarily bad as long as it was in small doses so that the body could tolerate it and rejuvenate itself; but, persistent stress continues to be an enemy to our health and productivity. While managing stress in one school can be very different from another, it is important to analyze the need of the institution to be proactive about shifting the cultural attitudes and rituals if it is appropriate to do so (Buckalew, 1993).

For most new teachers, the profession was primarily about survival and getting through each day; yet, according to Porter (2007) new teachers often had perspectives on underlying institutional and cultural attitudes often missed by veteran teachers. For example, Porter suggested that stress was often expected and accepted by the independent school culture and being overworked, overloaded, and chronically stressed was often treated as a barometer for productivity. Stress was often an accepted norm to veteran teachers but this was not necessarily overlooked by teachers who were new to independent school teaching.

Porter (2007) warned that an overload of stress in one section of the community could have a profound effect on other segments of the school population within the same community. If teachers were stressed, then it had implications for their students. Additionally, chronic stress impacted the health of individuals. Shifting the stress levels from chronic to manageable has the potential to impact the overall culture of an institution by increasing work and life balance and at the same time increasing teacher job satisfaction (Porter).

Workplace trends and stress were investigated in the United Kingdom (UK) as teacher retention efforts continued to be a focus requiring a multidisciplinary approach

for understanding the shortages which currently face that country (Jepson & Forrest, 2006). Jepson and Forrest asserted that when teachers were feeling stressed, it was a reasonable expectation that a decrease in occupational commitment would be followed by low job satisfaction and a desire to leave the profession. Further, Jepson and Forrest surmised that when occupational commitment increased, stress decreased.

Contributory factors to stress among teachers can be organizational or related to individual and intrinsic components (Jepson & Forrest, 2006). The division of the school can also be a contributory factor: for example, the Jepson and Forest study surveyed 95 teachers from various schools in the UK from both elementary and secondary divisions and indicated that teachers in primary or elementary school reported perceived higher stress levels than secondary school teachers. Identifying organizational practices which caused or exacerbated stress and recognizing individual characteristics which induced stress for some employees can help institutions become more adept at providing initiatives that enable the organization to reduce stress in the work environment (Jepson & Forrest).

Hard work and enthusiasm were indicative of passionate teachers but burnout prevailed if they were not rewarded and acknowledged (Brock & Grady, 2000). According to Brock and Grady, teachers suffering from chronic burnout became increasingly more isolated and were predisposed to complain about their workload. They were often confused about their own feelings of distraction and had difficulty defining their feelings of being overwhelmed. Detachment, self-blame, and the loss of self-esteem were frequent indicators of burnout; Brock (1999) estimated that as many as 40% of teachers have experienced it during the course of their teaching careers. Brock and Grady

cautioned that teacher burnout has never been considered a crisis, but gone unchecked could result in institutional vulnerability. Its trivialization in educational communities has caused lower teacher productivity, an increase in attrition, and has subsequently impacted teacher effectiveness (Brock & Grady).

Studies by Rieg, Paquette, and Chen (2007) suggested that dealing with stress continues to be vital for any institution focusing on retention initiatives and should be investigated, especially in light of the high turnover rates with new teachers who leave during the first three years of teaching. While Wheatley (2002) stressed the importance in building relationships, Rieg et al. concluded that relationship building was particularly difficult for new teachers given their high levels of apprehension associated with colleagues, students, and administrators.

Work and Life Balance: A Critical Component of Stress

A contributing factor to stress can be attributed to work and life balance which is an endemic problem in American society according to Burton (2004) and substantiated by studies provided by *SHRM Workplace Forecast* (Schramm, 2006) and the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007). Work and life balance as stated by Frone occurs when there is “lack of conflict or interference between work and family roles” (2003, p. 145). Employees currently seek better balance in their lives and current studies are evaluating balance throughout the disciplines to get a better understanding of how it impacts the functioning of organizations. Although Evans (2000) postured that caution should be applied when comparing the business and educational models as they rarely change in the same way or at the same pace, it is important to

recognize the need to identify issues relating to work and life balance and become cognizant of its relevance to organizations and social systems.

Attaining work and life balance has, indeed, surfaced as a priority issue for both individuals and employers in the business sector (McMillan et al., 2008). McMillan et al. suggested that compensation, benefits, and job security, as reported by the *SHRM Workplace Forecast* (Schramm, 2006), were important to employees and should also be rated as factors contributing to work and life balance. Understanding the issues which are important to institutional success and stability should be at the forefront of organizational planning yet, McMillan et al. contended that not much has changed in business with work and life balance issues, in part because the subject has not been viewed as a cultural or systemic problem. Booth (2004) claimed similar findings in her research on independent schools and suggested actions that independent schools should take in an effort to stay competitive.

Organizational and individual learning has been cited as necessary for addressing the issues of work and life balance (Burton, 2004; McMillan et al., 2008). It is important to achieve individual satisfaction with work and life by achieving “a sense of balance, satisfaction, happiness, and success without guilt, sacrifice, and compromise” (Spinks, 2004, p. 5). Spinks asserted that it continues to be a challenge to achieve equilibrium in life without support from others in the collective working environment. The environmental factors according to Crossman and Harris (2006) are key components to understanding job satisfaction. Organizational culture stands as a vital component to the working environment and offers a partial solution to resolving work and life balance issues. A supportive culture encourages colleagues to turn to one another for assistance

during times of family need or stress (Spinks). Spinks used the metaphor of a three legged stool to illustrate work and life balance and the importance of maintaining support systems to attain and sustain balance. If family and friends, the work environment, or community resources are not able to hold up the weight then the stool becomes wobbly, thus making work and life balance too hard to achieve.

The nature of work and family conflict or work and family balance has serious implications for both the employer and employee (Poelman & Beham, 2008). In the business sector, Poelman and Beham reported that responses to the needs of employees might include the following policies: flextime or telework, leave arrangements, child care and elder care, supportive arrangements which might include counseling, as well as compensation and benefits. While some of these initiatives might work for business and non-teaching personnel, they are arguably more difficult to implement for teachers. Yet, Poelman and Behman have concluded that "...employees who had more flexible schedules, more supportive co-workers or supervisors, greater access to work-family benefits, and mentors who are perceived as having similar work-family values reported less conflict" (p. 394). They also contended that fair and consistent enforcement of benefits remains important for organizational stability. To fully understand the complexities associated with the enforcement of policies which support balance, on-going research is required to continue to assess climate and culture (Poelman & Beham).

Establishing a work and life culture at any organization assumes that professional lives (environmental) and personal lives (psychological) are considered enmeshed and therefore not mutually exclusive (Koppes, 2008). Being valued as a worker and acknowledged as a human being is essential for establishing a better work-life culture and

in turn reflects positively on the institution or business organization as desirable places to work (Koppes). Koppes suggested that evaluating places to work will become part of the hiring process for employees as they ascertain the most conducive environments for *working to live* as opposed to *living to work*. Employees, who evaluate future employers and the potential organizational environment, will be more likely to create a holistic picture involving family, friends, leisure, and community which will surface as integral to the achievement of work and life balance (Koppes).

Koppes and Swanberg (2008) contended that work and life balance is not a passing fad but is an area requiring on-going research. The growing body of scholarship will support the concept that “effective supervisors and managers, as well as an organizational culture respectful of work-life, will lead to positive outcomes for workers, the management, and the organization” (Koppes & Swanberg, p. 3).

The number of households with multiple working members as part of the current workforce has increased, causing amplified stress on the family unit (Moen, Kelly & Huang, 2008). Moen et al. (2008) surmised that there has not been enough change in organizations to compensate for the stress on families, in fact, outdated policies and procedures continue to be enforced in the workplace. Further, institutional flexibility must be considered as an essential component to meeting the demands of work and life balance as conflict between work and family roles influences the quality of work and generates discontentment with family life. This divergence of work and life diminishes organizational outcomes (Grawitch et al., 2006). Additionally, Hayden (2008) added that expanding the definition of family is an important step in acknowledging the essential

relationships in employees' lives while incorporating policies that assist family members as they support these connections.

While institutions should continue to value a supportive work and life culture (Koppes, 2008) individuals should also be encouraged to assume part of the responsibility for daily renewal or other coping strategies aimed at stress reduction (Hallowell, 1993). Social and emotional support, group problem solving, relaxation techniques and non-competitive exercise are all usable techniques aimed at stress reduction according to Austin, Shah, and Muncer (2005). Self-renewal is essential as teaching is a profession that requires a tremendous amount of economic self-sacrifice and daily personal struggle, according to Thompson (1993a).

The typical workload of teachers is a demanding stream of class preparations, assignments to correct, school committees and events, and meetings with parents. The pace is unforgiving, unrelenting, with few breaks. Assistance from paraprofessionals, resource teachers, and counselors is often scarce. School meetings and paperwork often extend far beyond the school day. (Brock & Grady, 2000, p. 13)

Additionally, Thompson discussed some of the glaring issues in his appraisal of the status of teachers in the United States. Teachers are still considered a low status profession in the United States with salaries estimated at the low end of other industrialized nations. Independent school teachers are generally paid a lower salary than public schools with fewer opportunities to negotiate for higher salaries and working conditions because of their non-union status (Thompson). This can have serious consequences for those who are trying to achieve work and life balance as the ability to negotiate is diminished. When

factoring in other duties and assignments that teachers take on as part of their teaching jobs in the independent schools and the expectations within the community that their performance will be better than their public school counterparts, conditions become ripe for discontent. Thompson also discussed the power and leverage of the independent school families who have the clout to impact teachers either directly or through the school decision making process.

Studies by Melnick and Meister (2008) further revealed that all teachers appeared overwhelmed by workload. New teachers might be perceived as being a particularly vulnerable population for workload stress because they do not have the requisite knowledge or classroom experience. But, data show that both veteran and new teachers reported significant problems with time management (Melnick & Meister). Accordingly, for them there is simply not enough time to prepare, teach, and reflect.

Ingersoll's analysis of data suggested that organizational dynamics be evaluated for teacher retention and migration (2001). Teachers who left other jobs to go teach in the private school sector cited that it was too much work for the pay and disclosed that overscheduling, no breaks, and short lunches often fueled discontent (Certo & Fox, 2002). One of the attractions to the independent school is the small class size but Atkins (2003) has suggested that this is more of a benefit to the student as opposed to the teacher. The study conducted in the UK suggested that there was a perception that with small class size there was a commensurate workload which was lighter compared with public school counterparts. However, UK teachers, as cited by Atkins, suggested that planning, preparation, and assessment appeared to be limitless. Additionally, preparing for differentiated lessons for a small class was time consuming. Teachers in independent

schools, because of parental and administrator expectations, were forced to delve deeper and more critically into individual student performance. Teachers were required to produce academic reports which were in-depth studies on individual students. Atkins concluded in the study that teachers might not benefit directly from small class sizes with regard to workload.

Coping Strategies for Stress Reduction and Improved Performance

Austin, Shah, and Muncer (2005) measured teacher stress and offered their subsequent coping strategies for depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic complaints. The study consisted of 50 teachers from two high schools. Using a questionnaire, researchers measured teachers' work related stress. Results indicated that workload was a significant cause of stress and teachers would benefit from management techniques. Affective methods and occupational therapy strategies helped to coach teachers through the work related stressors and assisted with time management issues. Buckalew (1993), in his response to energizing the independent school teacher, stated that teaching can run the gamut between moderate stress levels to very high stress levels. Varying studies reported teaching as causing moderate stress levels yet the researchers who administered those studies tended to utilize the business survey model which considered "hovering boss" but not "hovering children" as experienced in education (Buckalew, p. 20). Buckalew stated that the responsibilities inherent in the care of children placed teacher stressors as very high, especially for elementary school teachers.

The research in business suggested that accessing one's sources of energy produced a better personal balance and higher productivity as seen in the results of the Wachovia Bank study (Schwartz, 2007). This research cited the gains in productivity

using 106 participants at 12 regional banks who engaged in energy renewal programs. The control group continued to engage in business according to their own habits and corporate rituals. The study analyzed the percentage of increases with loan and deposit revenues. In the first three months of the study there was a 13 percentage point gain. Thereafter, there were reported gains indicating that the study participants outperformed colleagues in the control group posting differences of up to 20%. The findings, using Wachovia's key performance metrics, demonstrated that there was a correlation between energy renewal and employee performance. In this study, Schwartz analyzed the habits of corporate executives in an effort to streamline prior habits and attend to "focusing the mind, energizing the human spirit, maximizing physical energy, and taking control over one's emotions" (p. 21).

Austin et al. (2005) asserted that secondary school teachers found that time management and role overload were primary sources of stress. Indeed, this correlated with *The MetLife Study*, in which Markow, Moessner and Horowitz (2006) discovered that teachers endorsed reducing the time that they spent in non-teaching duties. Austin et al. suggested that these areas should be investigated for reducing teacher stress and overload while exploring alternative strategies for coping. The alignment of programs for the differentiated needs of employees reduced stress and concurrently promoted positive outcomes for the organization (Grawitch, Gottschalk & Munz, 2006). "A culture that integrates action and reflection arrives at better decisions to which people can genuinely commit, and its people have a more prepared mental state" (Senge, 1990, p. 281). Leithwood and Beatty (2008) concluded that reflection continues to be a critical factor in

establishing authentic administrator and teacher relationships, which is an important element in establishing a positive environment and is more conducive to job satisfaction.

Organizational Dynamics

Strong relationships in organizations often countered the negative impact of stress and other health related issues according to Wheatley's (2002) study on the dynamics of organizations and change theory. The heart of an organization can often be revealed through the reactions of employees during questionable times. Pulling together or pulling apart can speak volumes about the climate of an organization (Wheatley). Building pathways and developing relationships with one another to resolve problems, was the way organizational coherence was built subsequently allowing employees to be more productive. Hayden (2008) postured that organizations, which promoted community cohesiveness by supporting relationship building and celebrating the personal and professional selves of teachers, demonstrated that employees were valued further suggesting a strong underlying ethic.

Storr (1988) in a seminal work on organizational stability acknowledged that collaboration and relationships were not the only ways to achieve personal fulfillment and job satisfaction; solitude and creative thought were also pathways to understanding one's inner world. When employees were fearful they had a tendency to withdraw, resulting in health issues such as stress. Physical manifestations of stress: "sleeplessness, restlessness, sudden anger, and unpredictable fears" (Wheatley, 2002, p. 2) had a negative impact on organizations. Employee behaviors had the potential to turn to postures which were more defensive and self-serving thereby impacting basic organizational functioning. It is through the awareness of oneself that sense can be made

of the world's complexities (Fullan, 1993). Personal growth continues to be the centerpiece for healthy organizations and committing to this concept is the first step in seeing any institution as a human and living community (Senge, 1990).

With the increased demands on teachers, job satisfaction often came from the culture of the organization which offered employees the opportunity to be autonomous yet encouraged engagement in decision making practices (Brock & Grady, 2000). Teachers highly valued the ability to assist in making organizational decisions, especially when it directly affected their teaching or classroom as they were ultimately responsible for student outcomes (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Brock and Grady suggested that when policies and procedures were too well defined then teachers were forced to follow rules instead of lending their voices to help create them. Schools that were too organized also created pressures which confined teachers, inhibited new ideas, and stifled communication, leading to teacher marginalization and isolation (Brock & Grady). Micromanaged schools, according to Brock and Grady, inhibited teacher decision making, subsequently forcing them to feel incompetent and disenchanting with the profession.

Jepson and Forrest (2006) suggested that acknowledging personal differences was one of the key factors in understanding why some teachers were impacted more by stress than others. Schools need to look externally to evaluate the demands and pressures of teaching while looking internally to become more proactive about initiatives aimed at job satisfaction and retention. Understanding the biology of stress and job satisfaction and its impact on the successful functioning of organizations has the potential to enlighten

employees and inform a culture while ultimately linking and scientifically measuring human development and institutional success (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Administrative Practices and the Effect on Climate and Culture

No matter how well conceived and executed, school change and reform meets resistance from teachers and students if the culture is not nurtured (Mulford & Silins, 2003). Mulford and Silins discussed leadership practices in a longitudinal study in Australia. Teacher voice was instrumental in understanding leadership styles which nurtured a positive climate in which change could occur. Mulford and Silins found that there were close links between school environment, leadership styles, and improved student learning. This was consistent with US research which also found a significant correlation between administrative practices and student learning (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Heck, 2000). Nettles and Herrington (2007) described the shift in focus from the impact that teachers have on student achievement to administrative behaviors which impacted the individual cultures of various institutions. Nettles and Herrington also suggested that administrators should be carefully guided in organizational and institutional best practices due to the link between administrators, the culture and climate of an institution, and student achievement. As Crossman and Harris (2006) observed, environmental considerations exist which impact teacher job satisfaction and in turn, influence student learning.

In evaluating school practice and organizational influence, Gratton and Erickson (2007) discussed the value of employees who were happy in their jobs and who were engaged in their work. Employees' need to look elsewhere was diminished due to their organizational commitment. Consequently, engaged employees displayed work habits

that were contagious and helped to increase productivity and institutional success (Gratton & Erickson). Bassi and McMurrer (2007) affirmed this in their own studies using Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to assess the organizational processes in the leadership and management of employees in an effort to understand Human Capital Drivers (HCD). In this study, businesses were evaluated as well as public schools. This study revealed that the businesses and schools that had the highest Human Capital Management (HCM) maturity scores had also demonstrated successful institutional outcomes. Bassi and McMurrer crossed over the lines of business and industry to show that certain key factors in leadership also influenced student achievement in schools. Leadership that valued putting more into employees as opposed to getting the most out of them were more likely to have a greater return in terms of organizational success (Schwartz, 2007).

Markow et al. (2006) noted that 37% of teachers surveyed for the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* responded that professional prestige was lower than had been expected. The survey also indicated that teacher satisfaction correlated with their personal interactions with principals. Being able to offer suggestions and opinions as well as feeling valued for the work they did were very important factors and enhanced job satisfaction. Teachers highly valued interactions with school principals and appreciated the opportunities to offer suggestions which were reflective of a positive culture, as reported by Booth (2007) and Richards (2005).

Factors of a healthy climate included elements of positive relationships between faculty members, administrators, parents, and students, and were manifested through a culture of trust, generosity, help, and cooperation (Barth, 2006). Barth asserted that

purposeful and helpful discussions should always take place in a forum conducive to community trust. Discussions that do not take place in trusting environments are often counterproductive to a healthy and professional learning community in which the focus should be on building relationships and fostering collaborative practices (Barth).

Administrators and principals impacted the culture and climate of their schools by creating environments which encouraged communication and flexibility, while adjusting some of the operations of the school to help meet the needs of the teachers (Brock & Grady, 2000). Principals and administrators had a substantial impact on the climate of a school by “attending to the basic and esteem needs of teachers, providing schedules with few interruptions, minimizing teacher duties, showing concern for individuals, maximizing encouragement, offering recognition to individuals, and providing meaningful and individualized staff development” (Brock & Grady, p. 57). By satisfying the needs of teachers, administrators and principals had the opportunity to satisfy teachers’ basic and motivational needs by creating an environment for personal success (Brock & Grady). “Teachers must succeed if students are to succeed, and students must succeed if society is to succeed” (Fullan, 1993, p. 46).

The emotions which greatly influenced teachers’ morale, stress, and commitment were impacted by leadership practices and the conditions of the work environment (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). There were some leaders who used power to provoke negative emotions in teachers rather than understanding, promoting, and nourishing the positive (Leithwood & Beatty). Behavioral neuroscience has shed some light on the physiologic component to leadership by focusing on brain chemistry. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) suggested a causal relationship between the moods of leaders and

employees due to mirror neurons which influenced followers causing them to mimic the moods of leaders. Mirror neurons are brain cells which create shared experiences in people. Recent brain research has underscored their importance in leadership practices demonstrating that cohesive groups are more likely to be led by someone who has utilized good mood and laughter to elicit the same from colleagues.

Personal characteristics of leaders contributed to the overall positive environment which was found to be essential for organizational success. Leaders who embodied the goals of achieving work and life balance fostered environments which supported and sustained that objective (Spinks, 2004). The work environment relied heavily on its leaders for modeling “time, stress, and career management, healthy life-style choices, conflict resolution, and problem solving” (Spinks, pp. 6-7). The possibility existed that people’s perceptions of their work-family interface were influenced by others according to VanSteenbergen, Ellemers, Haslam, and Urlings (2008). Subtle messages from work or from home affected a person’s appraisal of balance and helped to shape his/her perceptions.

Good leaders set the cultural tone for the institution by affirming his or her values through dress, behavior, and routine (Thompson, 1993b). Thompson insisted that “all of the writers on organizational and school culture are of one voice with respect to the role of the leader. They agree that the person in charge must be, first and foremost, a cultural leader” (p. 166). But Evans (1996) noted that there are often discrepancies in the knowledge of school administrators as many have not received training in the common business practice of organizational development. As schools have attempted to initiate reform, administrators were found ill prepared for complex change initiatives or how to

deal with embedded problems. Evans posited that following a linear, structured, and logical method of change ignored the fundamentally human, cultural, and unpredictable aspects of systemic reform. “Many improvement schemes, rooted in the rational-structural paradigm of change, concentrate on the current illnesses and the prescription of ideal cures, cures that emphasize positions, policies, and procedures rather than people” (Evans, p. 91).

Leadership directly impacted the ability to initiate school change which correlated with employee physical or psychological stability (Evans, 1996). Change was stressful; whether good or bad it manifested itself by disturbing natural rhythms and forcing people to alter their coping mechanisms while impacting perspectives on work and life. Evans insisted that employee dependence on continuity was normal and change challenged prior held norms and patterns.

In order to counter the negative organizational dynamics stimulated by stress and uncertainty, we must give full attention to the quality of our relationships.

Nothing else works, no new tools or technical applications, no redesigned organizational chart. The solution is each other. If we can rely on one another, we can cope with almost anything. Without each other, we retreat into fear. (Evans, p. 3)

Wheatley’s (2002) warning regarding systems thinking encouraged organizations to set the framework for leaders to find “security in purpose, not plans” (p. 3). Building relationships, as Wheatley acknowledged, gives purpose to the organization. Employees who were stressed, overloaded, and overwhelmed with the job were unable to look past the demands of the moment and therefore, were resistant in their ability to look at the

bigger picture (Wheatley). Wheatley asserted that institutions that did not have processes in place for relationship building forced their employees to spiral inward. Quality leadership focused on building and solidifying relationships with colleagues to improve the culture of the institution (Evans, 2000; Wheatley, 2002).

Evans (2000) insisted that the unpredictability of teaching required improvisation and the need for some autonomy. Approaches to governance must respect the realities of school life and boards of directors must be conscious of the differences in change when it comes to businesses and schools. Additionally, school change agents should be cognizant of what drives teachers. Evans pointed out that when schools generate change it is often about adding more rather than taking away from the school day forcing teachers to be involved in many simultaneously implemented initiatives. Focusing on too many initiatives at once forces the school to accomplish less (Evans).

As Wheatley (2002) and Evans (2002) suggested, organizations must be conscious of relationship building in order to attend to the culture of the institution. Additionally, Leithwood and Beatty (2008) contended that administrators begin to look at the emotional center of each employee which lies at the core of organizational reform and sustainability. Motivating teachers through transformational leadership, required that administrators look at the emotions of teachers in an effort to disclose the complexities of the profession and reveal the psychological costs which contribute to teacher turnover. “Understanding how to assist teachers in maintaining positive emotional states would seem to be a central understanding for successful school leadership” (Leithwood & Beatty, p. 7).

Assessing the pool of knowledge and skills within the school teaching community will be an essential component for establishing a successful institution and should be a top priority for administrators (Larson, 2009). It has become the norm in educational organizations to manage as many as four generations of employees. Barth (2006) suggested that as teachers retire, much of the information regarding the profession will go with them, impacting teacher learning communities and student outcomes. Teachers who are new to the profession will need to learn during their careers what experienced teachers could have shared with them had there been trustful and collegial relationships and shared professional practice. Building collegial relationships among adult faculty continues to be challenging, but the rewards of shared practice will enable teachers to share their craft and repeat the cycle so that it becomes part of the culture (Barth).

Leithwood and Beatty (2008) suggested that the behaviors of leaders had a direct and powerful impact on teachers' working conditions and could either directly or indirectly impact teachers' emotions. Morale and satisfaction, although researched as separate emotions, were considered very closely related and should be carefully considered as the ingredients for a successful institution. Leithwood and Beatty stated that positive emotions helped to elicit constructive functions related to creativity, imagination, and core knowledge whereas negative emotions inhibited the access to one's fund of knowledge resulting in underperformance. The impact of teacher emotions, morale, and job satisfaction on student achievement was researched by Ostroff (1992) in a study of junior high and secondary school teachers. This study concluded that job satisfaction was the single most prevalent predictor of student achievement. Stockard and

Lehman (2004) suggested further that job satisfaction had a residual effect on teacher retention.

Teacher retention has not historically been a priority for independent schools but care should be taken to focus on the support of faculty through administrative effectiveness (Tracy, 2004). Richards (2005) asserted that teacher satisfaction directly impacted a school and to that end offered a study which focused on principal behaviors and attitudes impacting three stages of a teacher's career a) 1-5 years; b) 6-10 years; and c) 11+ years of experience. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated significant differences in responses from the 1-5 year group and the 11+ years. A principal holding consistently high standards for all teaching professionals was valued by the veteran teacher but not ranked as significant by the new teachers. Richards reported that principals giving guidance about teaching practices was not highly valued by any of the groups but praise and acknowledgement as long as it was genuine was rated as highly important by all three groups. Giving guidance about teaching practices could be perceived as micromanaging, which Brock and Grady (2000) suggested might lead to feelings of incompetency and threaten autonomy. Richard's Group 3 (11+ years) valued the ability to participate in decision making as well as assuming added responsibility.

Administrative behaviors have a far more lasting impact on teachers and can influence teacher attitudes regarding the profession. "Leaders need teachers. It's as simple as that. Without teachers' initiative—their willing and generous commitment of time, energy, effort, ideas, and openness to new learning—a school leader is in real trouble" (Leithwood & Beatty, p. 61). In fact, these behaviors have more of an impact on most teachers than other factors such as salary or class size although Leithwood and

Beatty (2008) suggested that salary and compensation greatly influenced how teachers perceived their jobs. While the factors effecting teacher job satisfaction might be presented by Crossman and Harris (2006) as environmental, psychological and demographic they converge together demonstrating that the environment often influenced the psychological and demographic aspects of the teacher population. Compensation is an example of the convergence of these factors linking teachers' esteem needs and professional value which subsequently impacts job perception and satisfaction (Leithwood & Beatty).

The Differentiated Needs of Teachers and Job Satisfaction

Teaching is often referred to in literature as being a *flat* profession (Cox, Lengel, & Slack, 2003; Danielson, 2007; Tye & O'Brien, 2002) suggesting that without career ladders (Booth, 2007; Cox et al.) a seasoned teacher will not realize the rewards or recognition for experience and expertise (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). There is a requisite cost for the organization as the commitment from the seasoned teacher declines with the corollary lack of satisfaction. Even if an institution retained veteran teachers there would be a deficit as there would be a subsequent loss of engagement (Leithwood & Beatty).

Johnson et al. (2005) discussed the positive implications of correctly implemented career ladders and differentiated roles for teachers as these structures can provide alternative career opportunities while heightening job satisfaction. Accordingly, Booth (2007) suggested the use of career ladders and succession planning, as these promotional practices had a positive impact on the esteem needs of teachers, thus generating positive outcomes for both the employee and institution. Additionally, Grawitch, Trares and Kohler (2007) noted that there was a correlation between employee involvement in

institutional decision making and job satisfaction. This correlation may be the key to understanding healthy workplace practices. Thus, involving teachers through differentiated practices expands new roles for them for increased involvement, commitment, and ultimate satisfaction (Grawitch et al.).

In assessing the needs of new teachers, Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu and Peske (2001) proposed that more time and support supplied by relevant institutional policies and fostered by more experienced colleagues was an integral part of mentoring and retention initiatives. Mentoring practices had the potential to not only address the needs of new teachers but satisfy the needs of the experienced teachers by diversifying their responsibilities and expanding leadership roles (Grawitch et al., 2007). Few schools, however, were appropriately organized to facilitate the mentoring and induction programs required by both inexperienced and experienced teachers. Yet, one such independent school working with a consultant and constituents from administration and teaching, implemented a new and more cohesive system for evaluation and promotion which served as a possible solution for salary inequities while dispelling the notion of teaching as a *flat* profession (Cox et al., 2003). The carefully crafted career ladder made compensation transparent while promoting and encouraging professional development, growth, and accountability. With a more demystified process, the school initiated a solution to many of the challenges of teacher job satisfaction and institutional commitment. According to Cox et al. this initiative incorporated an improved mentoring system which impacted veteran teachers by eliciting greater commitment, satisfaction, and challenge while providing a professional track for new teachers aspiring to improve professional practice.

Anchoring the teaching profession to the needs of teachers throughout various career stages should attract the attention of administrators and boards of directors as the loss of quality teachers has the potential to negatively impact each organization as there will be few respectable role models (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Tye and O'Brien analyzed Human Capital Theory, or the attributes attained through experience and education, and its subsequent application to teachers and suggested that schools look at the investment in a teacher's career and the value derived from it. Danielson (2007) surmised that a teacher's commitment to the profession will result in frustration and cynicism if the professional and personal needs are not monitored regularly. Subsequently, cultivating teachers as leaders had the opportunity to result in more engaged, optimistic, and enthusiastic employees suggesting that change would be more effective and produce more systemic outcomes (Danielson).

“Growing organizations through growing people” (Senge, 2006, p. 258) is a sentiment often heard in organizational change theory and reiterated by many theorists in the business sector. This notion is echoed by Cochran-Smith (2004) who postured that teachers were often idealistic about the reasons that they entered teaching but those ideals were not able to sustain them given the complexities and demands of the profession. All teachers need to be supported and have appropriate conditions, which are conducive for development, growth, and satisfaction in the profession. Cochran-Smith expressed the need for institutions to become more creative in an effort to retain those who wished to stay in education. There should be career trajectories, which not only support the teacher but provide change and challenge by providing leadership roles and assorted advancement opportunities (Cochran-Smith).

Smethem (2007), in a study in the UK, pointed out the need for studying women as a working group due to the number of females who are currently in the workforce. International studies on the retention of women teachers are more numerous due to the majority of teachers who represent the current teacher workforce. According to *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* (Markow, Moessner & Horowitz, 2006) female teacher respondents represented 75% of the teachers surveyed. This demographic consideration highlighted the need of a particular group and suggested the requirements for differentiation in retention strategies in American education (Crossman & Harris, 2006). “The issue of work-life balance and career development is likely to be acute because of the number of women seeking to balance the conflicting pressures of work, family and home” (Smethem, p. 467). Certo and Fox (2002) claimed that teaching is no longer the profession that once ran from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm so that women could be with their families. In fact, this cultural shift, where the teachers were accepting of the hours and the salary that was associated with it, is becoming less competitive with career and financial expectations (Certo & Fox). Women have more alternative career choices and the field of education must provide satisfiers which compete with other professions.

Another demographic consideration suggested that organizations must be particularly sensitive to the needs of an aging workforce. Sociologists, focusing on contemporary society, have discovered that people are engaging in education, work, and leisure at different times in their lives contrary to the linear sequence which suggested that people were educated at the outset, worked until mid-life and then enjoyed leisure during retirement (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2007). Retirement is no longer a fixed point on the continuum as many baby boomers are working part-time or full-time beyond the

traditional retirement age. Smyer and Pitt-Catsouphes indicated that retirees are likely to continue working for the salary and benefits, the efficacy associated with work, or to combat the rising cost of living. While good organizational factors can keep the older workforce from retiring, the reverse scenario can also drive an older workforce into retirement suggesting that those who report having greater job satisfaction are more likely to keep working (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes).

Organizations must balance the positive aspects of an aging workforce and the importance of retaining them with the need to recruit new employees (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2007). Crafting job options for a workforce comprised of many age groups will provide an on-going challenge for organizations. Varying age groups have similar ideals of what promotes job satisfaction in the workplace. Job autonomy, learning opportunities, decision making, trust in management, and collegial and supervisor support can be considered components which contribute to personal satisfaction and life balance (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes). Burton (2004) claimed that balance was not a perfect state and fluctuations occurred as employees sought more balance in their lives; however, individuals should take charge of trying to achieve balance in life by mastering flexibility.

The differentiation of principal behaviors according to the needs of teachers based on their various career stages require that administrators not only understand what teachers value but are also aware of teacher vulnerabilities (Markow, Moessner, & Horowitz, 2006). Mid-career teachers or those with seven to fifteen years of teaching experience were particularly susceptible to burnout and boredom (Johnson et al., 2005). Although the study affirmed that some teachers were able to sustain their energy through

professional development initiatives, others succumbed to the stress and the uncertainty of teaching (Johnson, 2004). Johnson further suggested that both veteran and new teachers desired new roles and responsibilities, and meaningful professional development as part of their teaching career. Johnson et al. (2005) have recommended further that “professional development, new roles, and career ladders are three potential ways to bolster retention efforts” (p. 90). Teachers who were provided with opportunities within the profession were more likely to experience greater satisfaction thereby increasing retention. While historically independent school administrators have been attuned to the institutional environment, there is a newer and more pressing need to periodically “measure, analyze, and evaluate school climate” (Cohen, 2007, p. 19) to assess the needs of an increasingly diverse and varied group of employees.

Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2006) indicated that it was vital to the future success of teachers in all countries that the personal selves of teachers continue to be analyzed in an effort to understand sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and effectiveness. While personal identities may not always be stable or static, each teacher will channel various identities depending on the complexities and challenges of the job. Day et al. revealed that there were variations in the personalities of teachers and their perceived effectiveness as instructors.

Considerations such as age, life events, socio-economic status, and high levels of stress have an effect on personal lives. One might consider whether teachers have the energy, commitment, and agency to continue working in this field and particularly at the private independent schools.

Summary

The review of the literature has emphasized the need for retention initiatives directed at teachers in an effort to sustain high performance and institutional effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002; ISM, 2004). Current research has further suggested that high rates of teacher turnover can impact institutional effectiveness and students' academic performance (ISM). Quality and commitment cannot be sustained if there is a high rate of teacher turnover. While there was initially a concern about a potential teacher shortage, current evidence has suggested that teachers are prone to migrate to other schools or leave for other careers (Ingersoll). With senior faculty members poised to retire and teacher migration becoming a potential threat to institutional stability, retention initiatives for the independent school will become increasingly more important.

Current literature has recommended that in order for organizations to retain key talent, attention must be placed on teacher job satisfaction (Booth, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002). Institutions must adjust to a changing workforce by assessing what teachers value (Johnson et al., 2005). Benefits, compensation, work environment, leadership, and teacher support contribute to overall job satisfaction and are key elements in environmental, psychological and demographic studies (Crossman & Harris, 2006). Research has indicated that institutions evaluate their own organizational sources for teacher job satisfaction and retention and develop strategies and protocols for institutional effectiveness and success (Booth; Ingersoll; ISM, 2004).

CHAPTER THREE- METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention in an independent school. The study had two parts; the first part was a survey and the second included focus groups. The National Association of Independent School's (NAIS) *Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* was used to assess teacher satisfaction (Booth, 2007). Demographic information within the survey provided the opportunity for comparative data on participants' gender, age, and years of experience. Additionally, some sections of the survey provided opportunities for open-ended responses at the end of various sections for further study and review. In the second part of the study, survey responses were triangulated through the use of focus group interviews targeting job satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention. Voluntary participants were asked to respond to questions on how the culture of the school supported or inhibited them in reaching job satisfaction and if this impacted their desire to stay or leave the institution. Additionally, questions addressed work and life balance issues to ascertain if this was an important aspect of job satisfaction as noted in the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth).

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the key factors in teacher job satisfaction in the independent school?
2. To what extent do the factors of job satisfaction impact retention?

Participants

This study took place at a suburban independent school which had an enrollment of 674 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. The average class size was between 12 and 16 with students of color representing 22% of the student enrollment. More than 50 students have parents who were born outside the United States and for whom English was a second language. This school was accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools.

The administrative structure in independent schools is primarily determined by the philosophy and mission of the individual school which is governed by a board of trustees. Similar to a public school principal, the directors or heads of the lower, middle, and upper schools are responsible for the academic and day-to-day operations of their division. Accessibility and interaction between the teachers, the directors, and the head of school is a hallmark of independent school life. These division heads and other key school administrative personnel report directly to the head of school who reports to the board of trustees. Other key administrators, although vital to the health and function of the school, do not maintain the high level of interaction with teachers on a daily basis.

The researcher contacted the Head of School to request permission to collect data. Upon approval from the Head of School, the researcher contacted the targeted population consisting of 87 full-time teachers who were distributed throughout the lower, middle, and upper school divisions. These potential subjects held varying responsibilities according to individually negotiated contractual agreements. For the purposes of this study, learning specialists and librarians were considered full-time teachers and were

included in the survey and focus groups because of the aforementioned contracts with the head of school. Potential participants included 69 females representing 80% of the full-time teacher population and 18 males representing 20% of the full-time population. The age of full-time teachers who were invited to participate ranged from 24 years of age to 72 years of age. The researcher received 39 completed surveys which represented 44.8% of the total number of teachers at this school. Survey respondents were represented through the following groups; one from the 0-3, two from the 4-6, seven from the 7-9, and 29 from the 10+ group. There were 22 teachers who agreed to participate in the focus groups representing 25.2% of the institution's full-time teachers. These groups were stratified by years of experience and restructured due to the low number of participants in the 0-3 and 4-7 groups. Seven teachers participated in the 0-9 group, seven participated in the 10-19, and eight participated in the 20+ group.

Instruments

This study triangulated data by utilizing several methods for gathering pertinent information. With permission from NAIS (Appendix A) a survey instrument was used to collect initial data from volunteers by utilizing questions using the Likert scale as well as open-ended written questions. Permission was also granted (Appendix B) to reprint the survey in this document. The NAIS *Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Appendix C) developed by Booth assessed a) general satisfaction, b) benefits, c) compensation, d) work environment, e) preparing and retaining new teachers, and f) career paths. The survey had a section for the collection of demographic data, and while a specific descriptor regarding ethnicity was eliminated to further protect participant identity, pertinent data such as a) gender, b) years of teaching experience, c) age group,

and d) educational degrees were used to group and stratify information. Further, participants were asked relevant questions about intended career paths or intentions to retire. Participants completed 121 questions in 14 sections with an estimated completion time of approximately 60 minutes. The survey used the Likert scale and varied with questions being asked on a scale of one to five where one meant “not satisfied” to number five as being “extremely satisfied;” number one being “not important” to number five as being “extremely important.” Open-ended questions at the end of the various sections of the survey helped to illuminate some areas of ambiguity as well as obtain more complete and relevant responses for reliability.

Part II of this study utilized a set of questions which were posed to focus group participants to direct specific attention on the work atmosphere in order to assess how the culture or environment impacted teacher job satisfaction and retention. The same questions were utilized in each focus group to increase reliability and validity. The information was gathered manually by the researcher with the aid of a digital recorder, which was later transcribed by the researcher to substantiate and broaden the data collected through note taking.

Design

This mixed method case study was used to assess teacher job satisfaction and its relationship to retention. The study yielded quantitative data through the survey questions using the Likert scale and open-ended questions while the focus group interviews provided qualitative content data through open-ended questions and discussion. Methodology used by Booth (2007) was transferable to a case study environment although the survey was administered in hard copy form instead of on-line to ensure

protection of identity and preserve anonymity. Hard copy and anonymous submission of the survey was an important step in protecting teacher identity thereby minimizing vulnerability. Graziano and Raulin (2007) stated that reliability measures should produce similar results regardless of who is doing the measuring and to that end there should be some replication of data consistent with the NAIS (Booth) study.

The *Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) was utilized in Part I of the study, which also included open-ended questions for personal reflection and response. Part II of the study incorporated focus group meetings with targeted questions (Appendix D) created by the researcher for response and discussion to further examine what contributes to teacher job satisfaction while also assessing job dissatisfaction and work and life balance.

Validity was an important consideration for this study and was a component for choosing a representative sample for this case study consistent with the larger random sample of the NAIS (Booth, 2007) study. The NAIS study solicited participation from 3,010 independent school teachers using a random sample method through online solicitations. NAIS received 851 completed surveys representing 28% of their total solicitations. Females were considered the majority of respondents at 62%.

“Construct validity refers to how well the study’s results support the theory or constructs behind the research...” (Graziano & Raulin, 2007, p. 182). With that in mind, two phases of this study were utilized to incorporate distinct methods for gathering and triangulating data. The first phase presented the survey in hard copy form and was available to volunteers. Respondents were asked to answer several pages of questions using a Likert scale format. The *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey*

(Booth) was used to increase validity and reliability as it had been tested on a larger population. Open-ended questions at the end of several survey sections were used to generate more detailed responses thereby gathering a selection of diverse and more robust data.

The second phase was formulating focus groups according to the teachers' years of professional teaching experience. Focus groups helped to validate the respondents' answers on the survey while highlighting pertinent issues as individuals and as groups. The groups were invited to verbally respond to questions which were consistent throughout the three groups.

Multiple ways of gathering data such as survey questions, open-ended questions and focus group questions strengthened the validity of the study and reliability by triangulating the data. Reliability was attained through a carefully structured data gathering process such as posing the same questions to each of the three focus groups. The use of a digital audio recorder during focus group sessions in addition to manually recording the information enhanced reliability by gathering more complete data.

Procedure

After requesting permission from the Head of School to conduct a study and receiving subsequent approval, the researcher then sought and received approval from the Research Ethics Review Board of Immaculata University (RERB) (Appendix E). The researcher then began to gather data using a two part procedure. Full-time teachers were invited to participate in this study through an invitation in an email (Appendix F) using the school's list-serve. Phase I of the study, with permission from NAIS, utilized the NAIS *Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007). Voluntary

participants accessed the survey in hard copy in the middle/upper school and lower school faculty rooms. Completed surveys were placed in drop-boxes in those locations. The survey was completed anonymously and by returning it to the provided boxes, teachers implied consent in Part I of this study.

The survey was used in its entirety with the exception of Section 1, Introduction, Question #1, "Are you currently an independent school teacher?" This question was eliminated because data collection was performed at an independent school and only full-time teachers were requested to participate. Librarians and Learning Specialists were considered teaching professionals as they participate in the education of students in the classroom. Section 14, Question #28 sought information about the participant's ethnicity. This question was filled in by the researcher thus eliminating it in an effort to protect the identity of the participants while retaining the integrity of the NAIS survey.

Part II of the study consisted of follow-up focus groups comprised of full-time teachers who were employees of the same institution. Prior to the focus group meetings, the researcher piloted the questions using part-time teachers at the same institution who were not part of the study. Piloting questions was an essential component of this study as it enabled the researcher to consider possible obstacles associated with participant comfort while also helping to eliminate insecurities regarding the use of a tape recorder.

Potential full-time faculty participants were invited to take part in the focus group phase of the study through the original solicitation using the school's list serve. Potential participants were asked to read an explanation of the study and sign the embedded consent form (Appendix G) which was available to volunteers in both faculty rooms and

located adjacent to the surveys. Envelopes were provided in each faculty room to isolate the consent forms from the surveys while further protecting confidentiality.

While the researcher's initial intent was to replicate the NAIS survey (Booth, 2007) by forming four separate focus groups according to years of teaching experience which reflected the stratification of the groups in the NAIS survey; 0-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, and 10+ years, the focus groups had to be modified to reflect the number of actual participants in each group. Marshall and Rossman (2006) concluded in their book on qualitative research that focus groups are usually comprised of 7 to 10 participants; accordingly, the researcher reassigned the participants to three focus groups consisting of 0-9 years of teaching experience, 10-19, and 20+. One of the characteristics of qualitative research is flexibility according to Marshall and Rossman and by reforming the focus groups the researcher was able to increase the number of participants in the 0-9 group. This reassignment enabled the researcher to conduct focus groups according to best practice in qualitative research by having the appropriate number of participants.

The groups were interviewed using a standard set of open-ended questions designed by the researcher to encourage discussion. The focus group sessions were scheduled during after school hours and lasted approximately one hour. The use of a digital audio recorder was used for accuracy in collecting data. Participation in the focus group was preceded by a letter of explanation and consent assuring the participants that responses would be recorded anonymously and confidentiality would be observed at all times.

Data Analysis

Stratifying the data according to participants' years of teaching experience gathered from the *NAIS Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) provided the framework necessary to examine patterns and themes with relation to job satisfaction. Assessing teacher satisfaction with organizational (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002), cultural (Deal & Kennedy, 2000), and environmental factors (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Johnson et al, 2005) illuminated some of embedded problems with satisfaction in this institution. Open-ended questions on the survey provided additional data which was not necessarily provided by information gleaned from the survey questions. Responses in participants' own words supplied an opportunity to gather more in-depth information while substantiating and illuminating findings from the survey questions.

Questions posed to the focus groups were open-ended and promoted discussion among participants. The digitally and manually recorded discussions provided more complete and reliable information. The data from the focus groups were analyzed in conjunction with the survey questions.

Summary

The *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) began to explore the realm of teacher satisfaction in an effort to establish protocols for schools in an attempt to stay competitive in an increasingly challenging environment for attracting and retaining teachers in the independent schools. Statistics provided by NAIS reported that 37% of teachers who responded to the survey will retire or leave the profession by 2016. By surveying teachers regarding various categories such as: a) general satisfaction, b) benefits, c) compensation, d) independent school work

environment, and e) the preparation and retention of new teachers, NAIS investigated levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with teachers in the independent school sector in an effort to help schools identify relative strengths and weaknesses in retention practices. While a study of this magnitude is important to examine an extensive number of NAIS member schools, it is also vital to analyze a case study to see if it presents similar data to the original study. Additionally, it is important to explore if the survey data show that independent schools are, in fact, at risk for losing teachers due to job satisfaction and to what extent environmental, organizational, or cultural factors influence retention.

The researcher attempted to ensure reliability of the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* by replicating the instrument in its entirety with minimal changes. Internal validity was established by repeating the NAIS survey and utilizing focus groups to triangulate information through multiple methods thereby producing more data rich results. The teacher focus groups, stratified by years of experience, helped to supply additional data in the form of reflection and discussion among the participants. While the survey provided opportunities for individuals to answer open-ended questions in written form, the focus group participants were able to discuss the researcher's questions in depth by adding to each other's comments and ideas thus providing the researcher with a more extensive study. This multidimensional approach strengthened the internal validity by presenting a survey instrument, open-ended written questions, and focus discussion groups for understanding the unique perspectives of the participants through conversation.

Data were analyzed to answer the research questions identified in this study and to compare the results with the larger NAIS research. By using the categories established

by the NAIS survey, the researcher examined data from the perspective of organizational, environmental, and cultural factors which influenced teacher satisfaction. The independent schools are unique based on their own missions and strategic plans but according to Merriam (1998) external validity can be established through reader or user generalizability and its subsequent application or comparison to other institutions which might have similar profiles. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter Four and reflect an interpretation of the NAIS study through an exploration of teacher experiences at a single site.

CHAPTER FOUR—RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine teacher satisfaction and its impact on teacher retention in the independent school. In the first part of the study, the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) was completed by 39 full-time faculty members who volunteered to participate in this study. The survey was analyzed to determine the factors from which teachers derived the most satisfaction from their careers and the factors which generated discontent and dissatisfaction. Survey questions using the Likert scale explored several categories which included a) general satisfaction, b) benefits, c) compensation, d) work environment, and e) preparing and retaining new teachers. As part of the survey, open-ended questions were utilized to increase internal reliability and validity by providing participants with a means to highlight aspects of satisfaction and dissatisfaction to further emphasize themes or to address issues. Throughout this survey, patterns were examined in an effort to compare the data with the initial findings of Booth and to determine if satisfaction has the potential to impact teacher retention.

In Part II of this study, additional steps in data collection were added to strengthen the internal validity and reliability. Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions, which were conducted on-site after regular school hours. Focus group conversations were recorded using a digital recorder to increase internal reliability measures. Groups were formed based on years of experience gathered from the consent forms submitted by voluntary participants but reformed due to the lack of participation in the 0-3 group. Seven teachers participated in the 0-9 group, seven teachers were in the

10-19 group, and eight teachers formed the 20+ group. The groups were administered the same researcher generated questions for consistency. Probing questions were inserted by the researcher to further clarify or illuminate points of interest.

The data from the survey and focus group discussions were used to identify patterns and themes in relation to teacher job satisfaction and to assess if the satisfiers are enough to retain teachers in independent school education. The surveys were initially analyzed to discover areas where respondents assigned the highest priority. These areas were targeted for analyses using the data from the open-ended questions and focus group discussions. The information was then synthesized to determine what factors were most important to the participants and if the resultant level of satisfaction with those factors impacted a teacher's commitment to the institution. Accordingly, Section 13, Question 24 in the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) asked teachers what they would like to be doing in five years. This question served as a means to assess teacher intention. However, it is important to note that the case study method was not longitudinal in scope and therefore, follow-up interviews with those who actually leave the institution would need to be part of another study.

Part I—Survey Results

Participant Demographic Data

Eighty-seven full-time teachers were solicited for participation in this case study from which 39 or 44.8% of the teacher population at this site responded to the survey. Demographic data on each participant from Sections 12, 13, 14 and 15, Questions 23, 24, 27, 29, and 30 contained in the survey are reported in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1—*Demographic information of survey respondents*

Groups based on yrs. of experience	No. of participants	Gender	Age	Earned degrees
0-3	1	(1)F	(1)20's	(1)BA/BS in education (1)BA/BS in other field
4-6	2	(1)F (1)NR	(2)20's	(2)BA/BS in education (1)BA/BS in other field (1)NR
7-9	7	(7)F	(5)30's (1)60's (1)NR	(2)BA/BS in education (5)BA/BS in other fields (2)NR undergraduate
10+	29	(26)F (3)M	(2)30's (8)40's (13)50's (4)60's (2)NR	(8)BA/BS in education (18)BA/BS in other fields (3)NR undergraduate (9)M.Ed. (6)MA/MS (1)MMT (1)Ed.D. (2)Ph.D. (2)J.D. (1)Psy.D. (2) NR

NR=Not Reported

The information gathered in Part I of the study indicated that the majority of teachers who filled out the survey were females who represented 87.1% of the respondents. One faculty member did not answer the question regarding gender which resulted in an unreported gender response (NR). The demographic information revealed that the majority of participants in this study were highly educated having earned more than one degree and most holding multiple or advanced degrees. Several degrees were not reported (NR) in the 4-6, 7-9, and 10+ groups. One participant declined to share degrees in the 4-6 group, two participants in the 7-9 group neglected to report undergraduate degree(s) or “other degree,” two participants in the 10+ did not report any

degrees, and three participants from that group did not report any undergraduate degrees. All of these items which were not reported were marked as not reported (NR).

Respondents in the 10+ years of experience were the predominant category representing 74.3% of the participants. An analysis of this relatively large group in the study revealed that participants represented a diverse range of academic scholarship with some individuals earning dual Bachelor's degrees both in Education and in other fields. The 10+ group members also held 20 advanced degrees. Five participants in this group declined to either respond or respond completely to this question indicating that other degrees were not reported. This group represented diversity in gender, age, and advanced degrees.

General Satisfaction

Participant surveys were sorted and data were entered onto spreadsheets categorized by years of experience. Information from each group's surveys was entered onto spreadsheets reflecting the answers from all of the 39 participants. This enabled the researcher to report both aggregate and disaggregated data when needed. The summative data was then analyzed for trends and patterns. Subsequent tables were generated to reflect the areas of greatest importance to participants. Questions which garnered the least response scatter in importance as well as information which was disclosed in either the open-ended questions or focus group discussions were extracted for further examination and placed on tables to illustrate areas of focus and participant interest.

The *NAIS Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) compiled a series of comprehensive questions to assess overall satisfaction with working conditions. The results of Section 2, Question 2 were analyzed and information was reported in Table 4.2

which reflected the opinions of the 39 participants in this study. Many factors contributed to job satisfaction and teachers were asked to respond to nine factors of general satisfaction by rating each element of their job by using 1= Not Satisfied (NS), 2=Somewhat Satisfied (SS), 3= Satisfied (S), 4=Very Satisfied (VS), 5= Extremely Satisfied (ES), and Not Applicable (N/A). The researcher extracted seven items of significance which are displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2—*Selected survey responses on general satisfaction; Section 2, Question 2*

	1=NS	2= SS	3=S	4= VS	5=ES	N/A
My effectiveness with students	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(4)10.26%	(17)43.59%	(17)43.59%	(0)0.00%
Effectiveness of school leaders	(2)5.13%	(5)12.82%	(19)48.72%	(11)28.21%	(2)5.13%	(0)0.00%
Support of teachers by school leaders	(1)2.56%	(5)12.82%	(9)23.08%	(18)46.15%	(6)15.38%	(0)0.00%
Social support from colleagues	(1)2.56%	(2)5.13%	(8)20.51%	(14)35.90%	(13)33.33%	(1)2.56%
Autonomy/power to make curricular decisions in my classroom	(1)2.56%	(3)7.69%	(5)12.82%	(10)25.64%	(18)46.15%	(2)5.13%
Education and training I need to teach assigned subjects	(1)2.56%	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(11)28.21%	(25)64.10%	(1)2.56%
My interaction with parents	(2)5.13%	(1)2.56%	(6)15.38%	(17)43.59%	(12)30.77%	(1)2.56%

Teachers representing 92.3% of the surveyed population reported that they were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with having acquired the training necessary for

teaching assigned classes. Teacher effectiveness was highly rated by 87.1% of the participants stating that they were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with their teaching performance with students at their current institution. Freedom to teach in one’s own way was another area in which respondents were highly satisfied; 86.8% of the participants were either “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied”.

To a lesser extent but still important, participants responded that 74.3% were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with parent relationships. Teachers also regarded autonomy in the classroom and freedom to make curricular decisions as satisfying with 71.7% of the respondents stating that they were either “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.” Some response scatter did appear when asked about social support from colleagues indicating that 20.5% were only “Satisfied” with this aspect of the environment while 69.2% were either “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.”

The questions on leadership did not yield similar satisfaction scores as reported in the other questions and revealed some response scatter. For example, when asked about the effectiveness of school leaders 5.1 % were “Not Satisfied,” 12.8% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 48.7% were “Satisfied,” 28.2% reported being “Very Satisfied,” and 5.1% were “Extremely Satisfied.” Similar response scatter was evident when teachers were asked about their support by school leaders in which 2.5% were “Not Satisfied,” 12.8% reported to be “Somewhat Satisfied,” 23% were “Satisfied,” 46.1% were “Very Satisfied,” and 15.3% reported being “Extremely Satisfied.”

Responses from this portion of the survey indicated that participants were most satisfied with their a) education and ability to teach assigned classes, b) effectiveness with students, and c) freedom to teach the way they wanted. Participants were least

satisfied with the leadership in the institution, although they reported being more satisfied with the support of leaders than actual leadership effectiveness.

The Importance of Benefits

Assessing the importance of benefits is an essential part of understanding compensation in the independent school as benefits are factored in as part of the overall compensation package. Section 3, Question 3 of the survey asked how important the selected benefits were to teachers. The most significant issues were highlighted from the survey to illustrate the opinions of the majority of participants. The actual survey invited participants to respond to the importance of 21 benefits which are offered by many independent schools. The researcher found that 11 of these benefits emerged as priority items to this particular population of respondents and reflected the opinion of the majority. While some of the other benefits like time off, financial planning assistance, legal assistance, and tuition remission for faculty children received interest, they did not obtain the same levels of interest throughout the surveyed groups. The benefits which received unequally distributed responses among the groups would be of greater interest if there were more respondents from the 0-3 and 4-6 groups. The information from the disaggregated data would inform administrators about the differentiated needs of the groups based on years of experience.

When the data was compiled from all of the respondents, 11 benefits emerged as significant. When asked about the importance of these benefits, the respondents were asked to rate each one with the following scale 1=Not Important (NI), 2=Somewhat Important (SI), 3=Important (I), 4=Very Important (VI), 5= Extremely Important (EI), and Not Applicable (N/A). The results of this question are illustrated on Table 4.3.

Table 4.3—*Survey responses on the importance of benefits; Section 3, Question 3*

	1=NI	2=SI	3=I	4= VI	5=EI	N/A
Employer paid health insurance for employees	(1)2.56%	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(35)89.74%	(1)2.56%
Health care benefits for dependents	(4)10.26%	(1)2.56%	(2)5.13%	(4)10.26%	(22)56.41%	(6)15.38%
Tuition reimbursement for faculty	(3)7.69%	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(9)23.08%	(24)61.54%	(2)5.13%
Employer contributions to retirement plan	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(4)10.26%	(35)89.74%	(0)0.00%
Dental insurance	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(2)5.13%	(14)35.90%	(20)51.28%	(2)5.13%
Life insurance	(0)0.00%	(4)10.26%	(3)7.69%	(9)23.08%	(22)56.41%	(1)2.56%
Financial planning assistance	(6)15.38%	(1)2.56%	(6)15.38%	(8)20.51%	(16)41.03%	(2)5.13%
Sabbaticals	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(8)20.51%	(12)30.77%	(16)41.03%	(3)7.69%
Financial aid for faculty children	(5)13.16%	(1)2.63%	(5)13.16%	(5)13.16%	(19)50.00%	(3)7.69%
Flexible benefits program to allow faculty to set aside pre-tax income	(1)2.63%	(2)5.26%	(7)18.42%	(6)15.79%	(21)55.26%	(1)2.63%
Professional development opportunities	(0)0.00%	(2)5.13%	(3)7.69%	(7)17.95%	(27)69.23%	(0)0.00%

As indicated in Table 4.3, the most highly valued benefit was the employer contribution to retirement in which 10.2% selected it as “Very Important” but 89.7% found it to be “Extremely Important.” Respondents selected employer paid health

insurance as a valued benefit with one person (2.56%) selecting this benefit as “Very Important” while 89.7% categorized it as “Extremely Important.” This was rated as the second most highly valued benefit in this portion of the survey. Dental insurance was also of great value as indicated in Table 4.3 showing that 87.1% viewed it as “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.”

Of the remaining benefits from this portion of the survey, tuition reimbursement for faculty was noted by 84.5% of the participants as “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.” Professional development opportunities were also considered a significant benefit with 87.1% indicating that it was either “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.” A flexible benefit program, which sets aside pre-tax dollars, was highly valued by 72% of the participants while sabbaticals were also valued by 71.8%. The responses were inconsistent for a) financial planning assistance, b) health care benefits for dependents, and c) financial aid for faculty children.

As reported on Table 4.3, the benefits that the respondents from this study valued the most were a) employer contributions to a retirement plan, b) employer paid health benefits, c) dental insurance, d) professional development opportunities, and e) tuition reimbursement for faculty.

Participant Satisfaction with Benefits

In the prior section, teachers were surveyed to assess which benefits were most important to them. The selection of benefits was originally compiled by NAIS (Booth, 2007) in an effort to reflect the offerings by the various independent schools. Participants highly valued most benefits offered however; there were some benefits which received “Not Applicable” indicating that not every category applied to all of the participants. The

benefits might not be universally applicable because of the type of school or the differentiated needs of the participant ages. This was also an important factor in the analysis of teacher satisfaction with the benefits.

Section 4, Question 4 was used to analyze participant satisfaction with the benefits offered by their institution. Twenty-one benefits were presented and participants were asked to rate their satisfaction using 1=Not Satisfied (NS), 2=Somewhat Satisfied (SS), 3=Satisfied (S), 4=Extremely Satisfied (ES), and Not Applicable (N/A). Again, 11 factors were extracted to reflect the importance that participants placed on those specific benefits.

It should be noted that the original survey removed one category in the rating system of respondent satisfaction implicating that there was no direct corollary between importance of benefits and satisfaction of those benefits. Respondents had to select from the categories displayed in the survey by choosing either 3=Satisfied or 4=Extremely Satisfied. “Very Satisfied” was not an option and therefore compromised the data as it did not clearly reflect the levels of participant satisfaction with the associated benefits.

The researcher selected the same 11 benefits contained in Table 4.3 because of their level of importance to the participants and to maintain consistency. Participant satisfaction with those benefits is contained in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4—*Survey responses on the satisfaction of benefits; Section 4, Question 4*

	1=NS	2=SS	3=S	4=ES	N/A
Employer-paid health insurance for employees	(2)5.13%	(6)15.38%	(11)28.21%	(18)46.15%	(2)5.13%
Health care benefits for dependents	(6)15.38%	(7)17.95%	(9)23.08%	(8)20.51%	(9)23.08%
Tuition reimbursement for faculty	(6)15.38%	(11)28.21%	(15)38.46%	(3)7.69%	(4)10.26%
Employer contributions to retirement plan	(2)5.13%	(7)17.95%	(16)41.03%	(14)35.90%	(0)0.00%
Dental insurance	(1)2.56%	(5)12.82%	(15)38.46%	(16)41.03%	(2)5.13%
Life insurance	(1)2.56%	(3)7.89%	(20)52.63%	(10)26.32%	(4)10.53%
Financial planning assistance	(3)7.69%	(8)20.51%	(9)23.08%	(3)7.69%	(16)41.03%
Sabbaticals	(3)7.69%	(7)17.95%	(14)35.90%	(9)23.08%	(6)15.38%
Financial aid for faculty children	(4)11.76%	(8)23.53%	(8)23.53%	(0)0.00%	(14)41.18%
Flexible benefits program to set aside pre-tax income	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(19)48.72%	(8)20.51%	(11)28.21%
Professional development opportunities	(9)23.08%	(8)20.51%	(15)38.46%	(7)17.95%	(0)0.00%

An analysis of data revealed that while 10.2% of the respondents found employer contributions to their retirement plan “Very Important” and 89.7% declared that this benefit was “Extremely Important,” only 35.9% were “Extremely Satisfied” with this benefit, while 41% noted that they were merely “Satisfied” as reported in Table 4.4. The second most important benefit category for respondents was employee paid health insurance in which 89.7% found this to be “Extremely Important.” Participants reported more satisfaction with this benefit indicating that 28.2% were “Satisfied” and 46.1% were “Extremely Satisfied.” Another benefit marked as highly valued was dental insurance with 51.2% of the respondents indicating that this was “Extremely Important” to them yet, only 41% were “Extremely Satisfied” with the actual benefit. Although there was no direct corollary in satisfaction with 4=Very Important, it should be noted that 38.4% of the participants were “Satisfied” with this benefit.

The other two relatively important benefits to the respondents showed some scattered results indicating that although they were rated as highly important to them, there was mixed satisfaction. The section on tuition reimbursement indicated that 15.3% were “Not Satisfied,” 28.2% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 38.4% were “Satisfied,” and 7.6% were “Extremely Satisfied.” It should be noted that this benefit did not apply to 10.2% of the respondents who participated in this study who marked “N/A.” Professional development was rated as another area of importance to the respondents; yet again, there was discernable response scatter in satisfaction. Responses indicated that 23% were “Not Satisfied,” 20.5% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 38.4% were “Satisfied,” and 17.9% were “Extremely Satisfied.”

The responses to the life insurance benefit indicated that the majority, 52.6% of the respondents, were “Satisfied.” The other benefits showed response scatter and also some high numbers in the “N/A” column indicating that these benefits either were not high priorities or were not applicable to most participants.

The Importance of Compensation

In this portion of the survey, Section 6, Question 7, participants were asked to respond to questions regarding compensation using the scale 1=Not Important (NI) to 5=Extremely Important (EI). All four of the questions in the original survey were included because of their relative importance to all of the participants. Participants were asked to rate the importance of several criteria relative to their salary. Table 4.5 displays the questions and responses to this portion of the survey.

Table 4.5 *Survey responses on importance of compensation, Section 6, Question 7*

	1=NI	2= SI	3=I	4= VI	5=EI	N/A
Salary comparable to local independent school salaries	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(5)12.82%	(32)82.05%	(0)0.00%
Salary comparable to local public school salaries	(2)5.13%	(3)7.69%	(3)7.69%	(17)43.59%	(14)35.90%	(0)0.00%
Salary comparable to local salaries in general	(1)2.56%	(3)7.69%	(6)15.38%	(14)35.90%	(15)38.46%	(0)0.00%
Salaries can be supplemented during summer through school employment opportunities	(2)5.13%	(2)5.13%	(4)10.26%	(8)20.51%	(23)58.97%	(0)0.00%

When asked about the importance of a teacher's salary being comparable to other local independent schools, 94.8% of the respondents indicated that this was either "Very Important" or "Extremely Important." Although having comparable salaries to the local schools was not as important as being competitive with the other independent schools, 79.4% of the respondents indicated that it was either "Very Important" or "Extremely Important." Respondents indicated that 74.3% thought that it was "Very Important" or "Extremely Important" to have salaries that were competitive with the local salaries in general. When asked about opportunities to supplement one's income at their place of employment during the summer months, 79.4% responded that it was "Very Important" or "Extremely Important."

This category was particularly interesting as it utilized specific criteria in an effort to establish a benchmark for creating salaries in the independent schools. Participants were given the opportunity to respond to outside comparative standards which were most important to them. This question provides concrete information regarding the most significant outside influences on teacher's salaries.

Participant Satisfaction with Compensation

Participants were given the same questions using the equivalent scale to assess their satisfaction with compensation regarding the four outside standards. Table 4.6 illustrates participant responses from Section 6, Question 8.

Table 4.6— *Survey responses on satisfaction of compensation; Section 6, Question 8*

	1=NS	2=SS	3=S	4=VS	5=ES	N/A
Salary comparable to local independent school salaries	(4)10.26%	(3)7.69%	(6)15.38%	(22)56.41%	(4)10.26%	(0)0.00%
Salary comparable to local public school salaries	(15)38.46%	(7)17.95%	(9)23.08%	(4)10.26%	(2)5.13%	(2)5.13%
Salary comparable to local salaries in general	(8)20.51%	(11)28.21%	(12)30.77%	(4)10.26%	(2)5.13%	(2)5.13%
Salaries can be supplemented during summer through school employment opportunities	(4)10.26%	(4)10.2%	(6)15.38%	(14)35.90%	(7)17.95%	(4)10.26%

The participant responses display a range in satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the areas associated with salary. Responses to the question about satisfaction with salaries being comparable to local independent schools indicated that 10.2% were “Not Satisfied,” 7.6% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 15.3% were “Satisfied,” 56.4% were “Very Satisfied,” and 10.2% were “Extremely Satisfied.” In comparing salaries to the local public schools there was a range of satisfaction with 38.4% responding that they were “Not Satisfied,” 17.9% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 23% were “Satisfied,” 10% were “Very Satisfied,” and 10.2% were “Extremely Satisfied.” Although 79.3% of the participants responded that having a salary competitive with local salaries in general was important, the relative satisfaction in this area was scattered. Participants valued having a way to supplement their salary during the summer with 79.4% indicating that this was “Very Important” or “Extremely Important,” however when participants were asked

about their satisfaction in this area, only 53.8% were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.”

The Importance of the Work Environment

Research on organizational culture has surfaced as a critical component of the work environment and has the potential to influence how an employee perceives his or her job. Establishing work and life balance can be influenced by the culture of an institution and is a vital part of the work environment. The culture of an organization can also influence class sizes, safety, rooms and supplies, diversity within the community, as well as a teacher’s interactions with parents and students. These aspects of the work environment are highly reflective of independent school culture and tend to be valued by independent school teachers. It was anticipated that the participants would find many of these factors important; however, participant ratings on satisfaction in these areas has the potential to impact teacher retention.

Participants were asked to respond to 13 questions from Section 7, Question 9. The researcher extracted 11 questions which were relevant to the participants and displayed the least response scatter. Elements of the work environment not included in the following Table were questions regarding teacher housing. Table 4.7 illustrates the responses to questions about the work environment and displays how much value teachers place on the following factors.

Table 4.7—*The importance of the work environment; Section 7, Question 9*

	1=NI	2= SI	3=I	4= VI	5=EI	N/A
Being able to balance work with my personal life	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(13)33.33%	(25)64.10%	(0)0.00%
Positive interactions with parents	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(8)20.51%	(30)76.92%	(0)0.00%
Positive interactions with students	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(3)7.69%	(35)89.74%	(0)0.00%
Safe work environment	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(4)10.26%	(35)89.74%	(0)0.00%
Manageable class sizes	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(5)12.82%	(34)87.18%	(0)0.00%
Engaged students	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(7)17.95%	(32)82.05%	(0)0.0%
My teaching style is a good match with my school's culture	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(8)20.51%	(31)79.49%	(0)0.00%
Adequate room, supplies, and equipment	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(11)28.21%	(27)69.23%	(0)0.00%
Diverse faculty	(1)2.63%	(0)0.00%	(7)18.42%	(14)36.84%	(16)42.11%	(0)0.00%
Diverse student body	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(8)20.51%	(13)33.33%	(16)41.03%	(1)2.56%
A community that has people like me	(2)5.13%	(3)7.69%	(6)15.38%	(15)38.46%	(12)30.77%	(1)2.56%

Participants responded to almost all aspects of the work environment indicating that the factors presented were considered either “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.” The most highly valued factors of the work environment included work and

life balance which 97.4% of the participants cited as being “Very Important” or “Extremely Important” to them. Having positive interactions with parents was also highly valued by 97.4% of the participants. Teachers cited that interactions with students were also valued with 97.4% responding that this was “Very Important” or “Extremely Important” to them. Having adequate room, supplies, and equipment was also valued by 97.4% of the participants who cited that these factors were “Very Important” or “Extremely Important” to them. The three most highly valued aspects of the work environment were safety, manageable class sizes, and engaged students. One hundred percent of the participants cited all three of these factors as being either “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.”

The questions regarding diversity of students and faculty generated responses that ranged from “Important” to “Extremely Important.” When asked about the importance of having a diverse faculty, 78.9% of the participants cited this as being “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.” Responses tabulated with regard to the importance of having a diverse student body showed that 74.3% considered that this was either “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.” When participants were asked to respond to the question regarding having a community which is reflective of the individual participant, 69.2% said that it was “Very Important” or “Extremely Important.”

Participant Satisfaction with the Work Environment

Participants were directed to Section 8, Question 10 of the survey to determine how satisfied they were with their work environment by using the same scale as Question 9. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions. Results are displayed on Table 4.8

Table 4.8—*Satisfaction with the work environment; Section 8, Question 9*

	1=NS	2= SS	3=S	4= VS	5=ES	N/A
Being able to balance work with my personal life	(2)5.13%	(5)12.82%	(17)43.59%	(9)23.08%	(6)15.38%	(0)0.00%
Positive interactions with parents	(0)0.00%	(4)10.26%	(5)12.82%	(18)46.15%	(12)30.77%	(0)0.00%
Positive interactions with students	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(4)10.26%	(12)30.77%	(23)58.97%	(0)0.00%
Safe work environment	(0)0.00%	(0)0.00%	(2)5.26%	(9)23.68%	(27)71.05%	(0)0.00%
Manageable class sizes	(1)2.63%	(0)0.00%	(2)5.26%	(8)21.05%	(27)71.05%	(0)0.00%
Engaged students	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%	(6)15.38%	(11)28.21%	(21)53.85%	(0)0.00%
My teaching style is a good match with my school's culture	(0)0.00%	(1)2.56%	(6)15.38%	(11)28.21%	(21)53.85%	(0)0.00%
Adequate room, supplies, and equipment	(2)5.13%	(0)0.00%	(8)20.51%	(13)33.33%	(16)41.03%	(0)0.00%
Diverse faculty	(6)15.38%	(2)5.13%	(16)41.03%	(12)30.77%	(3)7.69%	(0)0.00%
Diverse student body	(2)5.26%	(2)5.26%	(16)42.11%	(13)34.21%	(4)10.53%	(1)2.63%
A community that has people like me	(2)5.13%	(1)2.56%	(9)23.08%	(18)46.15%	(7)17.95%	(2)5.13%

The most satisfying factor to these respondents as exhibited in Table 4.8 was the safe work environment which showed that 94.7% expressed that they were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.” Another factor garnering high levels of satisfaction

was the manageable class sizes in which 92.1% of the respondents declared that they were “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.” Teachers were also pleased with their teaching style being a good match for the school as well as their positive interactions with the students, and overall student engagement. Eighty-two percent responded that they were either “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with this factor of the work environment. There was some response scatter when asked about positive interactions with parents with 76.2% noting that they were either “Very Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” with this aspect of the work environment.

The two questions about diversity elicited some response scatter but the majority in both cases stated that they were “Satisfied.” When asked about diversity of the faculty 15.3% responded that they were “Not Satisfied,” 5.1% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 41% were “Satisfied,” 30.7% declared that they were “Very Satisfied,” and 7.6% were “Extremely Satisfied.” When asked about the diversity of the student body 5.2% were “Not Satisfied,” 5.2% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 42.1 % were “Satisfied,” 34.2% confirmed that they were “Very Satisfied,” and 10.5% reported being “Extremely Satisfied.” Having a community with members who were similar to the individual participants elicited responses which stated that 5.2% were “Not Satisfied,” 2.5% were “Somewhat Satisfied,” 23% were “Satisfied,” 46.1% responded that they were “Very Satisfied,” 17.9% reported that they were “Extremely Satisfied,” and 5.1% responded that this question was not applicable to them.

There was also some response scatter in the area of work and life balance; 5.1% were not satisfied, 12.8% reported that they were “Somewhat Satisfied” with their ability to achieve it while 43.5% responded that they were “Satisfied,” 23% reported that they

were “Very Satisfied,” and 15.3% stated that they were “Extremely Satisfied.” In this area of the survey, 97.4% found work and life balance to be highly important to them but the results were scattered on their ability to achieve it.

Preparing and Retaining New Teachers

Examining how teachers enter an institution is critical to understanding its culture. The final section of the survey required that the participants respond to the manner in which the school prepared and retained its teachers. Data from the disaggregated groups could potentially inform institutional practices as it might identify important information especially from the newest teachers in the 0-3 group. The lack of participation from this group prevents the researcher from obtaining significant data on the 0-3 participants to be used to inform the mentoring and induction program.

In Section 9, Question 13, participants were asked to respond to ten school practices from which the researcher focused on six items for analysis. Using the scale 1=Not Well at All (NWAA), 2= To Some Extent (TSE), 3= Adequately (A), 4=Very Well (VW), 5=Extremely Well (EW), and Not Applicable (N/A), participants responded to school practices which included a) induction, b) mentoring, c) communication, d) the dissemination of curriculum and materials, and e) in-service training. Data from this segment of the survey is displayed in Table 4.9 and indicated some survey response scatter in almost all of the categories.

Table 4.9—*Responses on preparing and retaining new teachers; Section 9, Question 13*

	1=NWAA	2=TSE	3=A	4=VW	5=EW	N/A
Induction program to teach new faculty about the school's culture, academic and nonacademic programs, and administrative procedures	(2)5.13%	(16)41.03%	(15)38.46%	(5)12.82%	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%
Opportunities for new teachers to meet their colleagues and parents	(4)10.26%	(10)25.64%	(12)30.77%	(9)23.08%	(4)10.26%	(0)0.00%
Department heads and coteachers communicate regularly with new teachers	(3)7.69%	(8)20.51%	(10)25.64%	(10)25.64%	(6)15.38%	(2)5.13%
Curriculum materials and/or curriculum maps are provided to new teachers	(16)41.03%	(9)23.08%	(8)20.51%	(5)12.82%	(1)2.56%	(0)0.00%
Mentoring or buddy-system where new teachers are partnered with experienced teachers	(1)2.56%	(11)28.21%	(10)25.64%	(12)30.77%	(5)12.82%	(0)0.00%
In-service training for new teachers on topics such as evaluations, parent meetings, etc.	(7)17.95%	(12)30.77%	(9)23.08%	(7)17.95%	(3)7.69%	(1)2.56%

Teachers were asked to respond to how well the school implements a new teacher induction program to provide new employees with information regarding the school's a) culture, b) programming, and c) administrative procedures. The data indicated disparate responses on the effectiveness of these practices with 41% stating that the school did this

“To Some Extent,” 38.4% said “Adequately,” 12.8% responded “Very Well,” and 2.56% responded that this was implemented “Extremely Well.” Opportunities to meet colleagues received even more of a response distribution indicating that 10.2% reported “Not Well at All,” 25.6% said “To Some Extent,” 30.7% responded “Adequately,” 23% said “Very Well,” and 10.2% stated that the school did this “Extremely Well.”

Department Heads and co-teachers have the potential to impact new teachers through regular communication and while 41% of the respondents reported that this was executed either “Very Well” or “Extremely Well,” 25.6% thought that this interaction was “Adequate,” 20.5% thought that the school did this “To Some Extent,” and 7.6% responded that the school did not perform well in this area. The question on curriculum materials and mapping elicited responses showing that 64.1% responded that this process was performed “Not Well at All” or “To Some Extent,” 20.5% replied that it was “Adequate,” 12.8% stated that it was executed “Very Well,” while 2.5% noted that it was implemented “Extremely Well.”

Mentoring and buddy systems were also measured by this survey with 28.2% stating that the school did this “To Some Extent,” 23% said that the school did this “Adequately,” and 17.9% allowed that the school did this “Very Well” with an additional 12.8% stating that this was done “Extremely Well.” Providing in-service training for new teachers received similar disparate responses with 17.9% stating that the school did “Not (do this) Well at All,” 30.7% stated that this training was done “To Some Extent,” 23% said that it was “Adequately” performed, a lower percentage, 17.9%, stated that that it was “Very Well” done and only 7.6% thought it was performed “Extremely Well.”

Analyzing disaggregated data from the various groups on the preparation and retention of teachers would be very useful particularly in this area which is so critical. Unfortunately, the number of participants in the 0-3 and 4-6 ranges were insufficient and therefore a comparison of these groups would not yield meaningful information.

Open-Ended Questions

The open-ended questions contained in this survey strengthened internal validity and reliability while emphasizing the key issues relating to teacher satisfaction. Open-ended questions were offered to clarify or highlight important factors of satisfaction in three areas of the survey; a) benefits, b) work environment, and c) preparing and retaining new teachers.

Several participants from the 4-6 and the 10+ groups commented on the number of personal days currently available to teachers. Participants from both groups suggested that the school offer more than one personal day per year. Suggestions from these groups also included additional healthcare and retirement benefits or increasing contributions by the school to benefits that are currently offered. A recommendation from a member of the 7-9 group offered that long term care insurance might be added for a better benefits package. It was also suggested that the independent schools create retirement packages comparable to the public schools as there is a significant disparity in this particular benefit.

Respondents also commented on benefits which might not be part of a traditional benefits package. Non-traditional benefits like sabbaticals or other incentives might be utilized to increase commitment and reward dedication and loyalty to the school.

Questions 11 and 12 inquired about aspects of the work and community environment which have an impact on teacher satisfaction at this particular school. Leadership appeared numerous times in the written responses throughout the various groups. Each group mentioned administration and the impact that it has on teacher job satisfaction. Many participants specifically noted that feeling supported and appreciated by the administration was very important to them and receiving positive reinforcement was highly valued. Increased professional interaction was an important factor to several respondents. It was also noted that having administrative support when difficult interactions occur with parents is highly appreciated.

Clear evaluation procedures as well as effective and positive communication were aspects of the work and community environment which had not been mentioned in the survey. Members from the 10+ group also stated that mentoring was extremely important. A member of this group mentioned that it was important to have “a mentoring or development program to assist teachers in planning their careers over the long term. Clear cut goals for the development of what it means to be a master teacher, for example, and more opportunities to achieve and to lead.” A member of the 7-9 group mentioned promotion from within and stated that succession planning was very valuable due to its impact on institutional commitment. Instituting and sustaining transparent evaluation procedures were also mentioned as important components to planning a teacher’s career and establishing professional focus within the institution. Recognition was a common theme and one participant noted that it “was important to be recognized for additional certifications and professional accomplishments.”

A participant from the 4-6 group made several observations about the work environment which included comments about time management. Examples of this statement included ill-planned assemblies, field trips and other activities that never end on time and impact important class instruction. A comment from the 10 + group stated that there “is little time for collegial meetings to discuss curriculum and specific student needs.” There is “not enough appropriate/curriculum related in-service time.” Time management was a theme in several of the written responses citing that teachers are often asked to fill-in for other teachers. As a member from the 4-6 group noted, “We should not be expected to fill-in for other teachers without compensation. It demeans the value of our time and discourages teachers from staying home when needed as it burdens our fellow teachers.” Yet, a member of the 7-9 group stated that there is an inability in this environment for colleagues to step out of their job description to help co-workers.

There was a common theme throughout the written comments from all groups regarding colleagues and collegial relationships. Some of the written comments included that having supportive colleagues was very important but there was not enough time to engage in professional discourse. Engaging in activities with colleagues was also very rewarding but respondents found that this was difficult to achieve.

The survey was designed to gather important data in many different areas of a teacher’s professional life but it also incorporated questions regarding the career paths of the participants. Section 10, Questions 16 through 19 addressed the career paths of the individuals. Question 16 asked about having a mentor during the first year of teaching at this school; 58.9% responded that they had had a mentor as part of a formal arrangement, 17.9% responded that it was part of an informal arrangement, and 23% responded that

they did not have a mentor. It should be noted that the latter was from the 10+ group as revealed when the data was disaggregated.

When asked about having job offers from both independent and public schools in Question 17, 66.6% of the participants responded that they had received job offers from both the independent and public school sectors while 33.3% had been offered jobs only from independent schools. Question 18 asked respondents about the types of schools in which they had taught. Replies to this question indicated that 41% had taught only in independent schools, 46.1% had taught in public, 5.1% had taught in other schools which included Head Start, religious, and college. Three respondents chose not to reply to this question.

Prior job offers and previous employment was a vital aspect of this study as it showed that the majority of teachers have the qualifications to teach in other types of institutions or have other career options. Responses also indicated that teachers may not be committed to either public or independent education and could potentially choose a job based on the work environment, culture, compensation, or benefits. Participants had the qualifications to migrate to other educational institutions or seek other careers, which is an important factor when considering satisfaction and retention.

The reasons that these teachers chose to work in the independent schools was covered in Section 10, Question 19 using 11 preselected factors and offering an opportunity for respondents to write their own thoughts. Each participant had the opportunity to select all of the factors which influenced his or her decision to work at an independent school. These factors are displayed on Table 4.10.

Table 4.10—Your Career Path; Section 10, Question 19

Why do you choose to teach in an independent school instead of a public school?	Combined Groups
Independent school students are more engaged	58.97%
Independent school parents are more involved in the school community	35.89%
Smaller class size	82.00%
More autonomy in the classroom	64.10%
Safer school environment	38.46%
Less red tape	53.80%
Don't have to teach to the test	69.23%
Better support from school leaders	12.80%
Better support from teacher colleagues	12.80%
Better room, supplies, equipment and support services	35.89%
Better work/life balance	35.89%

Table 4.10 illustrates that 82% of the participants strongly valued the small class sizes in the independent schools. Not having to teach to the test and autonomy in the classroom were also highly valued and served as attractors to the independent school. Another factor which was highly valued by 58.9% of the participants was that students at the independent schools are more engaged.

Toward the end of the survey, critical information was gathered through open-ended responses regarding what teachers liked best about working in an independent school and what they liked least. The 0-3 group stated that small class sizes, engaged students and freedom to teach in one's own style were positive elements of the

independent school. However, “helicopter parents,” or those parents who were considered as over protective and hovered too closely inhibiting the growth and independence of their children, and highly stressed students, were determined to be the two factors that this group liked least. The 4-6 group listed small class sizes, freedom to teach in one’s own style, the lack of real discipline problems, and flexibility in planning the day as factors that they liked the most, but similar to the responses from the 0-3 group “helicopter parents” and stressed students were what they liked least. Negative factors cited by this group also included “embarrassingly low salaries” as well as “public schools have better job protection.” Respondents also mentioned “the individual salary negotiations and arrangements” that one must make due to the lack of a salary scale.

Three respondents from the 7-9 group reported that they liked the small class sizes and their interactions with students. Persons also mentioned autonomy in teaching, alignment of mission and practice, pleasant working environment, and money for supplies and trips as positive attributes to working in the independent schools. Negative factors mentioned were that it was more stressful than public school, there was no dean of faculty or assistant heads at any level, too much board and parental control, and lack of union protection to address unfair practices. Additionally, participants from all of the groups noted that they had experienced broken trust with administrators, that preferential treatment of employees existed at the institution, that they would have better protection at public schools, and that the pay was too low.

In the 10+ group, individuals liked the vacation time, creating a safe environment for students, the alignment of mission and practice, the quality of life, the mental stimulation of the environment, and the camaraderie of colleagues. The most frequently

mentioned items of satisfaction listed in order of frequency of recurring responses were class size, student/teacher ratio, relationships with students, strong sense of community and values, autonomy in teaching, and the caliber of and collaboration with colleagues. The teachers were also satisfied with the students who were engaged and intellectually curious, and that they did not have to deal with governmental bureaucracy. When asked what teachers liked least, this group overwhelmingly cited low salary. Other factors which were mentioned more than twice in written responses were student and parent entitlement and preferential treatment of some employees. A selection of other factors mentioned included lack of compensation when working on weekend admission days, no merit increases or transparent pay scales, the lack of sufficient professional development money, and the lack of a good pension. Participants in this group also mentioned the long hours, increased work-load and decreased prep-time, and poor communication between teachers and administrators as factors they liked least. Teachers also noted that there was no suitable curricular framework, no measurable goals and consistent expectations of faculty, lack of contact with peers in other schools, lack of union to address unfair practices. Participants also noted on-going concerns about student enrollment and job security.

Participants were clear about what they valued in the independent schools. Teachers enjoyed small class sizes, the engagement of the students, autonomy, and not having to teach to the test. However, throughout the groups, teachers also noted the factors that contributed to dissatisfaction. Participants cited the lack of internal communication with administration, overbearing parents, and salary issues as negative factors. While some participants noted the pleasant working environment others cited the

independent schools as more stressful than public. Stress is an important factor in education and was mentioned in various areas of this study. Institutional attention to stress is critical because of the impact that it can have on the various segments of the community.

Planning for the Future

The survey offered questions to the participants to inquire about their future plans which are displayed in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11—About You; Section 12, Question 24

What would you like to be doing in five years?	Combined Groups
Working in the job you currently hold	53.84%
In another teaching job in independent education	2.56%
In an administrative position in education	10.25%
In public education	7.69%
In a job outside of education	2.56%
Retired/not working	10.25%
Other (Please specify)	12.82%

As illustrated in Table 4.11, 53.8% would like to be working in the job they currently hold; however, 46.1% have different aspirations. Two participants mentioned that they would like to be working on doctoral degrees while another participant noted, “I would like to be healthy and happy. If that takes me elsewhere, so be it.” Another participant mentioned raising a family or working part-time.

Survey Section 13, Question 25 addressed the reasons a teacher might leave independent education other than for retirement. One of the participants noted that there was “too little money/benefits,” while another mentioned, “I would like more money to support my family.” Participants in the 7-9 group cited low pay as a reason for leaving independent education. One of the comments from the 7-9 group stated that, “Public education pays more money, has better benefits...and better on-going training for staff.” Two other comments from this group also mentioned the low salaries and lack of support.

In an effort to get a more global picture of the teaching profession, Question 26 of the survey asked participants when they planned to leave teaching or retire. Data indicated that 15.3% said five years or less, 25.6% said six to ten years, 43.5% said more than ten years, and 15.3% did not know.

In conclusion, the survey provided a plethora of information regarding what teachers value in their profession and how satisfied they are with their current job situation. Written responses offered the opportunity for teachers to expand on what they find satisfying in their jobs and what is dissatisfying to them. This is particularly critical as 53.8% of the participants from this survey cited that they would like to stay in the same job for the next five years. While some turnover in a school is healthy it is important to examine through discussion some of the issues facing teachers. The final phase of data collection revealed information which was gathered from discussion groups comprised of participants who were stratified by years of experience. Focus group discussions highlighted specific factors which were important to the individual groups and provided more robust information. Data was triangulated in an effort to further

analyze what teachers find most rewarding in their profession and the factors that might impact their satisfaction.

Part II- Focus Groups

The focus groups in Part II of this study were structured by using the consent form which was embedded at the bottom of the explanation of the study and was available to all 87 teachers at this study site. The signed permission form disclosed the number of years of experience for each participant. The focus groups were comprised of 22 participants or 25.2% of the full-time faculty. Although the original intent was to divide the participants into a) 0-3, b) 4-6, c) 7-9, and d) 10+ years of experience according to the structure of the NAIS survey it was essential, due to low response numbers in the 0-3 category, to restructure the focus groups into larger groupings a) 0-9, b) 10-19, c) 20+ years. This modification reflected the number of participants needed for a sound qualitative study. Each focus group met after school on different days to discuss the researcher questions. Seven teachers participated in the 0-9 group, seven participated in the 10-19 group, and eight participated in the 20+ group. A digital recorder was used to supplement the researcher notes to increase reliability.

Focus Group Discussions

Research Question 1: What aspects of your job give you the greatest level of satisfaction?

Participants from the 0-9 group offered that affirmation from administration and colleagues was very important to them and resulted in satisfaction. “When an administrator is appreciative, I would do anything,” stated a participant. Other members concurred stating that feeling valued and appreciated was very satisfying and had the power to be very motivating.

Respondents from all three groups noted that they received the most satisfaction and joy from their work with the students. They discussed working one-on-one with the students noting that the small setting had the potential to be nurturing for both the students and teachers. A member of the 10-19 group stated, “I like working with the students and I enjoy watching their growth and development. This makes me content in my job.” Teachers also spoke of their great satisfaction in watching student progress as they achieve various levels of independence. “I like when students get something and all of the pieces fall into place; the ah-ha moments.” Participants from the 10-19 group discussed the development of lasting relationships with students and their parents. A member of that group mentioned, “It’s a different experience each and every day; there is a beginning and a distinct ending in this job. Each year is different as you begin a new cycle.”

Teachers in all groups noted that they enjoyed the flexibility in teaching the curriculum which allowed creativity, and the ability to self-generate projects and new initiatives. A participant from the 20+ group noted the freedom to do one’s “own thing” and the satisfaction derived from working together with colleagues. Collegial support was mentioned and discussed in all three groups. A member of the 10-19 group stated, “I enjoy the social part of school; working with my colleagues and developing friendships.” The 20+ group also mentioned the good culture as a factor influencing their satisfaction.

Research Question 2: Which of these aspects do you feel has lead to your continued interest in working at this school?

Teachers in all three groups mentioned working one-on-one or in small groups with the students. Participants also mentioned the commitment of the students and the

strong bonds that develop. “When students graduate, it’s a source of pride and celebration for the entire community.” The quality of the student body keeps some teachers from looking elsewhere and participants stated that it made the job more enjoyable. Also mentioned as a positive factor was not “teaching to the test” and the subsequent flexibility of creating and implementing the curriculum. The support and interaction of colleagues were also mentioned as reasons for sustained interest in the school.

Research Question 3: What aspects of your employment give you the greatest level of dissatisfaction?

The factors which lead to the greatest levels of dissatisfaction were rather extensive in all three groups. Lack of communication was mentioned as a factor which was very dissatisfying to most members of all three groups. Change was a factor with members mentioning new administrators, change for change sake, and the damage to institutional memory. Participants in the 0-9 group revealed there is a lack of administrator presence in specific divisions of the school and the lack of “guidance and vision” by administrators. Members of the 0-9 group were also frustrated by not knowing administrator focus or priorities. Teachers in this group relied primarily on their departments citing that the “departmental meetings are well run. We are carefully mentored but the division is hay-wire so I prefer to rely on the department for continuity.” Another teacher mentioned, “The department is really where you live. It’s convoluted and murky within the division.” “Departmental leadership has changed so that it’s often difficult to know who is in charge and who is driving the boat,” was stated by another participant who noted change in many aspects of the environment. This group also mentioned trying to find out “where they fit” and the uneasy feeling of “instability.”

The 0-9 group raised the issue of mentoring which, to them, was more social than practical and was not particularly helpful. Teachers often turned to their individual departments for information and guidance.

The topic of leadership was cited as having a tremendous impact on the culture and the environment. The 10-19 group cited issues with the “lack of understanding and appreciation by administrators.” Without a grievance process administrators often labeled teachers as “trouble makers” when discussing difficult issues. Participants discussed the results of not having a teacher advocate or someone to see when a problem was encountered. Members also conversed about the stress level of students but there is never consideration for the stress level of teachers. The lack of administrative respect for teachers and the disconnect between the reality of a teacher’s life and the expectations of the job, was declared as very dissatisfying to the 20+ group. There was discussion regarding the encroachment of bureaucracy within the institution. Issues of dissatisfaction were raised regarding the lack of administrator respect and the number of decisions made without teacher input which demeaned individuals and the teaching profession as a whole.

Time was mentioned as an issue by all of the groups with a participant from the 20+ group mentioning that “technology has invaded a teacher’s life in the classroom; there’s always a sense of immediacy.” It was also noted that parents can more easily “overstep their boundaries” with emails. Group 10-19 remarked that there was no time for reflective practice. Members from the 0-9 group concurred that, “We have plenty of faculty meetings but very little time to sit down as a group and share ideas. There is very

little time to communicate with our colleagues. Faculty meetings aren't always the best use of our time.”

Research Question 4: In what ways do these levels of dissatisfaction impact your level of commitment at the school?

The resounding theme throughout all three groups was the ultimate commitment to the students. Teachers discussed how much they enjoyed the students and speculated that it was this factor that influenced their love of teaching and their ultimate commitment to the school. However, members remarked how they often closed their doors just to teach even though it also had the potential to be socially isolating. Sometimes they felt the need to block out stress and the demands of the job to maintain the appropriate learning environment for their students. The idea of trust with administration surfaced in discussion disclosing that teachers sometimes reconsider their job or career options because of this factor however, they also noted that negative factors of the job did not necessarily influence their satisfaction in their job but it did impact their happiness in their jobs. Teachers noted that they knew the trade-offs associated with working in the independent school, but some factors have forced them to reassess their choices.

Although compensation used to play a smaller role, it is beginning to take a more prominent position because “there are high expectations and nothing gets taken away—just added.” These sentiments were echoed by all three groups with participants from the 20+ group stating that they were “totally committed but very frustrated.” They also stated that the same issues exist in other independent schools and added that it has the potential to erode teacher commitment over time. Teachers in the various groups stated that they

are always asked to do more however, compensation is not always reflective of the increased demands of the job.

Research Question 5: What strategies do you think the school should implement to help identify aspects of teacher satisfaction?

It was recommended by all three of the groups that administration begin to get to know individual teachers. The majority of members from the various groups felt that administrators did not seem to care about what teachers think or feel and suggested that they should “show interest and be a presence; what we do is very hard work.”

Administrators should be the facilitators in teaching and should get to know the teachers and understand what happens in the classrooms. Teachers discussed their general dissatisfaction with appreciation statements directed at all faculty instead of individuals. Global statements did very little toward satisfaction according to all the groups. A member from one of the groups suggested that acknowledgement of good work should be “specific, personal, and timely.”

Members also noted that colleagues in this institution are very high achieving individuals but they are not often asked what they think. It was also stated that having a safe place to vent is important and sharing feelings and using safe dialogue to work through problems would be helpful. It was noted that the public school sector has union representation but the independent school teachers self-advocate which is very challenging for some. Participants recommended teacher representation or a voice from each division to increase administrative awareness of teachers’ ideas and concerns. Developing trust with the administration was deemed very important to the participants

as it would enable employees to share both the positives and negatives. It was important to participants that administrators listen and value employee input.

The 0-9 group mentioned the committees on which many teachers serve were reported as “going nowhere,” which was extremely frustrating and a poor use of teacher time. Some committees were viewed as perfunctory to keep teachers engaged on some level. Consideration of teacher talent and time should be a consideration for administrators.

Research Question 6: Work and life balance is stated by Frone (2003) as a condition that exists when there is “lack of conflict or interference between the work and family roles” (p. 145). Do you have work/life balance? If yes—why? If not—why not?

The topic of work and life balance revealed a variety of responses from the three groups. All members agreed that balance was difficult to achieve as school work is often completed at home. One reason for this was explained by participants as the requirement for teachers to cover each other’s classes and duties when other teachers were sick. This limited teacher free time during the regular working day necessitating that work, such as correcting student work, is completed at home.

Those who had children found that achieving work and life balance was particularly challenging. Faculty meetings were considered by many as poorly planned and prone to run over the time allotted for afternoon meetings. Participants stated that you are a “mother or a father first and worrying keeps you from being fully constructive in the classroom or at meetings.” Another participant stated that, “my husband and I have figured how to make it work but I am heavily weighted towards work. There is constant conflict with after school commitments for the children and adult needs and requests in

the school community. Having one job that paid well would enable me to have better balance but my job at this school necessitates that I supplement my salary.”

Research Question 7: Do you think that work/life balance is important? Why? Why not?

There was general agreement throughout the groups that achieving balance is very important. Some members felt that they have achieved it through exercise, goals, and action plans. Most agreed that it is important to be a healthy role model to one’s family and to the students but recognized that they have not achieved it. “It’s out of reach—time keeps passing and I can’t get it,” remarked a participant from the 20+ group. “Something always seems to be added to the plate and there’s no time for all of it.” Members from this group suggested that work and life balance was difficult to achieve in a school culture in which the employees never says “no.” Teachers from this group mentioned that the school work culture encroached on their summer plans, which impacted work and life balance. Participants from the 20+ group noted that working over the summers had not been part of their historical experience at this institution.

A participant from the 0-9 group stated, “I take a portion of my evening to run, walk or exercise. I’m obsessed with it and won’t give it up. I have to have ‘me’ time.” Another offered that she observes her own rule that she never takes work home. Teachers stated that no one should ever question another teacher’s level of commitment because of the times when teachers have to work at home correcting papers and calling parents. A participant noted that it is mandated that teachers participate in admissions open houses on weekends or asked to participate in afternoon committee meetings. It is disappointing and stressful to teachers when the same courtesy or flexibility is not extended when a

teacher needs an early departure at the end of the day. Members stated that the job was hard and emotionally and physically draining.

The 10-19 group cited that some members think about leaving even though they have a high level of commitment to the school and its students. They noted that work and life balance impacted how well things were done and teachers often forgot their own parameters and limitations. One member stated that “at some point the negatives will begin to outweigh the positives.” While most affirmed that they were tired and frustrated, they also acknowledged that the teaching profession offered summers for spending with one’s children and reasonable working hours, which to most means that they leave between 4:00 and 4:30 pm.

Research Question 8: How do you think that teachers can achieve work/life balance?

Suggestions from the assorted groups reemphasized goals and action plans but also stated that “comp time,” reciprocity, or some flexibility from the school would be helpful. Prevalent themes throughout the discussion with the 0-9 group was feeling appreciated by administration and being seen as a human being. Participants noted that it was important to be heard and valued. They suggested that the school consider succession planning or selecting leaders from within in an effort to retain the institutional memory and encourage the professional growth of employees. Groups were unanimous in their need for feeling valued and respected both personally and professionally. There was an imperative to be respected for the lives they hold both inside and outside of the school. In order to secure optimum gains in student performance, teachers need to be respected more by the administration and the community. Instituting more purposeful and

meaningful mentoring and evaluative practices might assist new teachers while setting them on a path for optimum teaching and strategic professional goals.

Research Question 9: What can institutions do to support teachers in their attempts to obtain work/life balance?

Participants responded that having an advocate was necessary for better administration and teacher communication. It was also mentioned that the administration adhere to the same tenets used with students such as respect, sensitivity, and reinforcement. Simple and basic human considerations would be appreciated by teachers in all of the groups. Suggestions also included more “face time” between faculty and administration so that teachers are known as individuals. It was also recommended that administrators become more present and not stay behind closed doors. Administrators were seen as inaccessible.

Praise should also be balanced and meaningful without using a “global thank you.” Administration should also be aware of what goes on in the classrooms and be more supportive. Compensation should be examined and more flexibility in the schedule should be considered to include more personal days or flex time for teachers who are stretched beyond the normal hours of the day. A substitute coordinator should be appointed to secure teacher substitutes when needed. Participants also suggested that an Assistant Head of School be hired to oversee curriculum development and faculty relations. Members of the 20+ group stated that they were very committed to their students, the community, and the school concluding that teaching is a calling and not just a job. They subsequently reiterated their dedication and affirmed their passion for what they do.

Summary

Data from this research indicated that participants felt that they were effective teachers and well qualified to teach their subjects. They were pleased with their autonomy in the classroom and their ability to make curricular decisions. Teachers valued their interactions with parents and were satisfied with the social support from colleagues. Support of teachers and effectiveness of school leaders were areas showing more disparate responses. Benefits and salary were important to the participants and while teachers were satisfied with most of the benefits, satisfaction with salary compared with independent schools, local public schools, and local salaries indicated some response discrepancies. Participants noted that the work environment was very important to them and they were generally satisfied with most areas. However, diversity, work and life balance, and the preparation and retention of new teachers showed response discrepancies.

Participants initially chose to teach in an independent school primarily for the small class sizes, the autonomy in the classroom, the engaged students, and not having to teach to the test. The environment and culture of the institution had a discernable impact on participant satisfaction as conveyed through the discussion groups. Participants were in general agreement that their ability to build strong and lasting relationships with the students and their parents was extremely rewarding and satisfying. The participants noted that having summers off allowed them time to travel, engage in professional development, or be with their children which served as an attractive benefit to this profession. But also mentioned in this part of the study were the trade-offs that teachers made while working in an independent school. They noted the low salaries, the absence

of a salary scale or career ladder, the arbitrary and preferential treatment of some teachers, the lack of communication between teachers and administrators, and leadership that did not address the human side of teachers or the importance of relationship building. Participants mentioned that there is no job protection or teacher advocate contributing to their feelings of insecurity at an independent school. These factors, which cause job dissatisfaction, have the potential to alter teacher commitment to the institution possibly causing teachers to reassess their employment options.

Chapter Five will be used to synthesize the current information provided in this study to assess critical factors such as a) leadership, b) benefits, c) salary, and d) compensation as reported earlier by Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson (2005). Information will be analyzed to see if it is consistent with the NAIS study by Booth (2007) as well as assess if independent schools are facing challenges in retention and are at risk for losing teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE–DISCUSSION

Summary of the Study

Retaining teachers should be considered a priority for all schools but particularly for independent schools which are predicted to lose 37% by 2016 (Booth, 2007). The competition to keep quality teachers is likely to become more intense due to the impending retirement of the baby-boom generation and the availability of attractive career options particularly for women who make up the majority of the current teaching workforce (Markow, Moessner & Horowitz, 2006). The trade-offs often associated with working in independent schools such as small class size, autonomy in teaching, designing curriculum, and engaged students have been enough to attract and retain teachers for many decades but there is some question whether this is enough to sustain teacher commitment over the course of a career. The *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) examined teacher job satisfaction to assess what teachers value in the independent schools while examining elements of the culture that lead to dissatisfaction. This study utilized the same instrument to see if the findings could be replicated in a case study situation and to assess if independent schools are at risk for losing teachers. Two questions were used to frame this case study: 1) What are the key factors in teacher job satisfaction in the independent school? 2) To what extent do the factors of job satisfaction impact retention?

Independent schools must begin to assess their own vulnerability to teacher retention by examining what teachers value in the profession. Eighty-seven teachers were invited to participate in this case study. Thirty-nine voluntary participants responded by completing the *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* initially prepared

by Booth (2007). Twenty-two teachers signed the consent forms in order to participate in the focus group discussions.

This case study was divided into two parts; Part I was conducted using the *NAIS Teacher Job Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) as an instrument to analyze what teachers find most satisfying. Using the Likert scale, participants were asked to respond to questions regarding a) general satisfaction, b) benefits, c) compensation, d) work environment, and e) preparing and retaining new teachers. Teacher volunteers were also asked to disclose information by completing questions regarding demographic data. Participants were presented with the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions to serve as supplementary answers to seven questions. Two questions asked participants to respond in written form to what they liked most about teaching in an independent school and what they liked least. This segment of the survey offered an opportunity to focus directly on the satisfiers as well as factors which were dissatisfying to teachers.

Part II of the study was used to triangulate the data by using structured questions developed by the researcher and administered to all of the focus groups to generate discussions about a) satisfaction, b) dissatisfaction, c) school commitment, and d) work and life balance at the study site. Information gathered from the focus groups was used in conjunction with survey data to help determine if the school was at risk for losing teachers and then identify potential factors which influence teacher retention. While the survey was stratified by grouping volunteers by years of teaching experience such as: a) 0-3, b) 4-6, c) 7-9, d) 10+ there was an insufficient number of participants in the 0-3 group. The researcher restructured the focus groups to reflect the number of participants needed for a sound study. Groups were organized as follows: a) 0-9, b) 10-19, c) 20+.

The participants were more equitably distributed throughout the groups enabling the researcher to attain a more viable and equitable distribution of participants.

Summary of Results

General Satisfaction

Throughout all facets of the data collection process, participants remarked that they valued autonomy in the classroom and the freedom to teach the way they wanted. Teachers noted that they had the education and appropriate training to teach the population of students at this study site and felt that their teaching was effective. Participants also indicated that they were satisfied with their relationships with the parents in the school. The small and nurturing environment was considered to be beneficial for the students and the staff and a highly valued part of working in this community. A summary of the survey questions and discussions also confirmed that teachers enjoyed the quality of and the relationships with the students, as well as the small class sizes, the autonomy in the classroom, and the ability to make curricular decisions.

Teachers became passionate when they referred to their interactions with students making it clear that this was where they derived the most satisfaction and joy. This in itself fueled their commitment to the school adding that teaching is far more than just a job; most agreed that it was a calling. Focus group discussions substantiated the reasons that independent schools continue to attract teachers to independent education as they are student-centric communities with high standards and values.

As mentioned in a focus group discussion, teachers are often satisfied with their professions as educators but there are factors which impact “happiness in their jobs.” The

key factors influencing teacher dissatisfaction according to this study were a) leadership, b) compensation and benefits, and c) the preparation and mentoring of new teachers.

These factors overlapped with one another during the course of this study suggesting that many organizational characteristics influence work and life balance and impact satisfaction.

Leadership

Examining organizational practices can reveal areas of stress and dissatisfaction in an institution. Participants noted in written data and in focus group discussions how much administrator attitudes and practices contributed to their overall job satisfaction. Wheatley (2002) discussed the value and power of building strong relationships in an organization; however, the participants in this study stated dissatisfaction with their ability to foster vital relationships due to the lack of time devoted to meeting with colleagues and the inaccessibility of the Division Directors. Teachers discussed a need to be known as professionals but also as human beings with lives outside of the school and therefore desired better relationships with administrators.

Those who participated in this study also noted that their voices were not being heard. In spite of their professional experience, expertise, knowledge of the institution, or academic achievements, change was being implemented without discussion or strategic “buy in.” One participant noted that much of it was “change for the sake of change” and stated that initiatives lacked important input from teachers and were not carefully considered or executed. A member of a focus group commented that when administrators acknowledge and treat individuals with professional dignity and respect then it increases a teacher’s commitment and desire to support the administrator and the institution.

Responses from this study showed that professional acknowledgement from and communication with administrators is part of a positive environment which contributes to teacher satisfaction. Teachers noted how leadership practices impacted the work environment and their satisfaction with their jobs. This is consistent with the research by Brock and Grady (2000) who discussed the impact that administrators can have on the climate of a school.

Participants discussed in written form and focus group discussions that the absence of succession planning or a career ladder to define direction and professional paths within the school has caused the erosion of institutional memory. Too many new administrators and the lack of communication within the academic community have caused the school to, as one participant wrote, “lose its way.” This is critical to the school environment as these factors can impact employee stress. As Porter (2007) cautioned, stress in one area of the community can have a profound effect on other areas. Stress can not only impact employee health which has implications for the financial health of the school but more importantly can impact stress in the student population and possibly influence academic outcomes. As Porter suggested, it is important to monitor stress in an environment in an effort to create a more desirable institutional culture.

Compensation and Benefits

Although teachers demonstrated dissatisfaction with benefits, compensation received the most feedback on the open-ended questions possibly indicating that participants were more reflective and disappointed about remuneration and the impact it had on their overall satisfaction. The survey inquired about salary in relation to independent schools, public schools, local salaries in general, and the subsequent ability

to supplement an independent school salary. Teachers felt strongly that salaries should be competitive with local independent schools yet, the issue of salary and compensation surfaced many times throughout the data collection as being “embarrassingly low” or “disappointing.” Also, mentioned in the various areas of data collection were the preferential treatment of some teachers, the lack of career ladders or, opportunities for promotion or succession planning, and the lack of a transparent salary structure. A teacher mentioned that “those who had extra degrees or certifications should be acknowledged and rewarded.” Teachers noted their feelings of vulnerability without some representation such as a union. Self-advocacy was seen as challenging and intimidating with contract negotiations adding to feelings of vulnerability and job insecurity.

Work Environment and Work and Life Balance

Participants were very clear on the survey about the value they placed on the work environment. Data from the survey indicated that work and life balance, positive interactions with students and their parents, safety of the campus, manageable class sizes, engaged students, having a teaching style that is a good match for the school, and adequate room, supplies and equipment were deemed as highly important to them. Throughout the data there was a high satisfaction rating in most areas of the work environment except with work and life balance. Teachers rated this aspect of the work environment as highly important to them but they had difficulties attaining it.

Work and life balance emerged as a significant area of frustration for teachers primarily because there are so many factors which appear to influence it. In the open-ended questions, teachers frequently mentioned job security as a factor which influenced

their satisfaction with teaching at the independent school. They mentioned the lack of teacher evaluation procedures, salary scales, and career ladders as affecting their feelings of self-efficacy and job security. Student enrollment, the preferential treatment of some teachers, and the need to negotiate salary increases also influenced feelings of job insecurity. Participants discussed their tenuous relationships with administrators and their inability to share professional concerns as factors influencing their feelings of dissatisfaction and lack of security.

Technology was noted through the open-ended questions as an integral part of the work environment and a driving influence on participants' ability to attain work and life balance as it made them too accessible to parents. They reported spending much of their free or preparation time responding to parent emails or returning phone calls.

Respondents felt that technology had impacted the way in which teachers spend preparation time as they were responsible for responding to volumes of time sensitive email messages draining them of time and energy. Some felt that it added pressure and stress to the teaching day. Technology, for all of the positive aspects that it brings to teaching, has some downsides. As Charles (1999) pointed out, it has contributed to the decline of relationship building. This is critical in schools as the core of the independent school culture relies heavily on collaboration and collegial support. However, the nature of many emails, particularly from parents, requires some amount of immediacy which deprives teachers of the collaboration with colleagues and preparation time for students.

Although teachers reported some satisfaction with aspects of the work environment they still sought to have greater flexibility to attain work and life balance. Time management was a recurring theme in the data and teachers spoke frequently about

the impact that poorly planned meetings, assemblies, and other events had on their teaching and their inability to complete work during the school day. There was general consensus that while more gets put on a teacher's plate, nothing ever gets taken away and there is a sense that teachers have no recourse or protection from over-load. With a culture and a personnel and policy manual that does not permit teachers to say "no" when asked to participate on committees, take part in weekend admissions days, engage in extra duties, or cover classes and duties for absent teachers, participants felt that it often impacted their work-load and their ability to attain balance. Teachers indicated that without union representation there was no direct way to address grievance issues without being perceived as a "trouble maker" or someone who is not a "team player." When teachers are exhibiting stress, unable to balance work and life, concerned about money, and unable to communicate with administrators or colleagues, the climate of the institution suffers.

Preparing and Retaining Teachers

Preparing teachers at the outset of their career or job has the ability to impact whether they stay or leave the institution or the profession. This critical entryway into the community or into teaching must be carefully managed for optimum results. The portion of the survey which asked participants to respond to a variety of questions about the preparation and retention of new teachers received disparate and primarily unfavorable responses. A surprising 41% revealed that the institution did not do a good job sharing curriculum maps or materials with new teachers. This kind of practice could negatively impact a teacher's work and life balance, stress level, and integration into the community possibly resulting in challenges with teacher retention.

Throughout the questions there were mixed responses signifying the disparity in effective practices. The mentoring or buddy-system program at this institution was not viewed favorably. This is a critical area where best practice should be implemented for greater consistency to increase teacher retention and help to inform teaching performance (Johnson et al., 2001). While teachers at the independent schools highly value freedom and autonomy, no new teacher should be left alone to navigate the academic or social culture of an institution. Accordingly, institutions should be wary of the negative impact that social disconnection can have on an institution (Wheatley, 2002).

Limitations of Study

Independent schools maintain their own missions and philosophies which are unique to each institution. This case study is not meant to be generalized to these membership schools but to inform administrators and boards of trustees about the potential challenges to teacher retention through job satisfaction.

Another limitation to this study was the number of survey participants who were predominantly from the 10+ group. While this gives an interesting perspective from a variety of age groups as seen from the demographic data in Table 4.1, the study did not receive feedback from the diverse professional experiences needed in order to disaggregate the data. Although the overall participant number of 39 teachers was an acceptable number for a case study, the breakdown of participants according to years of experience did not offer the responses needed to be a significant representation of some of the specific groups. Respondents who submitted the completed surveys did not satisfy the numbers needed to disaggregate the data for more detailed information.

The focus groups presented the same limitations with participant numbers forcing the researcher to restructure the groups to a) 0-9, b) 10-19, and 20+. This restructuring enabled the participant numbers to be more evenly distributed although they did not correlate with the survey groups making it difficult to disaggregate the data and formulate any hypotheses based on themes emerging from individual groups.

Relationship to Other Research

While it is important to substantiate factors that attract teachers to the independent schools which respondents noted as smaller class size, not having to teach to the test, autonomy in the classroom, engaged students, and less red tape; it is also critical to look at the factors of job satisfaction to assess if independent schools are at risk for losing their teachers and, even more critical to a successful institution, their quality teachers. While losing some teachers can be healthy, too much turnover can be damaging to the vitality, and sustainability of a school (Ingersoll, 2001; ISM, 2004). Prior research in education focused on the connections between the school environment, leadership styles, and improved student learning and institutional outcomes (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Heck, 2000; Mulford & Silins, 2003).

The findings of this study were consistent with Ingersoll's (2001, 2002) suggestions stating that a future teacher shortage might have more to do with retirement or teacher migration than an actual shortage of teachers. Ingersoll suggested in his research that studies focus on organizational characteristics to determine why teachers look for other career options or migrate to other schools. Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson's (2005) study *Who Stays in Teaching and Why* contended that the critical factors such as work environment, school leadership, benefits and compensation, and teacher preparation

were significant factors impacting new teacher satisfaction and retention. The *NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey* (Booth, 2007) was designed with those considerations. Results of this study show that the work environment, leadership, work and life balance, compensation and benefits, and mentoring new teachers were the factors most likely to influence teacher satisfaction and generated the most information from the participants. These results mimicked the study by Booth (2007) and will be discussed further.

Data from the survey questions regarding the work environment revealed similarities to Booth's (2007) study, with work and life balance emerging as a serious issue with teachers at this study site. Participants in this study showed that they highly valued work and life balance but found that it was difficult to achieve making it a factor which warrants the attention of independent schools going forward. Work and life balance has been cited in recent research as a factor which will continue to impact employees in the business sector (McMillan et al., 2008) and in schools (Schramm, 2006). Responses from Booth's study and this case study are consistent with other current research in suggesting that organizations examine the work environment to begin to address issues with work and life balance (Crossman & Harris, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002; Spinks, 2004). Blending the professional lives and personal lives (Koppes, 2008) of teachers is an important factor in achieving happiness and satisfaction and is one of the most salient issues effecting teacher job satisfaction at the independent schools and the single most important factor impacting work and life balance.

Research by Schwartz (2007) noted that rising demands in the work environment results in challenges with balance as there is an ever increasing work-load. As reported

by the study group participants, “new tasks get added but nothing gets taken away.” This is consistent with Schwartz’s study stating that an increased workload can lead to stress. High levels of stress should be assessed in any environment but particularly in the independent schools where stress is part of the culture (Porter, 2007). Understanding and focusing attention on this aspect of the culture of independent schools might satisfy teachers by addressing levels of engagement and commitment.

Certo and Fox, (2002) claimed that those who left other jobs to teach in the independent schools cited low salary, over-scheduling, no breaks and short lunches as factors causing dissatisfaction. Results from this study site concur with prior research demonstrating that work overload, low salary, too many duties, and taking on the teaching assignments and duties of absent teachers was professionally exhausting and diminished the value of teachers’ time. According to Melnick and Meister (2008), there is very little difference in the way that new teachers and more seasoned teachers handle time management. Teachers in prior studies felt overwhelmed with workload as there simply was not enough time to prepare, teach, and reflect. Time management was discussed as a factor impacting work and life balance and an element embedded in the environment.

Booth (2007) and Johnson, Berg and Donaldson (2005) reported the importance of the environment and its impact on job satisfaction and personal efficacy. Participants in this study exhibited throughout the data that there were elements of the work environment that influenced their satisfaction or happiness with their jobs. Teachers in this study indicated that they highly valued building relationships and desired more opportunities for professional and social interactions with colleagues and administrators.

This is consistent with Wheatley's (2002) research regarding the necessity for building relationships for improved organizational outcomes.

Throughout the various data sources, participants confirmed that leadership impacted their satisfaction with their jobs. This is consistent with research suggesting that administrators impact the climate and work environment of a school (Brock & Grady, 2000; Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). Teachers noted the lack of institutional or administrative flexibility offering that it was difficult to achieve satisfaction and work and life balance. Teachers mentioned in open-ended questions and in the focus group discussions that their voices were not being heard by administration; yet, Powell (1996) mentioned that teachers in the independent schools derive respect and dignity from their influence in decision making. Powell also stated that teacher participation is only as good as the leaders who are in the school and stated that it is vital for administrators to acknowledge the dignity of the profession by listening, recognizing, and promoting leaders from within the institution.

Teaching has often been referred to by researchers as a "flat profession" (Cox et al. 2003; Danielson, 2007; Tye & O'Brien, 2002) which necessitates that administrators at independent schools examine leadership opportunities within institutions to sustain professional interest and commitment while providing professional career paths for the teachers. School culture should be carefully nurtured to avoid resistance from teachers, create buy in, and sustain change initiatives. Holding on to the positive aspects of a culture is important to the environment and allowing voices to be heard increases the commitment and institutional pride. Quality teaching, experience, and dedication should be valued and rewarded by school leaders as it is the foundation for sustaining a school's

mission and practice and is a source of teacher commitment and job satisfaction. All of these factors influence job security, job satisfaction and the ability to achieve work and life balance (McMillan et al., 2008; Schramm, 2006). The unfortunate result of not being able to attain teacher satisfaction necessitates the potential to generate discontent and negatively influence organizational outcomes (Grawitch et al., 2006).

Another factor of the environment which garnered comments throughout the study was that teachers were disappointed with salary and the absence of a competitive and transparent salary scale and benefits package. They also noted the preferential treatment of some teachers. Poelman and Beham, (2008) discussed in their research the importance of fair and consistent practices and enforcement to attain organizational stability. Participants suggested that the use of a career ladder and succession planning tied to evaluation procedures, would increase commitment. At the same time this process would reveal transparent compensation measures, and diminish preferential practices, which would further decrease feelings of insecurity. According to McMillan et al. (2008) compensation, benefits, and job security are vital components of work and life balance.

Addressing the preparation and retention of new teachers is another critical factor for the institution but participants in this study gave very low ratings in this area on the survey. Responses indicated that the mentoring program was not up to the expectations or standards of the participants and they noted low levels of satisfaction on every question. This suggested that the school does not incorporate processes necessary for teachers to receive the support they need. Poor induction or mentoring could impact a new teacher's satisfaction and possibly risk the loss of new teachers. Current research advocates mentoring practices which focus not only on the needs of new teachers but also on the

needs of experienced teachers, by offering opportunities for leadership (Grawitch et al., 2007).

Independent schools, which are free from bureaucratic control, were once institutions where teachers could attend to the academic and personal growth of students while enjoying organizational elements such as innovation, flexibility, creativity, community, and caring which Friedman (2005) considered to be the hallmarks of independent schools. However, survey ratings and discussions regarding these factors indicated low levels of teacher satisfaction. Organizational elements of the culture which include leadership, work and life balance, compensation and benefits, and preparing and retaining new teachers are impacting how teachers look at themselves and their profession.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is important to have group reliability between the data collection methods in order to compare and disaggregate the information. Therefore, having a larger sample to represent the diversified experiences at a case study site is highly recommended in an effort to duplicate this study.

Years of experience does not necessarily correlate with the age of participants as some independent school teachers come to teaching after jobs in other professions. The 10+ survey participant group represented four different age groups. Job satisfaction has the potential to be very different depending on the ages of the participants. Koppes (2008) discussed the importance of establishing a work and life culture at institutions while examining the professional lives (environmental) and personal lives (psychological) because they are enmeshed. Analyzing the data according to either the

participant's ages or generation could also reveal the diverse psychological implications of teachers' lives and the impact that these factors have on their overall job satisfaction. Although Booth (2007) accomplished this in the NAIS study due to the breadth of the research, it was difficult to achieve comparable results in this case study due to the participant vulnerability in a small sample. The new teachers in the 0-3 years of experience are significant in research because of the high stress levels and retention challenges associated with this group. The survey requests information on induction and mentoring practices as this is a critical component for understanding how new teachers respond to the profession and the community. This is an important piece to a study on retention. Additionally, studying teacher job satisfaction at the various division levels such as; lower school, middle school, and upper school might provide differing expectations from the organizational environment.

This study did not explore teachers' reasons for leaving this study site. A possible focus of further research might incorporate or focus on teachers who have left their jobs to migrate to other independent schools, public schools, or other careers. Assessing retention issues through exit interviews or conversations with teachers who leave independent schools has the potential to contribute to the body of independent school research. This would provide a level beyond teacher intention as recorded on the survey and supply a valuable source of information regarding teacher migration and the competitiveness of independent school teaching as a profession.

Independent schools would benefit from research based on the differences between job satisfaction and job happiness. As noted in this study, discussion groups spoke about their satisfaction with their jobs as teachers and their interactions with the

students but they struggled with happiness in the job. Focusing on the differences between happiness and satisfaction by analyzing how these two factors influence and inform a teacher's perception of the culture and environment would further the research on this topic.

Conclusion

As teachers at this study site plan for their future, the prediction for the next five years is somewhat disconcerting given that only 54% of the survey participants envision themselves in their current jobs. According to the data in Table 4.11, migration to public schools, leaving to teach at other independent schools or leaving the teaching profession altogether, is likely to claim 12.8% of the participants. With 10.2% of the survey participants planning to retire, 10.2% foresee occupying administrative jobs, and 12.8% seeking alternative opportunities, data show that 46% of the participants anticipate that they will be seeking other options in the near future. This figure is staggering even though it incorporates some retirees. It is important to note that according to data collected from the survey, 67% of the participants had received job offers from both the independent and public schools prior to accepting a job in the independent school demonstrating that the teachers who responded to the survey have a variety of job options open to them in the teaching profession. With this in mind, independent schools should begin to evaluate their own cultures to assess their needs for retention initiatives aimed at holding onto quality faculty.

Although teachers value the small class sizes, autonomy in teaching, designing and implementing the curriculum, and the incredible joy they derive from their relationships with the students there are a growing number of teachers who are

disappointed in the environmental factors of their jobs and anticipate finding alternative employment opportunities due to lack of satisfaction.

Feeling undervalued could impact one's work and life balance through the deprivation of satisfaction, happiness, and feelings of success. It is with that in mind that independent school administrators begin to take a look at their own school environment to assess if the culture needs to change in an effort to retain valuable faculty members and sustain a positive climate. Additionally, independent schools should begin to recognize symptoms of stress and burnout and establish strategies for support while also encouraging teachers to maintain routines in their own lives to help combat the feelings of stress. Acknowledging the stress factors at the independent schools and providing a forum for discussion is a first step in promoting a positive climate. Research aimed at the perceptions of administrators regarding teacher job satisfaction would help institutions understand the complexities of organizational dynamics and further their knowledge of relationship building through sound leadership practices.

As a formidable percentage of teachers contemplate leaving their jobs at this study site within the next five years, independent schools should be reminded of the metaphor of the bucket losing water (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). As teachers leave the profession it is similar to a bucket losing water. If the institutional mindset conveys that every teacher can be easily replaced it is similar to pouring more water into the bucket without first patching the holes. Analyzing the culture of each individual independent school and attending to the environmental "holes" should be the first step in teacher retention initiatives.

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Appendix A

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Permission to Use Survey



August 7, 2009

Dear Elizabeth,

As an employee of a National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) member school, you are granted permission to use any or all of the NAIS Teacher Satisfaction Survey. If you use all or part of this survey you must give attribution to NAIS. It is understood that the survey data collection will be conducted at an NAIS member school.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Booth

Susan Booth
Director of Strategic Initiatives
NAIS
1620 L Street, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20036
booth@nais.org
202-973-9763

Appendix B

Permission to Reprint Survey

From: Booth, Susan [booth@nais.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2010 1:28 PM
To: Biz Sands
Subject: RE: Dissertation
Attachments: Survey_3546213.pdf; Survey_3546213.doc

Biz,

Yes, you have permission to include the 2007 NAIS Teacher Satisfaction Survey as an appendix. Attached are copies of the survey in Adobe PDF and Word – hopefully this will help. I'd love to see your report when it is finished.

Best,
Susan

Appendix C

NAIS Independent School Teacher Satisfaction Survey

1. INTRODUCTION**1. Are you currently an independent school teacher?** Yes No**2. GENERAL SATISFACTION****2. Many factors contribute to a teacher's job satisfaction. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "Not Satisfied" and 5 means "Extremely Satisfied," how satisfied are you with these factors in relation to your current job? (Please rate each item.)**

	1= Not Satisfied	2	3	4	5=Extremely Satisfied	N/A
My effectiveness with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School's hiring process gave me realistic job expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectiveness of school leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support of teachers by school leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social support from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Autonomy and ability to make curricular decisions in my classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freedom to teach the way I want to teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the education and training I need to teach the subjects that I am currently assigned to teach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My interaction with parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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3. HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE BENEFITS?

3. Independent schools often provide a variety of benefits to their faculty. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Not Important” and 5 means “Extremely Important,” how IMPORTANT are the following benefits to you? Please rate each item even if your school does not offer the benefit.

	1= Not Important	2	3	4	5=Extremely Important	N/A
Employer-paid health insurance for employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health care benefits for dependents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onsite childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility with my work schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to work part-time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low-interest loans for housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty housing paid by school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuition reimbursement for faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to work on administrative tasks via telecommuting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to job-share	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employer contributions to retirement plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial planning assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sabbaticals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Tuition remission for faculty children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid for faculty children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible benefits program that allows faculty to set aside pre-tax income to pay for medical and/or dependent-care expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal assistance plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. YOUR SATISFACTION WITH BENEFITS

4. How satisfied are you with your school's benefits in these areas? (Please rate each item and indicate N/A if your school does not offer the benefit.)

	Not satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	N/A
Employer-paid health insurance for employee	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health care benefits for dependents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Onsite childcare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility with my work schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to work part-time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Low-interest loans for housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty housing paid by school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuition reimbursement for faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to work on administrative tasks via telecommuting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Opportunity to job-share	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employer contributions to retirement plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Life insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial planning assistance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sabbaticals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuition remission for faculty children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial aid for faculty children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible benefits program that allows faculty to set aside pre-tax income to pay for medical and/or dependent-care expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal assistance plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. BENEFITS

5. Are there other benefits that are not listed above that would be of great value to you?

- Yes
 No

6. If yes, please describe.

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7. COMPENSATION (YOU HAVE COMPLETED 50% OF THE SURVEY.)

7. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Not Important” and 5 means “Extremely Important,” how Important is it to you that your salary meets the following criteria? (Please rate each item.)

	1=Not Important	2	3	4	5=Extremely Important	N/A
Salary comparable to local independent school salaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary comparable to local public school salaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary comparable to local salaries in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary can be supplemented by summer, coaching tutoring, and other employment opportunities at the school where I work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Not Satisfied” and 5 means “Extremely Satisfied,” how Satisfied are you with your salary in these areas? (Please rate each item.)

	1= Not Satisfied	2	3	4	5=Extremely Satisfied	N/A
Salary comparable to local independent school salaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary comparable to local public school salaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary comparable to local salaries in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary can be supplemented by summer, coaching tutoring, and other employment opportunities at the school where I work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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7. HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE ASPECTS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

9. Teachers encounter a variety of working conditions, cultures, and environments in the schools and communities where they work. on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Not Important” and 5 means “Extremely Important,” how Important are these aspects of the work environment to you (Please rate each item.)

	1=Not Important	2	3	4	5=Extremely Important	N/A
Affordable housing in the area where my job is located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to balance work with personal life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable cost of living in the area where my job is located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive interactions with parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive interactions with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manageable class sizes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaged students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teaching style is a good match with my school’s culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate room, supplies, and equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse student body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A community that has people like me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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8. WORK ENVIRONMENT: HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU? (YOU HAVE COMPLETED 75% OF THE SURVEY.)

10. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “Not Satisfied” and 5 means “Extremely Satisfied,” how Satisfied are you with these conditions at your current job? (Please rate each item.)

	1= Not Satisfied	2	3	4	5= Extremely Satisfied	N/A
Affordable housing in the area where my job is located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to balance work with personal life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable cost of living in the area where my job is located	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive interactions with parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Positive interactions with students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manageable class sizes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaged students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teaching style is a good match with my school’s culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adequate room, supplies, and equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse faculty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse student body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A community that has people like me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Are there other aspects of the work and community environment that are not mentioned above that have an impact on teacher satisfaction at your school?

Yes

No

12. If yes, please describe.

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9. PREPARING AND RETAINING NEW TEACHERS

**13. How well does your school use the following practices to retain new teachers?
(Please rate each item.)**

	Not Well at All	To Some Extent	Adequately	Very Well	Extremely Well	N/A
Internship/apprenticeship/ teacher-training program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New teacher induction program to teach new teachers about the school's culture, academic and administrative procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for new teachers to meet their colleagues and parents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School has an appointed staff person in charge of new teacher services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Department heads and co- teachers communicate regularly with new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Curriculum materials and/or curriculum maps are provided to new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New teachers are given assigned readings related to school life, the teaching profession, and teaching practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School provides off-site professional development opportunities for new teachers (e.g., state or regional association beginning teacher institutes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mentoring or buddy-system where new teachers are partnered with experienced teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In-service training for new teachers on topics such as evaluations, parent meetings, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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14. Are there other practices your school should use to prepare and retain new teachers?

- Yes
 No

15. If yes, please describe.

10. YOUR CAREER PATH

16. Did you have a mentor during your first year of teaching?

- Yes, as a part of a formal arrangement
 Yes, but informally
 No, I did not have a mentor

17. During your career, have you received job offers from both public and independent schools?

- Yes, I have received job offers from both public and independent schools.
 No, I have never received a job offer from a public school.

18. In what types of schools have you taught?

- I have taught only in independent schools.
 I taught previously in public schools but moved to independent schools.
 Other (please specify)

19. Why do you choose to teach in an independent school instead of a public school? (Please check all that apply.)

- Independent school students are more engaged
 Independent school parents are more involved in the school community
 Smaller class sizes
 More autonomy in the classroom
 Safer school environment
 Less red tape
 Don't have to "teach to the test"
 Better support from teacher colleagues
 Better room, supplies, equipment, and support services
 Better work/life balance
 Other (please specify)

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11. YOUR CAREER PATH

20. What do you like best about working at an independent school?

21. What do you like least about working at an independent school?

12. ABOUT YOU

22. How long have you been in your current position?

- 0-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10+ years

23. How long have you been a teacher?

- 0-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- 10+ years

24. What would you like to be doing in five years?

- Working in the job you currently hold
- In another teaching job in independent education
- In an administrative position in independent education
- In public education
- In a job outside education
- Retired/Not working
- Other (please specify)

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13. ABOUT YOU

25. If you plan to leave independent education but do not plan to retire, why are you leaving independent education?

26. Looking to the future, would you say you plan to leave teaching or retire:

- In five years or less
- In six to ten years
- More than ten years
- Don't know

27. Gender:

- Female
- Male

14. ABOUT YOU

28. Are you:

- African American
- Asian American
- Latino/Hispanic American
- Native American
- Middle Eastern American
- Caucasian
- Multiracial
- International
- Other
- Prefer not to disclose this information

29. Are you in your:

- 20s
- 30s
- 40s
- 50s
- 60s
- 70s or older

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15. ABOUT YOU

30. What degree(s) do you hold? (Please check all that apply.)

- BA/BS in Education
- BA/BS (in field other than Education)
- M.Ed.
- MA/MS
- Ed.D.
- Ph.D.
- M.B.A.
- J.D.
- Other

31. If you hold a BA/BS in Education or M.Ed., did your education include experiential training (for example a hands-on teaching internship at a school or a student teacher experience)?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

16. ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

32. Is your school a day, boarding, boarding/day or day/boarding school?

- Day
- Day/Boarding (schools enrolling more than 50 percent day students, with the balance boarding students)
- Boarding
- Boarding/Day (schools enrolling more than 50 percent boarding students, with the balance day students)

33. What grade levels are taught at your school? (Please check all that apply.)

- Elementary
- Middle
- Secondary

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Appendix D

Focus Group Questions

Part II-Questions for focus groups

- 1) What aspects of your job give you the greatest level of satisfaction?
- 2) Which of these aspects do you feel is most likely to or has led to your continued interest in working at this school?
- 3) What aspects of your employment give you the greatest level of dissatisfaction?
- 4) In what ways do these levels of dissatisfaction impact your level of commitment to the school?
- 5) What strategies do you think the school should implement to help identify aspects of teacher satisfaction?
- 6) Work and life balance is stated by Frone (2003) as a condition that exists when there is a “lack of conflict or interference between the work and family roles” (p. 145). Do you have work/life balance? If yes—why? If not—why not?
- 7) Do you think that work/life balance is important? Why? Why not?
- 8) How do you think teachers can achieve work/life balance?
- 9) What can institutions do to support teachers in their attempts to obtain work/life balance?

Appendix E

Research Ethics Review Board Approval

**IMMACULATA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW BOARD
REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL REVIEW--REVIEWER'S COMMENTS FORM
(R1297)**

Name of Researcher: Elizabeth K. Sands

Project Title: Teacher Job Satisfaction and its Impact on Retention in the Independent School

Reviewer's Comments

Your proposal is approved. You may begin your research or collect your data.
PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS APPROVAL IS VALID FOR ONE YEAR (365 days)
FROM DATE OF SIGNING.

Reviewer's Recommendations:

<input type="checkbox"/> Exempt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved
<input type="checkbox"/> Expedited	<input type="checkbox"/> Conditionally Approve
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Review	<input type="checkbox"/> Do Not Approve

Thomas F. O'Brien

November 24, 2009

Thomas F. O'Brien, Ph.D., Ed. D., RERB Chair

Date

Appendix F

Invitation to Participate in Study

Full Time Teaching Faculty

Dear Colleagues:

I am currently at the data gathering phase of my doctoral dissertation and request your help. With permission from _____ I have chosen _____ as my study site. This study is comprised of two phases which incorporates a teacher survey and subsequent focus groups. The survey was initially created by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) in 2007 and administered electronically to teachers throughout the country. I obtained permission from NAIS to use their survey to gather information that will be pertinent to this study. I have chosen to use a hard copy version of their survey. Surveys and survey drop-boxes are located in the MS/US Faculty Room as well as the LS Faculty Room. It is important to work on these surveys independently and submit one survey per person.

Please note that an explanation of the data gathering process is on the focus group consent form. Should you wish to participate in *this* phase of the study; an envelope will be available in each faculty room for the completed consent forms. The focus groups will be an essential component to my study as it will provide a forum for discussion about questions which are not fully addressed on the survey. Kindly keep surveys and forms separate to preserve anonymity. I will collect the completed surveys and consent forms on Thursday, January 14th.

It is very important that you participate, not only for the success of my study, but to voice your opinions on a variety of issues which impact independent school teachers.

Many thanks,

Elizabeth Sands

Appendix G

Participant Consent Form



1145 King Road, P.O. Box 635, Immaculata, Pennsylvania 19345

I am currently engaged in a study about full-time teachers and I ask for your voluntary participation in a two part research venture. To help me gain further insight into this area I request that you fill out the enclosed survey which was originally distributed electronically by *The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)*. The survey is available to you in hard copy form to offer you the convenience of completing it outside the normal hours of school without relying on your school laptop. The survey portion of the study, which is anonymous, incorporates questions using a Likert scale as well as questions which are open-ended and have a space for writing your own answers. In an effort to further protect your identity; please note that #28 is filled in for you essentially removing this question from the survey. Drop-boxes for the completed surveys will be available in the MS/US and LS Faculty Rooms for your convenience. By taking this survey, you have agreed to participate in this study.

The second phase of this study, Part II, will involve focus groups which will be formed based on years of teaching experience. If you are willing to participate, you will be asked to discuss open-ended questions during one session lasting from 30 minutes to 1 hour. If you are contacted to participate, the date and time of the focus group meeting will be supplied at that time. All meetings will be held after school. Please note that a recorder will be used to help obtain accurate data. The recordings will only be available for my use and will be kept in a locked box until the information is destroyed in five years. Information from the focus groups will be recorded anonymously and reported as aggregate data to further protect your identity. To participate in the focus group, please sign and return this consent form to the researcher by using the envelope available to you in the faculty room.

We welcome questions at any time and please note that your participation in this research is on a voluntary basis and you may refuse to participate in any part of the study or at any point without consequence or prejudice. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Elizabeth K. Sands, at my home 610-644-6678 or you may direct your questions to my dissertation chair, Dr. Christine Moran, Immaculata University, 610-647-4400 ext. 3162.

Any questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas F. O'Brien, Chair Research Ethics and Review Board, Immaculata University, PA 19345, phone 610-647-4400 ext. 3221, or email tobrien@immaculata.edu Signing your name below indicates that you have read and understand the contents of this consent form and that you agree to participate in Part II, (focus group) of this study. Signing this form will not waive any of your legal rights.

Participants Signature

Date

Years of teaching experience

Email address to contact you about the focus group

Researcher's Signature

Date