FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHER ATTRITION: TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

This qualitative case study was conducted to ascertain teachers’ perceptions of the reasons for teacher attrition, the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession, and the steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention. The study involved 286 full-time or part-time teachers of kindergarten through twelfth grade students in a public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania. The study’s data were collected through the use of an online survey that included closed-ended questions and open-response questions. Personal interviews were conducted with six volunteers who had completed the online survey. The data indicated that among the five proposed reasons for teacher attrition that included salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment practices, the area of working conditions was the most perceived reason for teacher attrition.
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Chapter One – Introduction

Overview

The United States is currently facing an increasing demand for teachers as retirement and attrition rates of teachers increase at a higher rate than that of incoming teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The number of teachers who exit the profession is noteworthy. With approximately one-fourth of new teachers leaving the profession within the first three years of teaching (Tamberg, 2006; Rosenow, 2005) and half resigning within their first five years of teaching (Lambert, 2006; Tamberg, 2006), the need to address teacher attrition has come into focus.

Compounding the demand for teachers is the existence of laws that place higher expectations on those who wish to teach; thus, potentially limiting the pool of teacher candidates. Specifically, the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001, passed by the federal government as an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, placed tighter restrictions on teacher certification and mandated the use of highly qualified teachers by 2006. Exceptions to this mandate must involve the development of action plans to address how non-highly qualified teachers will meet the standards placed on them. In order to be classified as a highly qualified teacher, the teacher must possess a bachelor’s degree, meet the requirements for the respective state’s certification regulations, and provide evidence of content knowledge in the subject for which the teacher is instructing (The Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2003).

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2005), more and more researchers and educators believe that the quality of the teacher is one of the most influential reasons for student success. Much research has been done regarding the influence teacher quality has on
student academic success (Carr, 2006; Harris & Sass, 2007; Kimball, White, Milanowski, & Borman, 2004; Milanowski, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). As such, it is critical that every effort be made to train, hire, and retain high quality teachers throughout all school systems.

In addition to the existence of laws tightening the requirements on potential teacher candidates and possibly limiting the number of available teacher candidates, the requirement of having students reach national and state requirements for student achievement levels places an additional burden on those in the teaching profession. No Child Left Behind legislation (2002) mandates adequate yearly progress for all schools. To accomplish this, the role of the high quality teacher again comes into play. Without the presence of a high caliber teacher, the likelihood of student academic success is diminished (Goe, 2007; Milanowski, 2004).

Teacher attrition also affects the financial situation of public education (Futernick, 2007; Luther & Richman, 2009; Shockley, Guglielmino, & Watlington, 2006a). With a limited amount of funding available for education, the cost to continually recruit, hire, and retain teachers can be a factor with high attrition rates. These financial costs can be further delineated to include recruitment and advertising, special incentives, administrative processing, training for new hires, and training for first-time teachers (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007).

While there are numerous reasons that teachers offer as factors considered when leaving the teaching profession, most of them fall into a few broad categories. These categories include salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development once employed, and recruitment practices.
Salary is an important factor for individuals initially selecting teaching as a career or who are remaining in the profession. Loeb and Reininger (2004) found that teachers are responsive to salary and are more likely to select a teaching position if the initial salaries are comparable to those in other occupations. Increasing compensation can entice some teachers to remain teaching once they have entered the profession (Feng, 2005; Imazeki, 2005).

The area of working conditions, encompassing many aspects of the educational environment, is often cited as a reason for teachers to leave the profession (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004; Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie, & Yoon, 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Luekens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004; Utah Foundation, 2007). Factors of working conditions include resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.

Teacher preparation is cited by researchers as being a focal point for teacher attrition (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that there is mounting evidence that teachers who are inadequately prepared to teach are more likely to leave the teaching profession.

The manner in which school districts approach the professional development aspect of the newly hired teachers impacts teacher retention (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Considerable research has been conducted on the variety of induction programs that are used throughout the country. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) concluded that the beginning teachers who received the services from mentors in the same discipline and participated in common induction activities were less likely to leave the teaching profession.

Recruitment practices also impact teacher attrition (Liu, 2004; McCarthy & Guiney,
Liu found that when the dialogue between the teacher and the district was insufficient for full disclosure of each party’s expectations, there existed a higher likelihood of teacher attrition. Additionally, when teachers were hired late in the summer or close to the start of the school year, they were more likely to leave the profession if they felt they did not have adequate time to prepare for their new positions (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching, 2004).

The need to supply sufficient numbers of teachers highlights the need to attract high quality candidates to the teaching profession and to retain them once they have arrived. Focusing on the latter, there is ample evidence to suggest educators and policymakers across the country should pay close attention to the number of teachers who are leaving the profession (Lambert, 2006; Rosenow, 2005; Tamberg, 2006). Although it is difficult to ascertain exact reasons for teacher attrition, it is important that additional research focuses on the factors that influence teacher attrition and explore specific data to add clarity to why teachers are leaving the profession and how they can be retained (Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner, & Lyter, 2007; Ingersoll, 2002; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005).

Need for the Study

As the national research continues to focus on the key factors of why teachers leave the profession, research specific to south-central Pennsylvania is less prolific. The Education Policy and Leadership Center (2003) conducted a teacher quality and supply project in 2001 during which the issue of the supply of teachers in Pennsylvania was the focus. Within this report were four policy recommendations to the state including (a) promote professional teaching in Pennsylvania, (b) enhance the preparation of future teachers, (c) address specific staffing problems, and (d) improve the collection and utilization of data. The report did not
specifically address teacher retention in Pennsylvania; however, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (2002) mandates that all districts have an induction program. The induction programs found within Pennsylvania are crafted to meet the individual needs of a particular district or a consortium of public education entities (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2002).

If the United States and specifically south-central Pennsylvania are going to address the need to replace the number of teachers who leave the profession, clear and exact data must be collected to determine the factors influencing these teachers’ dramatic decisions to abandon a profession that they had worked so hard to enter. Adding any further clarity to the issue both nationally and in south-central Pennsylvania may afford educators and policymakers the opportunity to use precious human and financial resources more effectively and efficiently.

**Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to discover teachers’ perceptions of the factors affecting public school teacher attrition. Upon reviewing the available research in the area of teacher attrition, one can conclude that additional research would add to the larger body of data available to educators and policymakers today. By obtaining such specific information available to educational planners in south-central Pennsylvania, educational policymakers in that location may be able to avoid or diminish the loss of teaching expertise via teacher attrition.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the key terminology was defined as follows.

*Highly qualified teacher* - A highly qualified teacher is one who possesses a bachelor’s degree, met the requirements for the respective state’s certification regulations, and provided
evidence of content knowledge in the subject for which the individual is teaching (The Education Policy & Leadership Center, 2003).

*Induction* – Induction encompasses a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development process that is organized by a school district to train, support, and retain new teachers and seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong learning program (Wong, 2004).

*Mentor* – A mentor is a single person, whose basic function is to help a new teacher (Wong, 2004).

*Professional development* – Professional development involves a comprehensive approach to the training of teachers to assist them to perform at a level that produces higher student achievement (No Child Left Behind, 2002).

*Recruitment practices* – Recruitment practices include those activities and procedures that lead to the securing of new employees’ services (Recruit, 2012).

*Salary* – Salary refers to the amount of compensation provided for services rendered (Salary, 2012).

*Socioeconomic status* – Socioeconomic status generally refers to the combination of income level, education level, and occupation (Adler, 1994).

*Teacher attrition* - Teacher attrition is the number of teachers who exit the teaching profession separate and unique from teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001).

*Teacher preparation* – Teacher preparation involves programs that have prospective teachers engage in activities that include courses involving choosing and using instructional materials, applying educational psychology, observing authentic teaching, and interacting with existing professionals regarding teaching (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006).
Teacher turnover – Teacher turnover includes the number of teachers who choose to leave the profession (teacher attrition), move from one school to another school, or move from one school district to another school district (Ingersoll, 2001).

Working conditions - Working conditions include such variables as the availability of resources (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie & Yoon, 2004), administrative support (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Greiner & Smith, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009), teaching assignment (Johnson, 2006; Luekens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004), student behavior (Geving, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007), teacher workload (Luekens et al., 2004 Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007), teacher accountability (Gaytan, 2008; Luther & Richman, 2009), and stress (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching, 2004).

Limitations

The small geographic area from which the subjects originated limited this study. The one school district, while meeting the needs for this particular study, did not provide representation from a large area.

A second limitation to this study was the small number of participants. While the number of subjects was sufficient for this study, the number of respondents only allowed for a limited number of views within this study.

A third limitation was the representation of the subjects, which included only public school teachers (kindergarten through twelfth grade). Other individuals involved directly or indirectly with children’s education such as administrators, school board members, and parents, were not included in this sample; thus, their views on this topic were not represented in the sample.
Due to these limitations, the results of this study were not applicable to larger populations, geographic areas, or varying populations associated with education. The risk of over-generalizing conclusions from this study and using them beyond the scope of this study must be considered.

**Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were answered.

1. What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition?
2. What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession?
3. What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?

**Summary**

This study focused on teachers’ perceptions of the reasons for teacher attrition, the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession, and what districts can do to enhance teacher retention. This qualitative case study included data from the teaching staff from one district located in south-central Pennsylvania. This study was intended to provide educational planners with data on which they can base their decisions as they dedicate financial and human resources to hire teachers, provide professional development to them once they are hired, and consider the reasons why some of them decide to remain in or leave the teaching profession.

Within the context of this study, the researcher focused data collection within the framework of five reasons for teacher attrition that include salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment practices. Additionally,
teachers provided their views of what a public school district can do to increase the likelihood for teachers to remain in the profession, and what factors would be important to teachers as they decide to continue in the teaching profession.
Chapter Two – Literature Review

Introduction

The pool from which public schools hire their staff is changing significantly. With nearly half of the teaching staff classified as baby boomers, those individuals born between the years 1946 and 1964, loss of teachers due to retirement is a growing concern (National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 2010). The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2007) reported that 2.7 million teachers left the profession between 1995 and 2005 due to retirement and attrition; and the attrition rates are growing.

The need to supply sufficient numbers of teachers brings into consideration the ability to attract high quality candidates to the teaching profession and to retain them once they have arrived. Regarding the latter, there is evidence to suggest that educators and policymakers across the country should address the problem of the growing number of teachers who leave the profession (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). The Alliance for Excellent Education (2008) found that of the approximate half million teachers who leave their profession each year, only 16.0% of them are classified as retirees. Even with the recent economic downturn, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan believes that teacher shortages will continue to exist and teacher turnover will continue to be an important concern (Duncan, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009).

With the mandate of federal legislation under the No Child Left Behind amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that all schools must hire highly qualified teachers, schools are also forced to concentrate their hiring effort on meeting this minimum requirement (No Child Left Behind, 2002). Ultimately, the demand for highly qualified teachers is rooted in the understanding that teacher quality has a direct impact on student learning (Goldhaber & Anthony, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2002). With this
premise, the need to hire and retain the most qualified teachers forces educators to examine how best to accomplish this process.

Teacher attrition presents a multi-dimensional issue that negatively affects students, parents, and taxpayers (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Johnson et al., 2005; National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 2007; Nobscot, 2004; Paone, Whitcomb, Rose, & Reichardt, 2008; Shockley, Guglielmino, & Watlington, 2006a). The financial cost of this exodus is estimated to be in excess of $2.2 billion annually (The Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). As districts are forced to replace teachers, costs for hiring and training new teachers divert funds from other aspects of educating children (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008). This problem is recognized at all levels of the field (Duncan, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009). With the large number of teachers needed to replace those leaving the field, the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2010) concluded that more will need to be done to address attrition in order to keep all classrooms staffed with qualified teachers and subsequently keep costs in check.

While attrition due to retirement is an inevitability, attrition from non-retirement is not. Of increasing concern are the findings that suggest that approximately one-fourth of beginning teachers leave their profession within the first three years (Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2007). Ingersoll and Smith (2003, May) and Minarik, Thorton, and Perriault (2003) found that approximately half of all teachers who leave the classroom do so within their first five years of teaching. Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005) found districts that reported one third of their beginning teachers left the profession following their first year of teaching. Cox, Parmer, Tourkin, Warner, and Lyter (2007) found that over 16.0% of all public school teachers leave the profession or change schools annually as compared to 11.0%
of their counterparts in non-teaching professions (Ingersoll, 2002).

Teacher attrition rates are not stable across districts, which suggests that some districts are doing a better job of retaining teachers than others. Of particular concern are lower socioeconomic status (SES) schools that experience significantly higher attrition rates, particularly in lower performing schools, than in higher SES and higher performing schools (Paone et al., 2008). In their study of Colorado schools, Paone et al. found that attrition rates in low-performing schools were more than twice the number of those in schools rated as average in performance. They further found that, in general, the neediest students were being taught by a greater percentage of less experienced teachers than their average counterparts. In his study of 2,000 teachers in California, Futernick (2007) found that, on average, 10.0% of teachers who work in schools with high-poverty levels leave those schools annually. Other studies (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) found that teachers from schools with higher percentages of minority students or from those that have a higher proportion of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch are more likely to exit the profession. High turnover in urban schools exacerbates the academic challenges for urban students who are already at a disadvantage (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The U.S. Department of Education (2012) reported that there are teacher shortage issues in all 50 states, suggesting that the number of incoming teachers is not sufficient to offset retirements and attrition. This places an ever-increasing pressure on administrators to compete for and retain the shrinking pool of highly qualified teachers to work with all classifications of students in a myriad of school settings. Whether individuals are focusing on national data or very localized information, the urgency to address teacher attrition as it relates to the overall demand for teachers is present.
Teacher Effect on Student Achievement

There are compatible areas of research that suggest that effective experienced teachers positively affect student learning (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2000; Goe, 2007; Milanowski, 2004) while the loss of experienced teachers negatively affects student achievement (Fulton et al., 2005). Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found a correlation between teacher effectiveness and length of time in the classroom. In their study they identified five years as a general parameter for determining the length of time it takes a new teacher to become effective in the classroom. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2007) report suggests that during the first five years of teaching, teachers often not only struggle with adapting to their classroom duties, but also to their overall new environment which includes the unique climate of the school and community. Schools with generally higher turnover rates are often left with no other option but to fill teaching vacancies with teachers who have less than five years of experience in the classroom (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002); thus, decreasing their chances of populating their teaching staff with effective teachers.

The U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics found that students in high poverty schools are nearly twice as likely to be taught by beginning teachers, decreasing the hope for raising these students’ achievement levels (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Compounding this predicament, Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2009) found that the more effective teachers who transfer rather than leave the profession tend to move to higher performing schools. Given these data, it is not surprising that Keesler and Schneider (2010) found that schools with high numbers of teachers with less than five years of experience had significantly higher rates of failing to
meet adequate yearly progress benchmarks than schools that employed more experienced teachers.

Teacher Attrition’s Effect on Districts’ Finances

Teacher attrition generally has a negative fiscal impact on schools and their districts since the resources utilized for hiring and training processes effectively decrease financial resources available to operate schools (Barnes et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2005; Shockley, Guglielmino, & Watlington, 2006b). Johnson et al. determined that the higher the incidence of teacher attrition, the lower the benefit from costs associated with hiring, educating, and retaining new teachers.

The demographics of a district, including SES, often determine the extent to which teacher attrition fiscally affects the district. At-risk schools are particularly vulnerable to the financial strains imposed by teacher attrition since they consistently spend a higher percentage of their overall available funding to frequently recruit and train teachers (Barnes et al., 2007). Urban districts are generally susceptible since they have an inordinately high percentage of at-risk schools.

Given the lost funds dedicated to teacher attrition, school districts would benefit from focusing their resources on implementing teacher support programs focused on reducing teacher attrition rates (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). Additionally, Barnes et al. (2007) reported having difficulty analyzing costs throughout the country due to a myriad of formulas utilized to calculate expenses associated with teacher attrition. They recommended districts develop a data collection system that can easily identify the specific costs of replacing teachers lost to attrition to further aid districts in clearly addressing the financial burden of teacher attrition.
Determinants of Teacher Attrition

Five factors that are often cited in the research as dominant factors influencing teacher attrition are salary (Imazeki, 2005), working conditions (Johnson et al., 2005) teacher preparation programs (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006), professional development opportunities for beginning teachers (National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future, 2007), and recruitment practices (Liu, 2004; McCarthy & Guiney, 2004).

**Salary.** Guarino, Santibañez, and Daley (2006) concluded that higher salaries are associated with lower teacher attrition as beginning teachers cite low salaries as an important reason for job dissatisfaction. Liu and Meyer (2005) found that low teacher salary was a leading cause of teacher dissatisfaction with their job that ultimately led to teacher attrition. Gonzalez, Stallone-Brown, and Slate (2008) found salary to be one of three most influential reasons why teachers left the profession in their study of exiting teachers in Texas. Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers (2004) conducted extensive interviews with 55 teachers in Massachusetts and found those teachers who could not afford a comfortable middle-class lifestyle and had difficulty paying their bills expressed the desire to leave teaching. Imazeki (2005) determined that by increasing beginning teachers’ salaries, new teacher attrition rates can be lowered. Imazeki pointed out that the attrition rate for new teachers might be impacted by the salary offerings in competing, neighboring districts if those districts offer higher salaries, enticing teachers to switch to their districts.

Rotherham and Mead (2003) stated that many talented individuals leave the teaching profession or do not enter it initially because of low salaries. Many teacher salary schedules are constructed to allow for financial gain to be realized based on years of service rather than other factors such as student performance or evaluation rating, a point that some educators
believe discourages talented individuals from being attracted to the teaching profession (Podgurksy & Springer, 2006).

Specific subject teachers in fields such as math and science (Leech, 2008; Podgursky, Monroe, & Watson, 2004) and English teachers (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008) viewed higher salaries as a deterrent to leaving the profession. Additionally, Hanushek et al. (2004) found that higher salaries for male teachers significantly reduced the likelihood of their departure from teaching, especially earlier in the males’ careers, while female teachers were less inclined to be influenced as dramatically by higher salaries.

Although evidence exists that pay is a factor for influencing teachers’ decisions to leave the profession (Brown & Slate, 2008; Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006; Imazeki, 2005; Liu & Meyer, 2005), there are data that offer a slightly different view of the impact salary has on teacher attrition (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). Hanushek and Rivkin pointed to working conditions as higher determinants for teacher attrition than salary. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2005) found that it is difficult for salary to be separated from other variables such as working conditions. They contended that some teachers would tolerate lower salary if working conditions were better and concluded that higher pay by itself would not likely yield higher retention rates. Similarly, Futernick (2007) found that in order for teachers to remain in the profession, teachers would likely forgo inadequacies in salary if they could avoid bureaucratic impediments to teaching such as excessive paperwork and interruptions to classroom instruction. Additionally, Futernick found that such aspects of teaching that include the ability to participate in the school’s decision-making processes and teachers’ relationships with their colleagues impacted their view of the importance of salary.

Johnson et al. (2005) found that it is difficult for salary to be separated from other
variables such as working conditions. Some teachers will tolerate lower salary if working conditions are satisfactory. Conversely, if working conditions are poor, a higher salary may be expected (Johnson, et al., 2005). Overall, teacher salaries are about 20.0% below the salaries of other professionals with comparable education and training (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

**Working conditions.** Research suggests that the area of working conditions must be considered as a possible reason for teacher attrition (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005). Working conditions include such variables as the availability of resources (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie & Yoon, 2004), administrative support (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Greiner & Smith, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009), teaching assignment (Johnson, 2006; Luekens, Lyter, Fox, & Chandler, 2004), student behavior (Geving, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007), teacher workload (Luekens et al., 2004; Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007), teacher accountability (Gaytan, 2008; Luther & Richman, 2009), and stress (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching, 2004).

One troubling issue involving working conditions was raised when Darling-Hammond (2003) reported that the teacher attrition rate at lower-income or lower achieving schools was influenced by the poorer working conditions typically found in these types of schools. Harris (2002) found that teachers in high-minority, low-income schools reported significantly worse working conditions, including poorer facilities, less access to textbooks and supplies, fewer administrative supports, and larger class size. Harris concluded that teachers in these schools were significantly more likely to leave teaching because of the working conditions.
**Resources.** Carroll et al. (2004) found that inadequate resources inhibit the ability of the teachers to be effective and lead to their disinterest in remaining in the teaching profession. They cited this as particularly troublesome for high-risk schools where working conditions tend to be deterrents of teacher entry and retention. These researchers reported that in districts where working conditions were more appealing, teachers were more likely to accept less money than if conditions were considered poor. Carroll et al.’s study is consonant with Buckley, Schneider, and Shang’s (2004) findings of a positive correlation between teachers’ perceptions of the quality of their facility and their likelihood of remaining in the school. Loeb et al. (2005) corroborated these findings in their study that showed increased teacher attrition in lower SES schools that have inadequate facilities. Public Education Network (2004) found that approximately 20.0% of respondents from four low-income schools of urban areas of the country cited inadequate resources and materials as one of their three most listed reasons for considering leaving the teaching profession.

Schneider (2003) found that those teachers who evaluated their facilities as having average or lower quality facilities were 40.0% more likely to consider leaving their schools. Similarly, Buckley et al. (2004) found with teachers in Washington, D.C. that there was a significant correlation between how teachers evaluated their schools’ facilities on a grading scale and their decision to remain at their schools. They found that the higher the grade of their school’s facilities, the more likely they were to remain at that school.

**Administrative support.** Research suggests that teachers’ views of their administrators have a major influence on teacher retention (Boyd, et al., 2011; Greiner & Smith, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009). Luekens et al. (2004) found that over one-third of teachers transferring to new schools cited dissatisfaction with support from their administrators as
either “very important” or “extremely important” in their decision to leave. Kukla-Acevedo (2009) found that administrative support was a more influential factor in teachers’ decisions to leave the profession than was student behavior. Texas teachers who had left the profession listed administrative support as one of the top three reasons for their decision to leave; the other two reasons were found to be student discipline and salary (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Additionally, Stockard and Lehman (2004) found that new teachers who perceived themselves as having less support from administration and less effective leadership indicated that they were less satisfied with teaching and more likely to consider leaving the profession.

Useem (2003) found that among 60 new middle school teachers in seven high-poverty schools in Philadelphia, all 12 teachers who worked in a school in which teachers were not happy with administrative practices either transferred or left teaching. As other schools reported far more stability, Useem concluded that strong administrative support and a collegial working environment can lead to higher retention rates.

Darling-Hammond (2003) found that the area of working conditions, including administrative support, was a more accurate predictor of teacher attrition than characteristics of students; however, not all teachers’ desire for support is limited to that provided by the administration. Many teachers express a need for support and collegiality from other teachers, and the lack of this support factors highly into their decision to exit the field (Abdallah, 2009; Luther & Richman, 2009). Paone et al. (2011) found that higher rates of teacher attrition led to a decrease in the existence of professional learning communities that he contended impacted student achievement. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2009) suggested that creating collaborative teams of teachers within buildings would serve as a possible way to decrease teacher attrition rates.
When administrators support teachers by creating and promoting opportunities for collegial relationships among the teachers themselves, teachers experience a higher degree of job satisfaction (Woods & Weasmer, 2004). Woods and Weasmer found that teachers have a need to provide input into the decisions made in their schools to build ownership in the outcomes of those decisions. Woods and Weasmer concluded that strong collaboration encouraged by administrators adds to the overall job satisfaction of teachers and subsequent decisions to remain in or leave the teaching profession.

Wong (2004) found that teachers look to remain in teaching if they feel supported by their administrators through strong leadership and an encouragement of collegial relationships and learning opportunities among their staff. He contended that teachers tend to remain in schools where their principals excel and allow teachers to observe each other and be part of professional networks and study groups.

Luther and Richman (2009) found that teachers are not only concerned with support from administrators, but also about administrative turnover. Luther and Richman found that teachers who reported a high frequency of administrators leaving or moving in and out of their schools found teaching challenging and subsequently influenced their decisions to exit the profession.

**Teaching assignment.** Teaching assignments highly affect beginning teachers’ decisions to remain in or leave the profession (Johnson, 2006; Luekens et al., 2004). Luekens et al. reported that 40.0% of teachers who move to another school do so to acquire a better teaching assignment, usually meaning subject area or grade level. They found that teaching assignment, including subject area or grade level, was listed by 13.1% of the teachers who left teaching as a “very important” or “extremely important” reason for their
decision. Feng (2005) found that the student composition present within classrooms helped define teaching assignments. In her study of Florida teachers, those teachers who were assigned more capable students and a smaller number of students with behavior problems were more likely to remain in the teaching profession.

In her study, Johnson (2006) found that, particularly in the secondary setting, new teachers tended to have more class preparations than did their more experienced counterparts. This led to increased demands on the beginning teachers’ available time for preparation and resulted in a higher likelihood of them leaving teaching.

**Student behavior.** Student behavior is one of the main reasons why teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Specifically, Harrell and Jackson (2004) and Liu and Meyer (2005) concluded that student behavior has a significant impact on teacher attrition, following only issues relating to a teacher’s income level. Additionally, student behavior issues are related to a teacher’s job satisfaction that ultimately impacts a teacher’s decision to leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Student misbehavior also can lead to teacher stress that ultimately can impact a teacher’s decision to remain in the classroom (Geving, 2007; Kokkinos, 2007; Rieg et al., 2007). Multiple factors of student behavior leading to stress were found to be students’ disrespectful attitudes toward teachers and other students, hyperactivity, inattentiveness, and apathy toward learning (Geving, 2007).

**Teacher workload.** The overall workload of teachers can also affect the stress level of beginning teachers. Novice teachers can find themselves having to prepare for multiple and different class preparations and may be required to travel among different classrooms and schools. Luekens et al. (2004) found that the beginning teachers felt that their teaching
workload was too heavy and may have led to their decision to leave the profession.

Class size, an impact on a teacher’s workload, was also found to influence teachers’ decisions to leave the profession (Luekens et al., 2004; Public Education Network, 2004). Specifically, Luekens et al. found that approximately 26.0% of teachers who left the profession responded that they felt the classes they taught were too large.

**Teacher accountability.** The area of teacher accountability and its role as a factor in teacher attrition is getting increasingly scrutinized. Luther and Richman (2009) found that while teachers felt that some accountability was necessary, having to follow rigid standards and guidelines diminished the teachers’ autonomy and creativity. Luther and Richman concluded that this led to a lack of morale that led to lower job satisfaction and a higher likelihood of teacher attrition. Additionally, Gaytan (2008) found that increased accountability impacted both teacher retention and the actual initial recruitment as individuals considered entering the teaching profession. Tye and O’Brien (2002) tracked the graduates of a large teacher education program and found that teachers who had already left teaching listed increased accountability involving standards, high-stakes testing, and test preparations their number one reason for leaving. Furthermore, teachers who were still teaching but were considering leaving ranked accountability pressures on a high level.

**Stress.** Teachers feel stress specifically when facing a variety of working conditions (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching, 2004). Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching found that stress is a major factor for teachers when they are unprepared for the subjects they are assigned to teach. For example, secondary mathematics teachers may be assigned advanced mathematics classes as they first enter the profession. They may struggle to stay ahead of their students as they quickly
prepare lessons and fear being asked difficult questions from students. Consequently, they feel less than satisfied with their job performance, which can result in their decision to leave the position or profession (Johnson & The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching, 2004).

Fisher (2011) found that a major cause of stress for teachers of Advanced Placement courses is the increased accountability that these teachers experience when their students’ test scores are compared to other students on a national basis versus state or local levels. Additionally, Fisher found that these teachers are often asked to teach the Advanced Placement courses with little or no prior experience with these upper level courses.

Blase et al. (2008) found that a lack of parental and administrative support caused stress. Brown (2005) concluded that among teachers, stress is also a result of a lack of time to complete paperwork requirements of teaching. Overall, Jepson and Forrest (2006) found that some of the greatest predictors of increased stress with teachers are their personality type, level of teaching (elementary or secondary), experience level, and gender.

**Teacher preparation.** The level of teacher preparation is considered one of the determinants of teacher attrition. Overall, teachers who experience a high degree of preparation prior to entering the profession are more likely to stay in teaching than their less prepared counterparts (Boe et al., 2006). Specifically, pedagogical preparation that teachers receive prior to entering the profession has a direct impact on teacher retention (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2012). Ingersoll et al. found that those teachers who took a higher number of courses focusing on the art of teaching, including methodology, child psychology, and other areas involving selection of instructional strategies and materials, were significantly less likely to leave the profession. Additionally, they found that those teachers who received
high quality feedback, experienced frequent observations of other teachers, and spent more time in student teaching were less likely to leave teaching.

While these data point to teachers in general, Ingersoll et al. (2012) specifically completed research on mathematics and science teachers. As one of the more critical areas for which to provide an adequate supply of teachers, mathematics and science teachers are particularly affected by teacher preparation programs (Ingersoll et al., 2012). Ingersoll et al. found that the mathematics and science teachers’ undergraduate degrees, whether they were in education or not, had little impact on teacher attrition. However, they found that those mathematics and science teachers who experienced less pedagogical training were nearly twice as likely to leave the profession than those mathematics and science teachers who had received a comprehensive set of pedagogical courses.

As alternative preparation programs have grown in response to the shortages of teachers in critical subject areas and geographic locations, there is the concern raised that the teacher attrition rates may increase with the influx of these new recruits. Fisk, Prowda, and Beaudin (2001) found that those individuals who were lacking in proper certification or had been trained under the guidance of an alternative program left the teaching profession at nearly twice the rate. They also found that minority teachers who were trained within alternative certification programs left the profession twice as frequently as their non-minority counterparts. Additionally, Fowler (2003) noted that those teachers who were trained through Massachusetts’ alternative certification program left teaching after three years at the rate of 46.0%, over twice above the national average for all teachers.

Decker, Mayer, and Glazerman (2004) concluded that teachers from one of the major alternative teacher preparation programs, Teach for America, were far more likely to leave
than their non-Teach for America counterparts. They found that only 11.0% of the teachers within the Teach for America program reported that they were expecting to remain in teaching indefinitely. Additionally, Decker et al. found that none of the respondents indicated that they expected to remain in the profession until retirement.

Professional development for beginning teachers. Professional development that is provided to beginning teachers has an impact on teachers’ decisions to remain in teaching or exit the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). School districts cannot assume that teachers will be successful once they are employed. The Alliance for Excellent Education found that comprehensive induction programs can dramatically reduce teacher attrition, up to 50.0%, if they are developed and used with fidelity. It defined comprehensive induction as including a mentoring component, professional development and support for new teachers, scheduled opportunities for beginning teachers to meet with other teachers, and formal assessment feedback for beginning teachers during their initial years of teaching. It further found that an induction program should include strategies and resources to allow beginning teachers to be successful.

High quality teacher mentoring programs have a positive impact on keeping teacher retention rates lower (Cohen & Fuller, 2006; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kapadia, Coa, & Easton, 2007; Wong, 2009). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that teachers who participated in an induction program, a mentoring program, or a combination of both improved their retention rates by 15.0% to 50.0%. They found that having a same-field mentor and collaboration during common planning time were two components of an induction program that would lead to greater teacher retention. Additionally, they found that there was a proportional difference of teacher retention rates based on the number of components of a
comprehensive induction program that was used. Teachers can also benefit from the community atmosphere that can be provided during induction programs, leading to a higher level of teacher satisfaction and a decreased likelihood of leaving the profession (Heller, 2004). Looking more closely at beginning teachers, Marvel et al. (2007) found beginning teachers who received a mentor during their first year of teaching were half as likely to leave the profession compared to those beginning teachers who had not been assigned a mentor.

Another benefit of induction as it impacts teacher attrition can be found in Villar and Strong’s (2007) research. While mentoring and induction programs vary in structure and implementation, Villar and Strong found that the cost of mentoring can outweigh the cost of replacing the departing teacher through the combined expenses involved with recruiting and additional training of the new teacher.

Johnson et al. (2005) found that by having career ladders for teachers, fewer teachers were likely to leave the profession. Johnson et al. cited career ladders as including options for more veteran teachers to eventually grow to assume a variety of roles such as mentors, curriculum leaders, professional development leaders, or master teachers. She found that this allows these more veteran teachers to have professional options for growth rather than stagnation and eventual departure from teaching.

Impact of recruitment practices. While the focus on teachers leaving the profession remains paramount for many educators, the process through which teachers are hired is also being considered as a determinant for teacher attrition (Liu, 2004; McCarthy & Guiney, 2004). In his research involving new teachers from California, Michigan, Massachusetts, and Florida, Liu found that there is a better fit between the teacher and the district if the teacher makes the choice for employment when there is a full disclosure of the characteristics of the
district and specific information is shared about the involved teaching position. Liu concluded that a comprehensive dialogue and investigation should be completed on the part of the teacher and the district to ensure that both the teacher understands what will be expected from the district and the district comprehends what needs the specific teacher may have to be successful. Liu found that when teachers fully understand what is expected through a thorough interviewing process, they are more likely to have higher job satisfaction.

McCarthy and Guiney (2004) corroborated this research with their study of teachers within Boston’s public schools. They found that beginning teachers who had gathered information about the student demographics, staff culture, and the students’ needs prior to being hired were more likely to view their positions more positively. McCarthy and Guiney concluded that this higher satisfaction with their job led to a greater likelihood of remaining in teaching. Additionally, they found that the likelihood of higher job satisfaction increased among those teachers who had a higher degree of interaction with the district’s students.

The timing of hiring also impacts new teachers’ likelihood of success in their first year (Liu, 2004; McCarthy & Guiney, 2004; Useem & Farley, 2004). Liu found much of the hiring occurred within the month preceding the start of school and the first month of school. This late hiring did not allow for substantial preparation on the parts of the teachers as it relates to familiarization of curriculum, development of relationships with colleagues, and classroom preparations (Liu, 2004). McCarthy and Guiney found that those new teachers in Boston’s public schools in 2002 were hired on an average of just less than 17 days prior to the first day of school.

Late hiring is more prevalent in urban than suburban districts (Levin & Quinn, 2003; Useem & Farley, 2004). Useem and Farley found that late hiring in the areas in and near the
Philadelphia region were primarily due to delays in budget decisions, late transfers, and resignations. Levin and Quinn found late hiring to be common among their study of urban schools in contrast to early summer hiring being the norm for their suburban districts.

Levin & Quinn (2003) found that late hiring impacted the quality of teachers that districts ultimately hired. They found that students with higher grade point averages and those possessing more intense college preparations were more likely to accept positions earlier in the hiring schedule. Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching (2004) found similar results in their study of teachers from Massachusetts who accepted jobs earlier rather than waiting for later offers in order for them to have more time to prepare for their teaching assignment. Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching found that late hiring translated into a greater likelihood of job dissatisfaction in two ways. First, the teachers who took jobs in which they were less interested felt their frustrations once employed. Second, teachers had less time to prepare for their teaching assignment’s requirements.

Characteristics of Teachers Who Leave the Profession

Similar to the range of reasons why teachers leave the profession, the characteristics of these teachers vary. Age is one notable characteristic of teachers who leave the profession (Hanushek et al., 2004). Hanushek et al. found that there exists a u-shaped curve distribution with the younger and the older teachers being more likely to leave the profession. They found that teachers with the least and the most years of experience were more likely to leave the profession. Teachers under 30 years of age are the least likely to remain in the profession (Luekens et al., 2004).

Regarding gender, the research is inconclusive. While some research found that female
teachers had higher attrition rates than male teachers (Guarino et al., 2006; Luekens et al., 2004), other research data pointed to no significant difference between male and female teachers leaving the profession (Greiner & Smith, 2009).

In another study, Podgursky et al. (2004) found the higher the ACT (American College Testing) scores were of the teachers and if their attendance were at more selective colleges, there was a significantly greater likelihood of them leaving their profession in the first few years. They also found that the wages earned for male teachers after leaving teaching were higher than while serving as teachers. They found that the opposite occurred for females, whose wages after leaving teaching were lower on average from their salaries as teachers. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2005) found that high-achieving science and math teachers were significantly more likely to leave the profession than their high-achieving counterparts in other disciplines or subject areas.

Other areas of teacher demographics provide additional insight into the characteristics of those teachers who are leaving the profession. Highly capable teachers are more likely to leave the profession than less capable teachers (Boyd et al., 2005; Guarino et al., 2006; Podgursky et al., 2004). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that beginning teachers from high poverty schools were more likely to leave the profession than those beginning teachers at less impoverished districts.

Hanushek, et al. (2004) found that the ethnic background of the students impacted the decision of the teachers to remain in the profession. They found that white teachers were more likely to leave schools with higher concentrations of minority students. Conversely, Hanushek et al. concluded that minority teachers were less likely to leave if they taught in schools with higher concentrations of minority students.
Regarding the type of schools that teachers tend to leave, research data provide an insight into why some teachers depart. Teachers leave schools at a higher rate when there exists a high proportion of minority students or a large percentage of low-income students (Hanushek et al., 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Additionally, Guarino et al. (2006) found that teacher attrition tended to be higher in low performing schools and in urban areas as compared to rural or suburban communities. Paone et al. (2008) found a nearly doubled teacher attrition rate in schools having an unsatisfactory rating on the state’s accountability scale as compared to those schools with average ratings. Hanushek et al. found that teachers who left the profession in an urban Texas school district had students with lower achievement gains. They suggested, however, that the potential effect of these teachers’ departures may have been positive if more qualified teachers ultimately had been hired. Boyd et al. (2009) found a similar situation in New York City schools and suggested that some students may benefit when ineffective teachers leave the profession. They contended that student performance in this situation might increase as a result of teacher attrition.

**Summary**

Research affords policymakers and educational leaders the opportunity to make informed decisions. When evidence supporting the need for high quality teachers whose effect on student achievement is present, the reasons for teachers leaving the profession can be traced to the addressed areas of salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development of beginning teachers, and recruitment practices.

Knowing the characteristics of teachers who are more likely to leave the profession or remain in teaching is helpful, as educators focus on what can be done to assist teachers having these characteristics to be more likely to decide to stay in the profession. Teacher
attrition’s impact on student achievement, the staff responsible for hiring teachers, personnel providing professional development, higher education policymakers, and those who are involved in local financial decisions is real. Knowing what can be done to ameliorate this impact using research data is critical.

As the national research continues to focus on the key factors of why teachers leave the profession, research pertinent to more localized areas is seen as less prolific. Having such local, specific information can assist appropriate educational planners. Avoiding the loss of teaching expertise in an environment of limited school funds is the hope of educators and policymakers as they consider teacher attrition.
Chapter Three – Methods and Procedures

Introduction

This study focused on teachers’ perceptions of the reasons public school teachers leave the teaching profession. The researcher included a description of the subjects of the study, the setting of the study, the instruments to be used to conduct the study, the research design, procedures to be followed when conducting the study, the analysis of the data, and the summary.

Subjects

The subjects for this study included 286 teachers working within a single public school district in south-central Pennsylvania during the 2012-2013 school year. Part-time and full-time teachers were included in this group. The subjects were from all levels of the district’s grade configurations including four elementary schools, one intermediate school, and one high school. Subjects possessed a wide spectrum of characteristics including gender, age, levels of education, ethnicity, salary levels, and years of experience.

Setting

This study was conducted within a single public school district in south-central Pennsylvania comprised of 56 square miles with a population of 26,736. The district is in a rural setting and has an occupational profile that includes a mix of agriculture and light industry. The population of the district includes multi-generational families along with an influx of people who have moved there from a neighboring state but commute to their out-of-state employers. The annual operating budget for the 2012-2013 school year is $55,630,723 with nearly two-thirds of this amount originating from local funding. The district spends $13,818 per student in annual expenses including student instruction.

The student population is approximately 4,100 found within four elementary schools,
one intermediate school, and one high school. The grade configuration for the elementary schools is kindergarten through grade five, the intermediate is grades six through eight, and the high school is grades nine through twelve. The student population is 91.4% White with 2.9% African American, 2.8% Hispanic, 1.7% Asian, 0.2% Indian, and 1.0% other. Within the district 13.4% of the students are identified as learning support and 3.8% as gifted.

The average daily attendance for each level is 96.6% for kindergarten through grade five, 96.3% for grades six through eight, and 95.7% for grades nine through twelve. Free and reduced lunch eligibility for the district is 28%. The four elementary schools have free and reduced lunch rates of approximately 32.0%, 21.0%, 32.0%, and 19.0%. The intermediate school and high school have free and reduced lunch eligibility rates of 30.0% and 24.0%, respectively. Two of the four elementary schools receive Title I federal funds due to their proportion of students from low income families and the students’ educational needs based on the district’s self-determined criteria in the area of reading.

The graduation rate, defined as the percent of students graduating in four years, is 88.7%. The following is a class profile of the expected career activity for the 324 graduating seniors from the class of 2012. Among the graduating seniors, 79.0% planned to attend an institution of higher education, 10.0% had full-time employment, 6.0% enlisted in the military, and 5.0% were either unemployed or their plans were undecided.

Regarding student performance on state assessments, state proficiency targets for the 2012 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) were 81.0% for mathematics and 79.0% for reading. The following percentages were for those students reaching proficiency targets for mathematics and reading respectively for the 2012 PSSA tests for the four elementary schools: 86.1% and 80.8%, 80.8% and 80.0%, 82.0% and 70.0%, and 83.0% and
78.0%. The percentages for those students reaching proficiency targets for the 2012 PSSA mathematics and reading tests respectively for the intermediate school were 91.2% and 82.3%, and for the high school, 62.6% and 62.8%.

Class size averages for the various levels of grade configurations are as follows listed by students per teacher per class: Kindergarten through grade two – 21, grades three through five – 23, grades six through eight – 26, and grades nine through twelve – 25. Regarding serious reports of student misbehavior during the 2011-2012 school year in the district, there were six expulsions for drugs/alcohol/tobacco and three expulsions for weapons or violence.

The district’s staff is comprised of 295 professional staff and 273 support staff. Additionally, there are 24 administrative staff including central office personnel and building administration. The salary schedule in effect provides for a range from a beginning teacher with no experience to earn $47,029 per year to a teacher with a minimum of eighteen years of service and a master’s degree plus sixty credits to earn $82,267.

The district is a member of a teacher induction consortium that collectively provides mandated induction activities and training to its member districts’ teachers. The district provides leadership and resources to support the induction program’s five goals, which are to develop a strong mentoring relationship between the beginning teacher and the induction team, to establish available and necessary resources and practices, to build an understanding of district student achievement expectations, to establish a knowledge base of successful classroom techniques and procedures, and to develop an awareness of professional expectations (The Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008). This program is one year in duration and includes a mentor teacher, as a member of the induction team, serving as the key resource to the beginning teacher. Interaction between the induction team, comprised
typically of the mentor teacher and at least one building administrator, is formally and informally encouraged along with a requirement for a log of activities that must be submitted at the conclusion of the school year. Opportunities exist for both district and consortium activities that support the five goals of the program (The Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2008).

The district hires a varying number of teachers each year and as needed during the year. Typically, the district’s teacher turnover rate, defined in this case as the number of teachers who leave the district per year and are replaced, averages approximately 7% of the total teaching staff. Recruitment practices include public advertisement of all positions and district officials’ attendance at career fairs at various colleges and universities.

Teachers in the district are evaluated annually on all aspects of their job performance including both classroom performance and other professional activities. This overall rating is either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and is typically shared at the conclusion of the school year. Additionally, teachers participate in a differentiated supervision model in which they choose to experience one or more modes including a self-directed project, peer collaboration, or administrative observation. All first-year teachers are formally observed at least once per marking period. Additionally, short informal visits are made frequently by building and central office administrators.

**Instruments**

This survey instrument was developed by the researcher and used via an online service provider, SurveyMonkey (see Appendix A). The instrument included statements utilizing a Likert scale and open-response questions to which teachers were asked to respond with comments. The follow-up interview questions were also developed by the researcher based
on existing literature and needs of the study (see Appendix B). The survey instrument, comprised of the Likert scale questions, open-response questions, and interview questions, was developed by the researcher and reviewed by an expert panel consisting of teachers who were not part of the study. The questions found within the survey and interview formats were developed using other previously used surveys and questions that were found to be useful in similar studies and the creation of original questions. This panel provided feedback to the researcher regarding format, ease of understanding, and clarity. Once the expert panel reached a consensus, the survey instrument and interview questions were field tested with teachers who were not part of the study. The researcher used the results of the field test to determine the final composition of the survey instrument and interview questions.

**Research Design**

This study was a qualitative case study that focused on teachers’ perceptions of the reasons why teachers leave the profession. Merriam (2002) suggests that qualitative researchers are focused on conducting data collection in the field, gathering and analyzing data, understanding meaning from data, using an inductive approach to data analysis, and producing a descriptive narrative. Aligning with these points, this study involved one public school district with 286 teachers. Data were analyzed qualitatively without the use of substantial quantitative analysis and presented in a narrative to shed light on reasons for teacher attrition, the reasons why teachers choose to remain in teaching, and suggestions as to what districts can do to retain teachers in the teaching profession.

The researcher addressed reliability and validity of the instrument. Reliability is defined as how stable, trustworthy, and consistent an instrument is at measuring the same thing each time (Worthen, Borg, & White, 1993). The researcher in this study presented all
participants with the same online survey that included identical questions and format. The researcher used the same questions and interviewing format for each of the teachers who were interviewed following the completion of the online survey. Validity is defined as how the measure accurately determines the results of what the instrument was meant to measure (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1987). Creswell (2009) suggests that triangulating data by acquiring them from several perspectives from participants will add to the validity of qualitative research. In this study data triangulation occurred through the use of the three forms of data provided within the Likert scale questions, responses to the open-response questions, and the data gathered from the personal interviews that occurred following the submission of the initial survey.

**Procedure**

This study began with the development of the online survey instrument and personal interview questions. The researcher solicited the professional opinions and reactions to these questions and format via an expert panel comprised of eight administrators and kindergarten through twelfth grade teachers within the researcher’s own district. A revised survey was then given to a pilot group of eight teachers from neighboring school districts not included in the study’s survey pool. Using the feedback from this final pilot group following their actual completion of the survey, the researcher adjusted the questions to ensure validity.

Once the survey questions and format were finalized, the researcher submitted the study’s proposal to the researcher’s dissertation committee for input. Following changes from this group of professionals, the researcher submitted the study’s proposal to the Research Ethics Review Board at Immaculata University for its approval (see Appendix C). Once approval was granted, the researcher proceeded to conduct the study.
The initial step of the study was to acquire the selected school district’s superintendent’s permission to conduct the study via a letter, requesting her permission to contact her staff regarding the survey (see Appendix D). Once this permission was granted, the researcher contacted the building principals via e-mail explaining to them the study (see Appendix E). The researcher then sent an e-mail that contained the link to the survey to all teachers and included statements explaining confidentiality and anonymity regarding their responses (see Appendix F).

In order to acquire volunteers who would be willing to be interviewed, the researcher provided a statement in the original e-mail to contact the researcher either via telephone or e-mail to volunteer for the interview if the respondent were interested in being interviewed. From this group of volunteers, the researcher randomly selected two teachers from each of the elementary, intermediate, and high school levels to be interviewed. The researcher conducted each interview in person. The researcher recorded the interview via an audio recording method for subsequent transcription. To ensure the respondents’ anonymity, the interviews were coded with the letter E to indicate the elementary interviews, I to indicate the intermediate interviews, and H to signify the high school interviews. Each interview was assigned a specific number identifying only the order in which the interview was conducted. Each of the interviewees completed the consent form prior to participating in the interview (see Appendix G).

Upon the compilation of all data, the researcher analyzed the results of the study. Specifically, the researcher used the data from the survey’s Likert scale questions, the open-response questions, and the information provided through the six personal interviews to analyze the consistency of the data gathered.
Analysis of Data

The researcher collected the survey data from the online survey service provider via a password-secured, electronic method without identifying information. All data were secured in locked files or a password-secured digital medium.

The researcher gathered quantitative data via responses to the questions posed within the format of the Likert scale. The researcher gathered qualitative data from the responses provided to the open-response questions and during the interviews. Specifically, the researcher utilized an online survey service provider to collect data gathered from the surveys and depicted them in numerical and graphical formats.

The researcher analyzed all data to compare responses within the three areas of questioning to determine commonalities and differences. Particular focus and organization of data analysis was given to the various perceptions that responding teachers had pertaining to why teachers leave the teaching profession, the reasons why teachers remain in the profession, and steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention. These data were the basis for the study’s conclusions.

Summary

This study focused on teachers’ perceptions of the reasons public school teachers leave the teaching profession. The subjects for the study were teachers from a single public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania. They provided responses to an electronically delivered survey that included questions within the Likert scale format and open-response questions. Additionally, they had the opportunity to be randomly selected for personal interviews with the researcher if they so desired. The qualitative data found through these three forms of questions served as triangulation for this study and the basis for analysis.
Chapter Four - Results

Introduction

The data presented in this chapter represent teachers’ perceptions of the reasons for teacher attrition, the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession, and what districts can do to enhance teacher retention. The three guiding research questions were: (a) What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition? (b) What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession? and (c) What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?

This qualitative case study included data from the teaching staff from one public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania. Within the context of this study, the researcher focused data collection within the framework of five reasons for teacher attrition that included salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment practices. Included within working conditions for this study were the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.

Additionally, teachers provided their views of what factors would be most important or least important to teachers as they decide to continue in the teaching profession. The third guiding area of research focused on what a public school district can do to increase the likelihood for teachers to remain in the profession.

Results

This study occurred through the use of the three forms of data provided within Likert scale questions, open-response questions, and subsequent personal interviews that occurred following the submission of the initial survey. Teachers provided their perceptions to the
Likert questions and the open-response questions through an online survey. Volunteers from this group of respondents provided more in-depth reflections through personal interviews.

The researcher created the online survey and personal interview questions. The online survey consisted of eight teacher demographic questions, thirty-six closed-ended questions that solicited teachers’ perceptions involving the three guiding questions, and three open-response questions that addressed the three guiding questions. The twelve questions used during the personal interviews also included references to the three guiding research questions.

At the conclusion of the online survey that included the closed-ended questions and the open-response questions, participants had the opportunity to volunteer to be personally interviewed by the researcher. Eleven teachers contacted the researcher volunteering for the interview part of the study. From these eleven volunteers, the researcher randomly selected two teachers to be interviewed from each of the following levels: elementary school, intermediate school, and high school. The researcher conducted each interview in person at a time and location that was convenient for each interviewee. To ensure the respondents’ anonymity, the interviews were coded with the letter E to indicate the elementary interviews, I to indicate the intermediate interviews, and H to signify the high school interviews. Each interview was assigned a specific number identifying only the order in which the interview was conducted. No demographic information was gathered during the interviews to protect the anonymity of the participants.

**Demographic Information of Subjects**

The subjects for this study included teachers working within a single public school district in south-central Pennsylvania during the 2012-2013 school year. All 286 part-time
and full-time teachers employed by this district were included in this group and invited to participate in the online survey. There were 117 respondents resulting in a 40.9% response rate. The following demographic information is provided to allow for an understanding of the overall complexion of the sample population.

Table 4.1 shows the breakdown of the respondents and non-respondents, those teachers who did not answer the question, by the school within which each teacher works and the percentage for each category of the total sample population.

Table 4.1

*Online survey participants by level affiliation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job - Grade configuration</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of sample population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher – Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and/or 5 (Elementary)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher – Grades 6, 7, and/or 8 (Intermediate)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher – Grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12 (High School)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Not school specific)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-respondents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( N = 117 \).

As an overview of the professional longevity of the teaching staff, Table 4.2 indicates the breakdown of the sample population by the number of years that the teachers have been employed in education along with the percentage for each category of the total sample population.
Table 4.2

*Online survey participants by years employed in education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of sample population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *N = 117.*

The breakdown for gender classification was 90 females and 23 males with 4 non-respondents. Females comprised 76.9% of the total sample, males comprised 19.7%, and non-respondents accounted for 3.4%.

To provide an overview of the sample population’s age, Table 4.3 indicates the breakdown of total respondents as indicated by age ranges provided to the teachers on the online survey and the percentage for each category of the total number of respondents to the survey.
Table 4.3

*Online survey participants by age ranges by years of age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *N* = 117.

All respondents in this study classified their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian when asked to choose from a list of choices that included other classifications of American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black or African American, and Hispanic American.

Table 4.4 indicates the breakdown of total respondents by the number of years they anticipate they will teach before they leave the teaching profession or retire and the percentage for each category of the total sample population. This information provides an overview of the potential amount of time between the present and a potential retirement time. Additionally, these data indicate a sense for the overall tenure of the teaching staff within this district.
Table 4.4

*Online survey participants’ projected years in education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projected no. of years prior to leaving or retiring</th>
<th>No. of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of total respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 or fewer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *N* = 117.

**Research Question One - What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition?**

Teachers responded to a range of questions to provide their perceptions of the reasons for teacher attrition. Specific areas of questions included salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment practices. The area of working conditions was further disaggregated to include the specific areas of the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.

Table 4.5 depicts the online survey results of the teachers’ perceptions when asked to consider the influence that the area of salary concerns has on teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession or depart prior to retirement. Additionally, data are presented to indicate the teachers’ perceptions regarding if salary concerns impact female teachers more than male teachers or if male teachers are impacted more when considering remaining in the profession.
or leaving prior to retirement.

Table 4.5

*Teachers’ perceptions of salary as a factor influencing teacher attrition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N A/D</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary concerns are why teachers choose to leave the profession.</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(16)13.7%</td>
<td>(27)23.1%</td>
<td>(65)55.5%</td>
<td>(4)3.4%</td>
<td>(5)4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary concerns influence female teachers more than male teachers to leave the profession.</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(2)1.7%</td>
<td>(18)15.4%</td>
<td>(76)64.9%</td>
<td>(16)13.7%</td>
<td>(5)4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary concerns influence male teachers more than female teachers to leave the profession.</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(27)23.1%</td>
<td>(28)23.9%</td>
<td>(46)39.3%</td>
<td>(11)9.4%</td>
<td>(5)4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 117; SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, N A/D = Neither agree nor disagree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, NR = Non-responses. The number of respondents for each rating is listed in parentheses.

Teachers provided more details to the salary area of questioning through the open-response section of the online survey. One teacher responded to the inquiry regarding salary and its impact on teachers who leave the profession prior to retirement by saying, “Real teachers don’t leave because of money. Real teachers don’t become teachers because of the money; they become teachers because of their passion, their mission to give back, their real love for children.”

Another teacher responded to this online open-response question by stating, “I think it is dependent upon the teacher’s initial placement and priorities. In more urban settings and in
some states, the major reason could be attributed to poor pay or student behavior issues.”

E-1, an elementary school interviewee, responded to the question, “Do you believe salary is a major factor in teacher attrition?” with the following:

Possibly for the younger teachers - I think they may have more of a need for that salary because they’ve got higher student loans than what maybe some of the older teachers had when they came in to teaching.

I-1, an intermediate school interviewee, responded to the same question with the following:

I don’t think so. I think that for the most part, teachers enter the profession because they want to teach and they love kids, and I think the salary is adequate, and they knew that before it started. Otherwise, if salary had really been important, I think they would have chosen a career that was more lucrative. I don’t see salary as an issue myself.

I-2, an intermediate school interviewee, responded to the question, “Do you believe salary is a major factor in teacher attrition?” with the following statement:

I think that salaries are probably pretty fair, so I would say that it’s not a huge thing. I think that most people understand that you’re not going to get really rich being a teacher. I think that a lot of teachers that are married to other teachers live very comfortably, and I think looking at a lot of other professions that I value, teachers get paid pretty well.

H-1, a high school interviewee, offered her response to the same question when she stated:

I do not. One of the things one of our teachers said was, “I would do this job for free if it wouldn’t be for all the other stuff that I have to do.” I agree with that. Teaching is just absolutely the most inspirational job that you can have. It differs every day,
and your kids bring you learning experiences and things to look up, as well as a learning experience for them, and the interaction is just a fabulous thing.

H-2, a high school interviewee, responded to the question, “Do you believe salary is a major factor in teacher attrition?” by stating, “No, not at all. I think we’re paid well; either that, or I’m very satisfied. I don’t believe teachers are in it for the money by any means.”

Working conditions for this study were described to include the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.

Regarding working conditions, 59 teachers, or 50.4% of teachers responding to the survey, agreed that teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they want better working conditions while 17 teachers, or 14.5% of the respondents, strongly agreed. There were 21 teachers, or 18.0% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this contention. Additionally, 11 teachers, or 9.4% of the respondents, disagreed with this statement while 2 teachers, or 1.7% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this statement. There were 7 teachers, or 6.0% of the sample population, who did not respond to this question.

Table 4.6 depicts the online survey results of the teachers’ perceptions when asked to consider the influence that the area of working conditions has on teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession or leave prior to retirement. Data are also presented to indicate the teachers’ perceptions regarding if beginning teachers, those teachers having three or fewer years of experience, leave the profession prior to retirement due to wanting better working conditions. Additionally, the table contains data that reflect the teachers’ perceptions of whether female or male teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at higher rates.
because they want better working conditions.

Table 4.6

*Teachers’ perceptions of the area of working conditions as a factor influencing teacher attrition*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N A/D</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The area of working conditions is the most important reason why public school teachers leave teaching.</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they want better working conditions.</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female teachers leave the profession more than male teachers because they want better working conditions.</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male teachers leave the profession more than female teachers because they want better working conditions.</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *N* = 117; SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, N A/D = Neither agree nor disagree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, NR = Non-responses. The number of respondents for each rating is listed in parentheses.

Table 4.7 reflects the perceptions of teachers as they addressed each area of working conditions as a major reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. The
information reflects the degree of agreement or disagreement that the teachers viewed each area of working conditions as a major reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

Table 4.7

*Teachers’ perceptions of each factor of working conditions as a major reason teachers leave the profession prior to retirement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N A/D</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of resources</td>
<td>(3)2.5%</td>
<td>(36)30.8%</td>
<td>(30)25.6%</td>
<td>(36)30.8%</td>
<td>(5)4.3%</td>
<td>(7)6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>(30)25.6%</td>
<td>(53)45.3%</td>
<td>(15)12.8%</td>
<td>(11)9.4%</td>
<td>(1)0.9%</td>
<td>(7)6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assignment</td>
<td>(13)11.1%</td>
<td>(53)45.2%</td>
<td>(21)18.0%</td>
<td>(21)18.0%</td>
<td>(2)1.7%</td>
<td>(7)6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor student behavior</td>
<td>(19)16.2%</td>
<td>(60)51.2%</td>
<td>(12)10.3%</td>
<td>(18)15.4%</td>
<td>(1)0.9%</td>
<td>(7)6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher workload</td>
<td>(51)43.6%</td>
<td>(47)40.2%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
<td>(2)1.7%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(8)6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher accountability</td>
<td>(33)28.2%</td>
<td>(52)44.4%</td>
<td>(15)12.8%</td>
<td>(7)6.0%</td>
<td>(1)0.9%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>(83)70.9%</td>
<td>(27)23.1%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 117$; SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, N A/D = Neither agree nor disagree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree, NR = Non-responses. The number of respondents for each rating is listed in parentheses.

The area of working conditions and its various components as described for this study prompted a plethora of responses in the open-response section of the online survey. The two most mentioned areas within the responses to the question, “What do you perceive is/are the
most influential reason(s) why teachers leave the teaching profession other than retirement?"
were stress and administrative support. Similarly, the interviewees cited these two areas as
being major reasons why teachers leave the profession early.

Within the open responses, 47 of the teachers, or 52.2% of all teachers who scripted a
response to this question, cited stress as the most influential reason why teachers leave
teaching prior to retirement. This response was cited more than any other single reason for
teacher attrition. One teacher commented:

The most influential reason for teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement is
stress. That stress comes from a combination of factors including, but are not limited
to, teaching to the test, the workload, and lack of support or guidance from
administration.

Another teacher responded with the following:

Teachers are leaving the teaching profession due to health issues stemming from high
stress levels. The increasing expectations from districts to teach more with less
resources and less support from administration cause teachers to experience mental
and physical stress.

Another teacher cited stress as a major reason for teachers leaving early by saying, “I believe
stress (burnout) is the biggest reason teachers leave the teaching profession prior to
retirement. There are a lot of expectations placed on teachers and not enough time or
resources to cope with these demands.”

Responses given during the personal interviews were similar to those given in the
online survey, both in the closed-ended and open-response sections. When responding to the
question, “Is there one or two of the parts of working conditions that you believe is or are
more influential in teacher attrition than the other parts?” H-2, a high school interviewee, said:

Stress, yes. I think stress is more than anything, because if you see somebody has to get out, it’s because they just can’t take it anymore. The kids are kids, and if you can skin your own cat you can deal with the kids. Most of the teachers are strong enough to take care of that, but once the teachers start to not be as effective in the classroom or with their lesson plans, or with their organizational skills, the stress just snowballs and becomes the biggest issue and they end up stepping out; they need to move on to another profession.

Administrative support was also cited as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession early or as a cause of stress that ultimately leads to teacher attrition. Found in the online open responses, one teacher, in response to the question, “What is the major reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement?” stated the following:

One of the most influential reasons for leaving the profession would likely be support from administration. Administration is responsible for many decisions within the district that directly impact the staff and students. If teachers do not feel as though they are supported, they will become frustrated at the demands placed on them. E-2, an elementary interviewee, cited administrative support as the major area of working conditions that causes teachers to exit the profession prior to retirement. She stated:

I know a lot of retired teachers, and we get together a lot. I’m in an organization and there are a lot of retired teachers there, and the one biggest thing they’ll say is administrative support is so important and that communication on a regular basis, saying “Thank you” or “You’re doing a good job,” because you worry so much about,
“Am I doing the right thing?” You need that feedback, of that support. I do think that is really important, the administrative support.

Other areas of working conditions were cited in some form, none exceeding 6 responses, or 6.7%, in the open responses of the teachers. Other responses included other influences to cause teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement such as teacher workload, teaching assignments, student behavior, parental support, community support, new initiatives, state testing and related areas of national legislation, paperwork demands, and student accountability concerns.

Teacher preparation programs for this study referred to the levels of preparation prior to entering teaching, pedagogical preparation, art of teaching courses, and time spent in student teaching with quality feedback and frequent observations. In the online survey, 51 teachers, or 43.6% of the sample population, disagreed with the contention that teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they experienced poor teacher preparation programs and 11 teachers, or 9.4% of the respondents, strongly disagreed. These results compared to 18 teachers, or 15.4%, who agreed with this statement, and 2 teachers, or 1.7%, who strongly agreed with this statement. There were 26 teachers, or 22.2% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this contention. There were 9 teachers, or 7.7% of the sample population, who did not respond to this statement. Additionally, 57 teachers, or 48.7% of the respondents, disagreed that the area of teacher preparation programs is the most important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement while 20 teachers, or 17.1% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this statement. Furthermore, 5 teachers, or 4.3% of the respondents, agreed with this contention while 1 teacher, or 0.9% of the respondents, strongly agreed with it. There were 26 teachers,
or 22.2% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this contention while 8 teachers, or 6.8% of the sample population, did not respond to this question.

Looking more deeply into teacher preparation, respondents cited if this area were a reason for early departure from the profession, 48 teachers, or 41.0% of the respondents, agreed that the beginning teachers would have been unprepared to deal with the demands of the instructional process while 36 teachers, or 30.8% of the respondents, strongly agreed to this statement. In this survey 43 teachers, or 36.8% of the respondents, agreed that the beginning teachers would have been unprepared to cope with the demands of parents and the community and 32 teachers, or 27.3% of the respondents, strongly agreed to this statement. Additionally, 48 teachers, or 41.0% of the respondents, agreed that the beginning teachers would have been unprepared to address the needs of the students while 27 teachers, or 23.1% of the respondents, strongly agreed to this contention.

No teachers referred to teacher preparation programs when addressing the major reason or reasons why teachers exited teaching prior to retirement in their open responses via the online survey. Within the personal interviews, the direct question, “Do you believe the area of teacher preparation programs is a major factor in teacher attrition?” was posed to the interviewees. Their responses were similar to the online survey results when no teacher cited teacher preparation as a major reason for leaving teaching prior to retirement. E-2, an elementary teacher, indicated that although teacher preparation was very important, she did not conclude that teacher preparation is a major reason for teachers leaving teaching. She stated:

I do believe teacher preparation is very, very important. What I got at college when I was in college before teaching was very helpful, and all of the experiences that I got,
because I actually was able to student teach in third and sixth grade. At college I worked in the lab school in kindergarten and first grade, so I have kindergarten, first, third and sixth grade experience. Then when I interviewed and got my job teaching first grade, I felt I was really well prepared for that, and I had wonderful student teaching experiences. The observations that I had to make in the city schools, rural, and all around the observations were very important and those teaching experiences were very important.

Professional development in this survey referred to the areas of induction programs, same field/grade level mentors, opportunities to observe and visit other classrooms, and formal and informal assessment feedback once the teacher is employed. In their responses 50 teachers, or 42.7% of the sample population, disagreed with the contention that teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they wanted more or better professional development, while 7 teachers, or 6.0% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this statement. There were 36 teachers, or 30.7% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this contention. Additionally, 12 teachers, or 10.3% of the respondents, agreed with this statement while 3 teachers, or 2.6% of the respondents, strongly agreed with this statement. There were 9 teachers, or 7.7% of the sample population, who did not respond to this question.

Looking at specific teacher populations, 49 teachers, or 41.8% of the respondents, indicated that they disagreed with professional development as a reason why beginning teachers, those with three or fewer years of experience, choose to leave the profession prior to retirement while 12 teachers, or 10.3% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this statement. There were 32 teachers, or 27.4% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor
disagreed with this contention. Also, 14 teachers, or 12.0% of the respondents, agreed with this reason while 2 teachers, or 1.7% of the respondents, strongly agreed with this contention. There were 8 teachers, or 6.8% of the sample population, who did not respond to this question.

Regarding female teachers, 51 teachers, or 43.6% of the respondents, indicated that they disagreed with professional development as a reason why female teachers choose to leave the profession prior to retirement while 12 teachers, or 10.3% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this contention. Furthermore, 50 teachers, or 42.7% of the respondents, indicated that they disagreed with this area as a reason why male teachers choose to leave the profession prior to retirement while 12 teachers, or 10.3% of the sample, strongly disagreed with this statement.

Teachers failed to choose the area of professional development within the online open-response section as a major reason for teachers choosing to leave the profession prior to retirement. Four teachers mentioned the importance of having new initiatives be accompanied by adequate training, but none mentioned professional development as a major reason for teacher attrition.

During the personal interviews, each teacher was asked directly to respond to their perception of professional development as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement. All of them responded in effect that professional development is important, but it is not, itself, a major reason why teachers leave the profession early. Two interviewees specifically mentioned the importance of mentors being from the same field or grade level and how this is crucial for teachers. I-2, an intermediate school teacher, responded:
I would say if they don’t have the same field/grade level mentor, that’s probably the biggest thing. They need that mentor teacher there to give them those little short bursts. Then I’d say the other things are important, but maybe not as important as that mentor teacher to be there for them.

Similarly, E-2, an elementary school teacher, cited the value of mentors as part of professional development in the following statement:

I know within our district, definitely, the mentors are at the same grade level, and they’re at constant meetings on a weekly basis or even daily basis. I’ve seen it. I’ve been a mentor, too. That is very crucial and important for teachers staying in the educational field.

Recruitment practices in this study referred to the timing of when one is hired and a full disclosure of expectations of both the teacher and district. Found in the online survey, 46 teachers, or 39.3% of the respondents, disagreed with the contention that teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because of the district’s recruitment practices while 7 teachers, or 6.0% of the respondents, strongly disagreed. These data compared to 15 teachers, or 12.8% of the sample population, who agreed with this statement and 2 teachers, or 1.7% of the respondents, who strongly agreed with this statement. There were 38 teachers, or 32.5% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this contention. There were 9 teachers, or 7.7% of the sample population, who did not respond to this question.

Furthermore, 49 teachers, or 41.9% of the respondents, disagreed that the area of recruitment practices is the most important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement and 15 teachers, or 12.8% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this statement. These data compared to 2 teachers, or 1.7% of the respondents, who agreed to this
assertion and 1 teacher, or 0.9% of the respondents, who strongly agreed with this statement. There were 40 teachers, or 34.2% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement while 10 teachers, or 8.5% of the sample population, did not respond to this question.

Looking more deeply into recruitment practices, 49 teachers, or 42.0% of the respondents, disagreed that beginning teachers were frustrated that they were hired too late to adequately prepare for the start of the school year while 6 teachers, or 5.1% of the respondents, strongly disagreed with this contention. Compared to these data, 19 teachers, or 16.2% of the respondents, agreed to this statement while 5 teachers, or 4.3% of the respondents, strongly agreed to this statement. There were 29 teachers, or 24.8% of the respondents, who neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement while 9 teachers, or 7.6% of the sample population, did not respond to this question.

No teachers who provided input into the open-response section of the online survey cited the area of recruitment practices as a major reason for teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement. Additionally, one of the six interviewees indicated that this area could be a problem for teachers initially if they were unaware of such expectations as lesson plan formats and grade level meetings. Specifically, E-2, an elementary teacher, responded to the area of knowing expectations in advance when she stated:

I think the more information a teacher can have when they start their job, the more successful they are because they know right up front that this is what we expect. They know going into it that it isn’t like a surprise later on and seeing the work that’s involved in teaching. To find out how lesson plans are done and how many hours are involved in the meetings right up front would really make a difference.
Two of the interviewees also responded that late hiring, while not a major reason for teachers to quit, can cause added stress at the beginning of the school year. Both of these interviewees added that the area of recruitment practices could be more of a problem for teachers and districts in more urban settings where, in their opinions, budget concerns and uncertainty in class sizes may contribute to late decisions for posting positions and hiring teachers later in the summer months or just prior to the start of the school year.

One of the interviewees, I-1, dismissed the area of recruitment practices as a factor influencing teacher attrition with the statement:

I wouldn’t say those things are important at all because everybody’s come through the public schools; they kind of know what the situation is like at a school. It’s not like they’re going into an unknown environment, so I don’t find any of that critical. I think there are other things to look at for factors of why somebody would quit.

That’d be the last place I’d look.

**Research Question Two – What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession?**

Teachers were asked to rate a variety of items as very important, important, unimportant, or very unimportant as to their perceptions of each item’s level of importance regarding its role in increasing teacher retention. Each item was selected as being related directly or indirectly to the variety of reasons why teachers choose to stay in the profession prior to retirement.

Table 4.8 depicts the percentages of the teachers’ ratings of relative importance to the various items that were posed to the teachers and are related to why teachers remain in the teaching profession.
Table 4.8

*Importance of factors influencing teacher retention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
<th>NR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate salaries</td>
<td>(45)38.4%</td>
<td>(60)51.3%</td>
<td>(3)2.6%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate resources</td>
<td>(43)36.8%</td>
<td>(64)54.7%</td>
<td>(1)0.8%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support</td>
<td>(89)76.1%</td>
<td>(19)16.2%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for teacher input into decision-making process</td>
<td>(55)47.0%</td>
<td>(54)46.2%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(8)6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate teaching workloads</td>
<td>(78)66.7%</td>
<td>(29)24.8%</td>
<td>(1)0.8%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate student behavior</td>
<td>(46)39.3%</td>
<td>(52)44.4%</td>
<td>(10)8.6%</td>
<td>(1)0.9%</td>
<td>(8)6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher accountability based on student performance</td>
<td>(13)11.1%</td>
<td>(49)41.9%</td>
<td>(41)35.0%</td>
<td>(4)3.4%</td>
<td>(10)8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive pedagogical preparation</td>
<td>(15)12.8%</td>
<td>(69)59.0%</td>
<td>(23)19.7%</td>
<td>(1)0.8%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate student teaching experience</td>
<td>(23)19.7%</td>
<td>(61)52.1%</td>
<td>(23)19.7%</td>
<td>(1)0.8%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive induction programs spanning multiple years</td>
<td>(12)10.3%</td>
<td>(45)38.4%</td>
<td>(46)39.3%</td>
<td>(5)4.3%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same subject/grade level mentors</td>
<td>(58)49.6%</td>
<td>(44)37.6%</td>
<td>(4)3.4%</td>
<td>(1)0.8%</td>
<td>(10)8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment feedback for beginning teachers</td>
<td>(40)34.2%</td>
<td>(57)48.7%</td>
<td>(11)9.4%</td>
<td>(0)0.0%</td>
<td>(9)7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate recruitment practices</td>
<td>(35)30.0%</td>
<td>(66)56.4%</td>
<td>(6)5.1%</td>
<td>(2)1.7%</td>
<td>(8)6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *N* = 117; NR = Non-responses. The number of respondents for each rating is listed in parentheses.
Specifically, 37 teachers, or 41.6%, who responded to this question regarding teacher retention on the open-response section of the online survey, pointed to a general sense that teachers remain in teaching because they are making a positive difference in the lives of their students and they enjoy interacting with their students. While this is stated in many different ways, the underlying theme is that teachers who remain in teaching love what they are doing and do it despite obstacles that make teaching stressful. One teacher commented, “Teachers choose to remain in the profession because they have a love of teaching and working with students and the satisfaction it brings to help children succeed in school.” Another teacher responded to this question involving why teachers remain in their profession by stating:

Most teachers love what they teach and want to pass that love of content on to their students. In the end even under the worst circumstances, teachers are in it for the students and will stay in the profession for them.

One teacher provided a statement that summarizes what many others reported regarding their desire to work with students and how they become emotionally attached to helping their students become successful. This teacher commented:

The students are the main reason teachers stay in the teaching profession. After all, they are who teachers collaborate with the most. Some may be frustrating young adults, but they are the center of the teaching profession. They are searching for themselves, open and entertaining in a way that allows one to grow attached to them. It is impossible to be a teacher without the rapport and care for the students, and honestly, I think that is the key to why individuals are drawn to this profession.

Another teacher provided a statement focusing on a teacher’s responsibility and passion to work with the students and to be there for them as they learn regardless of other
perceived benefits of teaching. This message was included in reaction to the main reason why teachers stay in the profession in the following quote:

The kids - Teachers have a sense of duty and responsibility to be there for the students because if they aren't there, no one will take care of each one of them and teach them the way they need to be taught. As teachers, we feel a strong calling that we need to be there. It is our passion that drives us - not our salaries, not the summers "off," not the work week, not the holidays - just the students that sit behind the desks that we made a promise to!

The six interviewees offered very similar responses to those on the online survey when asked what helps to keep teachers in the profession. Again, the common theme was how the teachers wanted to help children and to make a difference with their students’ academic and social needs. One interviewee, H-1, stated:

Teaching is just absolutely the most inspirational job that you can have. It differs every day and your kids bring you learning experiences and things to look up, as well as a learning experience for them, and the interaction is just a fabulous thing.

Several of the teachers indicated that the existence of a positive working relationship with administrators and other colleagues was an additional benefit to working with the students. I-2 alluded to this in the following response:

I would say that they enjoy the time with the kids, that they enjoy doing the extra things. I think that most of the teachers that seem like they end up sticking are the ones who end up getting involved; they become coaches or they get involved in some afterschool programs. They kind of make teaching their life, not to say that they can’t have a personal life or anything, but I think that’s pretty important. I think they also
find a niche within the staff and kind of carve themselves out a role for what they do.

I think they would be the main reasons why they start to find success and then they start to get happy, and then I think it kind of snowballs at that point.

**Research Question Three – What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?**

Teachers were asked to provide their perception of which areas related to teacher retention would be the most important as teachers contemplate their futures relating to continuing teaching or leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement, and what districts can do to increase teacher retention. Teachers selected support from administrators and fair and appropriate teaching assignments as the two most important factors to increase teacher retention. Within this survey 40 teachers, or 34.2% of the respondents, listed support from administrators as the most important factor and 32 teachers, or 27.4% of the respondents, listed providing fair and appropriate teaching assignments and workloads, defined by the number of preparations and grade/subject levels taught, as the most important factor. No other individual factor was cited by double-digit percentages from the teachers.

Conversely, teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of the least important factor to increase teacher retention. Three factors combined to have been reported by 77 teachers, or 65.8% of the respondents. The area of recruitment practices was indicated as the least important factor by 27 teachers, or 23.1% of the respondents. Additionally, 26 teachers, or 22.2% of the respondents, indicated that a comprehensive multi-year induction plan was the least important factor, and 24 teachers, or 20.5% of the respondents, stated that teacher accountability based on student performance was the least important factor to increase teacher retention.
Teachers who responded to the online survey’s open-response section regarding what districts can do to help teachers remain in the profession provided a range of responses. The common element in most of their responses was the need to support and respect teachers. This support was mentioned as administrative support, parental support, and community support. Teachers also included the various kinds of support to include showing respect for their professional judgment, providing additional time for task completion, maintaining realistic expectations of teachers, acknowledging stress and providing ways to help teachers cope with stress, handling student behavior issues firmly, and holding students accountable for all of their actions.

This sentiment was reflected in a variety of statements made by teachers on the online survey’s open-response section. One teacher commented, “Public school districts need to support their teachers and provide resources that are needed to be successful. Teachers need time and resources to complete given tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.” Another teacher expounded on the concept of administrative support and feeling appreciated as being critical to keeping teachers in teaching with the response, “I believe that teachers need to feel appreciated and supported for their professional knowledge and performance.”

Additionally, 35 teachers, or 39.0% of teachers who scripted a response to the question regarding what districts can do to help teachers remain in the teaching profession, also included references to communication between the administration and the teachers. A range of responses included the need to have administrators provide methods to include teachers’ input into the decision-making process, to incorporate teachers’ opinions when considering new initiatives or programs, to trust teachers for their experiences and expertise in the classroom, and to generally listen to what the teachers have to say. One teacher
specifically focused on this area of teacher communication and the need for it to be considered when decisions are being made through the comment as follows:

I believe that truly empowering teachers to make decisions within the school is a major part of increasing the likelihood for teachers to remain in the profession. I also believe that ensuring a positive climate for both students and staff is a key. Competitive salaries and benefits are important too, but are no substitute for ensuring that teachers feel valued, appreciated, empowered and treated as professionals.

Another teacher stressed the need for districts to include teachers’ input into the decision-making process with the following comment, “A school district must show support and be willing to listen to their teachers, valuing their thoughts and opinions of what is best for the students.”

The six interviewees provided responses to what districts can do to increase teacher retention in a variety of comments. Some teachers responded with very specific ideas such as the district providing daycare for teachers’ children, remaining with a specific curriculum or program until teachers master it, holding students and parents more accountable for education, and encouraging teachers to get involved with coaching and other activities. Two of the interviewees responded with similar concerns that, while mentioned in the open responses, did not rise in frequency to rival the others previously mentioned. E-2, an elementary teacher, touched on the overall influence of stress on teachers. Stress was mentioned in previous segments of this study, and this teacher made the following statement regarding what a district can do to help increase teacher retention:

I thought it was really good that the districts have been stressing more about how counseling is available. I think that’s really important. I think a lot of teachers put on
stress and bottle it up and keep it inside, stressing them out. I think being encouraged to share more of what they’re feeling emotionally about their job and knowing that someone’s there to support are good things. They’re not facing these problems all by themselves, and they are normal problems that we all go through in the teaching career. I think that really is something that’s very helpful – knowing that you have the support and that there are people out there to help you if you’re really struggling and things aren’t going well. There are mentors, psychologists, counselors, and other people out there to help you get through the problems that we have throughout the teaching career.

Additionally, another interviewee mentioned references to the various requirements of the state and federal government on education. While some of the teachers alluded to this in their perceptions provided in the open responses, very few made this the focal point of what districts can do to help increase teacher retention. I-1, an intermediate school teacher, provided the following comment regarding this teacher’s perceptions involving the frustration associated with the impact that the state and federal governments have on education:

Well, the thing I’d like to see happen - and the school district has no control over it - I wish that the federal government and even state governments would realize that most school districts have students’ interests at heart, and that we would be able to determine what to teach and how to teach it. I just feel like all of this regulation is just wringing the joy out of administrators, out of teachers, out of classrooms. You could spend so much time giving the 4Sight tests just so kids do well on the PSSAs. Some kids aren’t good test takers, but they’re still going to be absolutely fine out
there in society. To be able to pinpoint a kid by their scores, I think that’s deadly, and I think all of that regulation is making it impossible. I don’t blame administrators because they’re getting pressure from people above them, the state, and then the state’s getting pressure from the national level, and I am not happy with that at all. I feel nervous about the future of teaching if this is the way we’re headed. It’s just really sad.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter represent information gathered during this case study of the perceptions of teachers in one public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania. The three research questions were as follows: (a) What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition? (b) What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession? and (c) What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?

The teachers were asked to respond to these questions in three different formats that included the closed-ended questions found in the online survey, the open-response questions in the online survey, and the personal interviews. The data presented encompass the responses found in these three data forms.

The data included teachers’ perceptions that included their reactions to various reasons for teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement. These reasons included such areas as salary, working conditions, teacher preparation, professional development, and recruitment practices. Within working conditions, teachers expressed their views involving availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress. Teachers also provided their
perceptions on why teachers choose to stay in the profession and what school districts can do to encourage teachers to remain in the profession.

The data pointed to the teachers in this survey rating stress as one of the major reasons why teachers leave the profession. While other areas such as salary, teacher preparation, professional development, recruitment practices and other areas of working conditions were perceived as having some impact on teachers’ decisions to leave the profession, stress was the only reason cited by all respondents as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement.

Regarding why teachers remain in teaching, only two areas, administrative support and the opportunity to provide input in the school’s decision-making process, were listed by all respondents as either important or very important. Maintaining a fair and appropriate teaching assignment involving the number of preparations and grade/subject levels was also listed as important or very important for retaining teachers in the profession by all but one respondent. Among the open responses and interviews, teachers cited the desire to help children learn and make a difference in the students’ lives as an underlying factor for remaining in teaching.

Teachers offered several ideas for districts to use to encourage teachers to stay in the profession. In addition to addressing the main areas listed as important or very important (administrative support, opportunity for input into the decision-making process, and appropriate teaching assignments), respondents suggested the need to have such support and respect exist from the administrators, community, and parents. Respondents recommended that districts provide support that would include showing respect for professional judgment, providing time for task completion, offering realistic expectations of teachers,
acknowledging teacher stress and providing methods to reduce it, and holding students behaviorally and academically accountable.

The data in this study were organized and presented in order of the demographics of the study’s subjects followed by the responses in each format to the three guiding research questions. The data presented in this chapter served as the basis for the research analysis and discussion segments of Chapter Five.
Chapter Five - Discussion

Summary of the Study

This qualitative case study examined teachers’ perceptions of the factors influencing teacher attrition. The three guiding research questions were: (a) What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition? (b) What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession? and (c) What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?

The study was conducted in one public school district located in south-central Pennsylvania among the district’s full or part-time teachers who worked at one level or multiple levels among four elementary schools, one intermediate school, and one high school. The grade configuration for the elementary schools was kindergarten through grade five, the intermediate was grades six through eight, and the high school was grades nine through twelve.

This study occurred through the use of a researcher-created online survey that contained two forms of questions including Likert scale questions and open-response questions. A third form of data resulted from subsequent personal interviews that occurred following the submission of the initial survey. Teachers provided their perceptions to the Likert questions and the open-response questions through an online survey. Volunteers from this group of respondents provided more in-depth reflections through personal interviews.

All 286 part-time and full-time teachers employed by this district were invited to participate in the online survey. There were 117 respondents resulting in a 40.9% response rate. The online survey consisted of eight teacher demographic questions, thirty-six closed-ended questions that solicited teachers’ perceptions regarding the three guiding questions, and three open-response questions that addressed the three guiding questions. The twelve
questions used during the personal interviews also included references to the three guiding research questions.

At the conclusion of the online survey that included the closed-ended questions and the open-response questions, participants had the opportunity to volunteer to be personally interviewed by the researcher. Eleven teachers contacted the researcher volunteering for the interview segment of the study. From these eleven volunteers, the researcher randomly selected two teachers from each of the elementary, intermediate, and high school levels to be interviewed.

**Summary of the Results**

The data were analyzed as they addressed the three guiding research questions involving teachers’ perceptions regarding teacher attrition. Each of the guiding questions was the basis for the questions used within the three data collection formats.

**Research Question One - What do teachers perceive are the reasons for teacher attrition?** Teachers responded to the various reasons why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement with a variety of views. Regarding salary, the majority of the teachers, 58.9%, believed that teachers did not leave the profession prior to retirement due to salary concerns. Additionally, 48.7% of the teachers indicated that male teachers would be more likely to cite salary as a factor in teacher attrition than female teachers.

In the area of working conditions, which for this study included the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress, 47.0% of the teachers who responded to the survey indicated that this area is the most important reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. Teachers provided their perceptions involving specific teacher populations that
included beginning teachers, male teachers, and female teachers. Approximately half of the teachers, 50.4%, felt that beginning teachers left the teaching profession because they wanted better working conditions. Regarding gender of the teachers, most of the teachers, 35.9%, responded that male teachers, rather than female teachers, were influenced more when considering the area of working conditions as a reason to leave the teaching profession prior to retirement.

Within working conditions, every teacher who responded to the closed-ended questions indicated that stress was a major reason teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. The majority of the teachers, 52.2%, who responded to the open-response questions also cited stress as the major reason for teacher attrition. Five of the six teachers who were interviewed also cited stress as a major reason for why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. Within the closed-ended results, 83.8% of the teachers cited teacher workload, including the number of preparations for a variety of subject areas, as the second major reason, following stress, for teacher attrition. Within the open-response portion of the survey, teachers indicated administrative support as the second most commonly cited reason, following stress, for teacher attrition.

Teacher preparation programs for this study referred to the levels of preparation prior to entering teaching, pedagogical preparation, art of teaching courses, and time spent in student teaching with quality feedback and frequent observations. Responding to the online survey, most of the teachers, 43.9%, did not believe that teacher preparation was a major reason why teachers exited the profession prior to retirement. No teachers responded that the area of teacher preparation programs was a major reason for teacher attrition on the open responses or during the personal interviews.
Professional development in this survey referred to the areas of induction programs, same field/grade level mentors, opportunities to observe and visit other classrooms, and formal and informal assessment feedback once the teacher is employed. In this study nearly a majority of the teachers, 48.7%, who responded to the online survey did not believe that teachers left the profession prior to retirement because they wanted more or better professional development. Regarding specific teacher populations, including beginning teachers, male teachers, and female teachers, 52.1% of the teachers who responded to the online survey indicated that they did not agree that beginning teachers, female teachers, or male teachers left teaching prior to retirement because they wanted more or better professional development. No teachers cited professional development on the online open-response question or via the personal interviews as a major reason for teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement.

Recruitment practices in this study referred to the timing of when one is hired and a full disclosure of expectations of both the teacher and district. In this study most of the teachers, 45.3%, who responded to the online survey did not view the area of recruitment practices as the most important reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. Additionally, no teacher provided the area of recruitment practices as the main reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement on the open-response portion of the survey or during the personal interviews.

Research Question Two – What do teachers perceive are the reasons why teachers remain in the teaching profession? Teachers were asked to rate a variety of items as very important, important, unimportant, or very unimportant as to their perceptions of each item’s level of importance regarding its role in increasing teacher retention. Each item was
selected as being directly or indirectly related to the variety of reasons why teachers choose to stay in the profession prior to retirement.

Teachers rated appropriate administrative support, appropriate teacher workloads, and opportunity for teacher input into the decision-making process as the three most important factors influencing teacher retention when viewing teachers’ ratings of combined responses as important or very important. Specifically, 76.1% of the teachers indicated that administrative support was very important as a factor influencing teacher retention, higher than any other factor listed on the survey. Additionally, 66.7% of the teachers rated the area of appropriate teacher workloads as the area receiving the second highest number of responses of very important as a factor influencing teacher retention. In the area of teacher input into the decision-making process, 47.0% of the teachers who responded to the online survey indicated they believed this area was a very important factor influencing teacher retention.

Conversely, teachers rated teacher accountability based on student performance, comprehensive induction programs spanning multiple years, and extensive pedagogical preparation as the three least important factors influencing teacher retention. Specifically, 43.6% of the teachers who participated in the online survey indicated the area of comprehensive induction programs spanning multiple years as the least important of all factors listed on the survey. Additionally, 38.4% of the teachers responded that teacher accountability based on student performance was the second least important factor influencing teacher retention. The third least important factor influencing teacher retention as cited by 20.5% of the teachers was extensive pedagogical preparation.

The online survey included other factors to be rated regarding their levels of
importance as factors influencing teacher retention, but these factors were not rated as either in the range of the three most important factors or the three least important factors. These factors included the following: adequate salaries, adequate resources, appropriate student behavior, appropriate student teaching experience, same subject/grade level mentors, assessment feedback for beginning teachers, and adequate recruitment practices.

Teachers who responded to this open-response question on the online survey and during the personal interviews frequently cited a general devotion to teaching, the pleasure of helping children learn, and the desire to pass on their content information to their students as three main factors influencing teacher retention. Specifically, 41.6% of the teachers who responded to this open-response question indicated they believed teachers remained in teaching because they were making a positive difference in their students’ lives and they enjoyed interacting with their students. The main theme of the responses to this question was that teachers choose to remain in teaching because they enjoy what they are doing and are satisfied with watching their students be successful despite any obstacles that may be present.

Responses provided by teachers who participated in the personal interviews of this study were similar to the other open-response answers found within the online survey. The six interviewees echoed the common theme that teachers remained in teaching because they enjoyed making a difference as they addressed their students’ academic and social needs. Additionally, three of the interviewees cited the existence of positive working relationships with administrators and colleagues as being an additional benefit that influenced teacher retention.

**Research Question Three – What do teachers perceive are steps that districts can take to enhance teacher retention?** Teachers were asked to provide their perception of
what districts can do to encourage teachers to remain in the teaching profession and to provide reasons that would be considered when teachers make the decision to exit the profession or remain in teaching. Teachers selected support from administrators and fair and appropriate teaching assignments as the two most important factors to increase teacher retention, resulting in two areas to which districts can apply their resources.

Conversely, teachers were asked to provide their perceptions of the least important factors influencing their decision to remain in teaching. Teachers selected the areas of recruitment practices, comprehensive multiple-year induction programs, and teacher accountability as being the least influential when teachers are deciding to remain in teaching or exit the profession.

Teachers who responded to the online survey’s open-response section and answered questions during the personal interviews provided a range of responses, but a common theme in their responses was the need to support and respect teachers. They included administrative support, parental support, and community support as three areas on which districts can focus to help teachers remain in the profession. Additionally, teachers suggested that districts should respect their professional judgment, provide time to complete expected job requirements, and provide methods to deal with stress including reducing teacher workload and holding students both behaviorally and academically accountable.

The six interviewees provided responses to what districts can do to increase teacher retention through a variety of answers. Some teachers responded with very specific ideas such as the district providing daycare for teachers’ children, remaining with a specific curriculum or program until teachers master it, holding students and parents more accountable for education, and encouraging teachers to get involved with coaching and other
activities. Additionally, focusing on stress was mentioned as an area to which districts can apply their efforts to attempt to retain teachers. One suggestion included the incorporation of providing mechanisms in the form of counseling or collaboration in an effort to provide support to teachers to reduce the stress load of teaching. Embedded in the interviews was a suggestion that reducing the number or degree of state and national requirements pertaining to education can serve as a focus for districts to maintain while trying to address teacher attrition. Acknowledging that there may exist little control over such requirements, one interviewee cited this area of state and national mandates as directly causing a reduction in the level of teachers’ satisfaction as they work with children.

**Limitations Found in the Study**

The sample population was comprised of teachers in one south-central Pennsylvania public school district. The homogeneous nature of this group resulted in the inability to assume that the teachers’ responses would be generally reflective of a broader, more heterogeneous group that would be potentially found in other locations throughout the country. One specific demographic was noteworthy as all teachers indicated that they were White/Caucasian. This lack of diversity resulted in data provided from a very homogeneous population.

The initial survey required volunteer teachers to use an online tool to complete. Being that this was the only option for teachers to initially participate in this study, some teachers, who may be apprehensive of technology, may have decided not to participate. This would potentially cause the data to be only from teachers who are more comfortable using technology.

While anonymity was guaranteed in all aspects of this study, some teachers may have
perceived that since their own superintendent gave permission for the study to be conducted, that in some way, results would be shared with the administration. There could have been some teachers who viewed the digital medium that was used as a quick method to trace responses and share information. These inherent apprehensions may have prevented some teachers from participating in the study.

The study was conducted during what many teachers perceived to have been the holiday season. Given this fact and the common perception that many people have a multitude of tasks to accomplish during the holiday season, some teachers may have chosen not to participate in completing the survey or volunteering to be personally interviewed. Additionally, some teachers may have skipped questions, chosen not to respond to the open-response questions, or shortened their responses to save time when completing the survey. This may have led to fewer respondents or less comprehensive responses resulting in a deprivation of data provided from the sample population.

**Relationship to Other Research**

The data collected in this study reflected other studies in a variety of ways. Research exists that salary is a factor for influencing teachers’ decisions to leave the profession (Brown & Slate, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Imazeki, 2005; Liu & Meyer, 2005). Contrary to this research, data in this study revealed that the majority, 58.9%, of the teachers believed that teachers did not leave the profession prior to retirement because of salary concerns. This contradiction may have been the result of this study’s participants’ potential satisfaction with their present compensation level and distribution formula. One respondent also indicated that if other factors involved with teaching were addressed, salary would only be a secondary consideration.
Data in this study supported the research that suggests that the area of working conditions must be considered as a possible reason for teachers leaving the profession (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Loeb et al., 2005). Specifically, 47.0% of the teachers who responded to this study’s survey indicated that this area is the most important reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

Additionally, in the area of working conditions as a factor in teacher attrition, data in this study aligned with other research that found that while salary is a factor, the area of working conditions is a higher determinant for teacher attrition than salary (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007). This is in agreement with Johnson et al. (2005) that it is difficult to separate other variables, such as salary, from working conditions, as some teachers would tolerate lower salary if working conditions were better. Data in the study also aligned with Futernick’s (2007) research in which he found teachers would remain in the profession, overlooking issues with lower salaries, if they could participate more fully in the school’s decision-making processes. This is consistent with responses found in this case study as respondents rated the opportunity for teacher input into the decision-making process of educational issues as one of the three most important factors influencing teacher retention.

Within the area of working conditions, stress was reported as the major reason teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. The second most commonly cited reason for teacher attrition within the open-response portion of the online survey was administrative support. These two cited reasons correspond with Johnson and The Project on the Next Generation of Teaching (2004) who found stress to be a major factor for teacher attrition and Blase et al.’s (2008) research that found a lack of parental and administrative support as a cause of stress for teachers.
Teacher preparation programs for this study referred to the levels of preparation prior to entering teaching, pedagogical preparation, art of teaching courses, and time spent in student teaching with quality feedback and frequent observations. Specifically, 43.6% of the teachers who responded to the online survey did not believe that teacher preparation was a major reason why teachers exited the profession prior to retirement. Additionally, no teacher responded that this is a major reason for teacher attrition on the open responses or during the personal interviews. Other research, however, found that those teachers who enter the profession with a high degree of preparation are more likely to stay in teaching (Boe et al., 2006). The difference in this study’s results may have been the result of this study’s participants possessing a general satisfaction with the local universities’ teaching programs as the participants frequently interact with their programs and teachers who received their training from them. Additionally, fewer teachers were being hired in this district as compared to the more distant past; thus, there may have been a lack of focus on this area of teacher preparation when considering factors that influence teachers’ decisions to leave or remain in the profession.

Professional development in this survey referred to the areas of induction programs, same field/grade level mentors, opportunities to observe and visit other classrooms, and formal and informal assessment feedback once the teacher is employed. Specifically, nearly a majority of the teachers, 48.7%, who responded to the online survey did not believe that teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they wanted more or better professional development. While induction programs were listed as one of the least important factors influencing teacher retention, The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) found that comprehensive induction programs can dramatically reduce the teacher attrition if
they are developed and used with fidelity. Additionally, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that teachers who participated in an induction program, a mentoring program, or a combination of both improved their retention rates by 15.0% to 50.0%. Contrary to the aforementioned research on the impact of induction programs, this study’s results involving induction programs may have been outcomes of participants not being exposed to many new teachers. With a lack of hiring occurring in this district, only 7.0% teacher turnover per year, there is likely little involvement of the staff with any induction program; thus, this lack of exposure may have led to this area being rated as less important.

Recruitment practices in this study referred to the timing of when one is hired and a full disclosure of expectations of both the teacher and district. Specifically, 45.3% of the teachers who responded to the online survey did not view the area of recruitment practices as the most important reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement. Additionally, no teacher provided the area of recruitment practices as the main reason why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement on the open-response portion of the survey or during the personal interviews. Related to this area of the study, Liu’s (2004) research found that when teachers fully understand what is expected through an extensive and comprehensive interviewing process, they are more likely to have higher job satisfaction and less likely to seek to leave the teaching profession. One reason that the area of recruitment practices may not have been rated as a major factor in teacher attrition is the relative stability of the study’s district’s employment force. With only 7.0% teacher turnover per year, resulting in limited hiring, this study’s participants were not likely to have the area of recruitment practices in consideration as a major factor in teacher attrition.
Recommendations for Further Research

The study focused on teachers’ perceptions of why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement, the reasons why teachers remain in the profession, and what school districts can do to encourage teachers to remain in teaching. The reported data resulted from the teachers’ views of one public school district in south-central Pennsylvania. Suggestions for further research are as follows:

1. Conduct a study that includes the perceptions of a broad sample of teachers’ views that would reflect a diverse sample population both ethnically and geographically.

2. Conduct a study to gather data on the perceptions of administrators from all levels and grade configurations regarding teacher attrition.

3. Conduct a study that focuses only on teachers who have chosen to leave the profession to gather the reasons for their departure from the profession.

4. Conduct a study that focuses only on teachers who have chosen to stay in the profession to gather the reasons for their decisions to remain in teaching.

5. Conduct a study of districts’ practices that are used to encourage teachers to remain in the profession.

6. Conduct a study on the area of stress as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession prior to retirement along with the identification of what teachers perceive are the causes of stress in the teaching profession.

7. Conduct a study of public school district human resource directors to gather the reasons teachers have cited for leaving the profession as they participate in the district exit interview process.
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gather data on teachers’ perceptions regarding why teachers leave the profession prior to retirement, why they remain in the teaching profession, and what districts can do to encourage teachers to remain in the profession. The research was conducted as a qualitative case study in one public school district in south-central Pennsylvania. The data were collected through an online survey that included closed-ended questions and open-response questions. Additionally, six interviews were conducted with volunteers following their completion of the online survey. Within this single district, all 286 part-time and full-time teachers employed by this district were invited to participate in the online survey. There were 117 respondents resulting in a 40.9% response rate.

The findings of this study contributed to the larger body of research in the area of teacher attrition. The scope of the setting and the sample population allowed for administrators and other educational policymakers who are local to south-central Pennsylvania to view the findings for the reality that they represent teachers’ perceptions regarding teacher attrition in that region. Specifically, individuals responsible for ensuring that hired teachers have the highest probability of remaining in teaching may benefit from these findings as these personnel attempt to create programs and policies to encourage teacher retention. Having this study’s findings available for this process may provide additional information of all teachers’ perceptions as they relate to the major areas found to be involved in teacher attrition and retention.

The study produced results that may have been indicative of the general geographical area. While aligning with the major research findings regarding the general categories of factors influencing teacher attrition, the data pointed to a smaller focus on stress, within the
overall area of working conditions, as the major reason for teachers to leave the profession prior to retirement. The respondents in this study listed a variety of factors that influence stress and parallel what other research findings have indicated. Such areas as administrative support, opportunity for teacher input into the decision-making process, and appropriate teacher workloads were cited as the three most important factors influencing teacher retention. Additionally, teachers selected support from administrators and fair and appropriate teaching assignments as the two most important areas for districts to address to increase teacher retention.

With the limitations of this study noted, it is important to conclude that this study may afford local educational planners, specifically within the south-central Pennsylvania area, with data that can be utilized to address teacher attrition and retention. Discovering the core areas that teachers perceive as important in retaining teachers and what teachers perceive should be the main foci of districts are direct benefits from this data. Combined with other research in the area of teacher retention, this study allowed the opportunity for a comprehensive approach when addressing the need to retain teachers within the profession.
References


Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

My name is David Renaut and I am presently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department of Immaculata University. As you know, your district superintendent has allowed me to ask you for your voluntary participation in this study.

This voluntary online survey contains questions involving teachers’ perceptions about the factors that influence teacher attrition and retention and what districts can do to increase the likelihood of teachers remaining in the profession. The purpose of this study is to provide data involving teacher attrition that are more specific to the local area and to add to the larger research found with broader sample bases. In order for me to complete this study, I am asking for your voluntary participation in completing this survey electronically by Thursday, December 13, 2012. Your responses will be secured in a confidential manner without any identifying attributions possible. All data will be analyzed and potential reporting will be done confidentially.

You will notice at the end of the survey that you will also be invited to participate in a brief voluntary interview. More specific details regarding this interview can be found at the end of the survey. For your information, it will take you approximately fifteen minutes to complete this online survey and an additional thirty minutes for the interview if you elect to be interviewed. Please understand that you may decline from answering any question found in this survey or during the potential interview.

Feel free to contact me with any questions at renautd@comcast.net or 717-451-0960. Thank you!
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

*1. Consent to Participate and Confidentiality Statement

While I understand the responses to any and all questions involved in this study are voluntary and will be kept confidential, there is always a potential risk of unauthorized disclosure. However, strict confidential standards will be maintained at all times. I understand that the data garnered through this study may be shared with Immaculata University to ensure that appropriate research standards are met with strict adherence. I understand that any data that are reported will be done in a manner for complete anonymity on the part of all respondents. All data will be retained for five years in a secured manner at which time it will be destroyed.

Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be directed to the researcher, David Renaut, at 717-451-0960 or renaut@comcast.net or Dr. Thomas Compitello, Dissertation Chair, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3298) or tcompitello@immaculata.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board. Questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas O’Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3221) or tobrien@immaculata.edu.

☐ Yes, I have read the above information and authorize my electronic responses to be used in this study.

☐ No, I do NOT wish to participate in this study.
## Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

### Part I - Teacher Demographics

**2. Which of the following best describes your position in your present school district?**

- [ ] Teacher - Kindergarten, Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, and/or 5
- [ ] Teacher - Grades 6, 7, and/or 8
- [ ] Teacher - Grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12
- [ ] Other

**3. Which of the following best describes your number of years that you’ve been employed in education?**

- [ ] 0-3
- [ ] 4-5
- [ ] 6-10
- [ ] 11-15
- [ ] 16-20
- [ ] 21-25
- [ ] 26-30
- [ ] 31-35
- [ ] 36-39
- [ ] 40 or more

**4. What is your gender?**

- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male

**5. Which of the following ranges includes your age?**

- [ ] 20-25
- [ ] 26-30
- [ ] 31-35
- [ ] 36-45
- [ ] 46-55
- [ ] 56-65
- [ ] Over 65
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

#### 6. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)
- [ ] American Indian or Alaskan Native
- [ ] Asian / Pacific Islander
- [ ] Black or African American
- [ ] Hispanic American
- [ ] White / Caucasian

#### 7. What degree(s) do you hold? (Please check all that apply.)
- [ ] B.A./B.S. in Education
- [ ] B.A./B.S. in field other than Education
- [ ] M.Ed.
- [ ] M.A./M.S.
- [ ] Ed.D.
- [ ] Ph.D.
- [ ] M.B.A.
- [ ] J.D.
- [ ] Other

#### 8. At this point, how many years will it be until you expect to leave teaching or retire?
- [ ] 5 years or fewer
- [ ] 6 to 10 years
- [ ] More than 10 years
- [ ] Not sure

#### 9. What do you expect to be doing five years from now?
- [ ] Working in education
- [ ] Working in a job outside of education
- [ ] Retired
- [ ] Other
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part II - Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition - Salary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next five sections of this survey involve five areas that impact teacher attrition. Please respond to each statement using the rating scale as shown in the survey.

10. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they want to receive higher salaries than public school teachers earn.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

11. Low salary is the MOST important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

12. Beginning public school teachers (with three or fewer years of experience) leave the profession prior to retirement because they want higher salaries.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

13. Female public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than male public school teachers because they want higher salaries.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Male public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than female public school teachers because they want higher salaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part III - Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition - Working Conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions in this survey refer to the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they want better working conditions.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>16. Poor working conditions is the MOST important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17. Beginning public school teachers (with three or fewer years of experience) leave the profession prior to retirement because they want better working conditions.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18. Female public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than male public school teachers because they want better working conditions.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Neither agree nor disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix A

**Online Survey Instrument**

## Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

19. Male public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than female public school teachers because they want better working conditions.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

20. A lack of resources (facilities and instructional materials) is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

21. A lack of administrative support is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

22. A challenging teaching assignment (difficult grade level or subject matter) is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

23. Poor student behavior is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

24. A heavy teacher workload, one that contains a multitude of preparations for a variety of subject areas, is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

25. Emphasis on teacher accountability involving student performance is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

26. Stress is a major reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

Part IV - Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition - Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation programs in this survey refer to levels of preparation prior to entering teaching, pedagogical preparation, art of teaching courses, and time spent in student teaching with quality feedback and frequent observations.

27. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they experienced poor teacher preparation programs.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

28. Poor teacher preparation programs is the MOST important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

29. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they are unprepared to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deal with the demands of the instructional process.</td>
<td>○</td>
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<td>address the needs of the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>cope with the demands of parents and community expectations.</td>
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</table>
### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

#### 30. Beginning public school teachers (with three or fewer years of experience) leave the profession prior to retirement because they are unprepared to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Unpreparedness</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deal with the demands of the instructional process.</td>
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<td>address the needs of the students.</td>
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<td>cope with the demands of parents and community expectations.</td>
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#### 31. Female public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than male public school teachers because they are unprepared to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Unpreparedness</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deal with the demands of the instructional process.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>address the needs of the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>cope with the demands of parents and community expectations.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 32. Male public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than female public school teachers because they are unprepared to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Unpreparedness</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>deal with the demands of the instructional process.</td>
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<td>address the needs of the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>cope with the demands of parents and community expectations.</td>
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Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

Part V - Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition - Professional Development

Professional development in this survey refers to the areas of induction programs, same fieldgrade level mentors, opportunities to observe and visit other classrooms, and formal and informal assessment feedback once the teacher is employed.

33. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because they want more and/or better professional development.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

34. Poor or non-existent professional development is the MOST important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

35. Beginning teachers (with three or fewer years of experience) leave the profession prior to retirement because they want more and/or better professional development.
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neither agree nor disagree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

36. Female teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than male teachers because they want more and/or better professional development.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

37. Male teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than female teachers because they want more and/or better professional development.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

## Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

### Part VI - Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition - Recruitment Practices

Recruitment practices in this survey refer to the timing of when one is hired and a full disclosure of expectations of both the teacher and district.

**38. Public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement because of the district’s recruitment practices (timing of when one is hired and full disclosure of expectations of both teacher and district).**

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

**39. Issues with the district’s recruitment practices (timing of when one is hired and full disclosure of expectations of both teacher and district) is the MOST important reason why public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement.**

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

**40. Beginning public school teachers (with three or fewer years of experience) leave the profession prior to retirement because they are:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated that they were hired too late to adequately prepare for the start of the school year.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear of the district’s expectations of them or their expectations of the district.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

#### 41. Female public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than male public school teachers because they are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated that they were hired too late to adequately prepare for the start of the school year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear of the district’s expectations of them or their expectations of the district.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 42. Male public school teachers leave the profession prior to retirement at a higher rate than female public school teachers because they are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated that they were hired too late to adequately prepare for the start of the school year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear of the district’s expectations of them or their expectations of the district.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix A

**Online Survey Instrument**

#### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

## Part VII - Factors Influencing Teacher Retention

This section of the survey involves what any public school district can do to increase the likelihood for teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

### 43. Please rate each item below as to its level of importance as it relates to increasing teacher retention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequate salaries that are competitive with surrounding districts and other professions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate resources (facilities and instructional materials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from administrators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to provide input into the school’s decision-making process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair and appropriate teaching assignments and workloads (number of preparations and grade/subject levels)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate student behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher accountability based on student performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive coursework in pedagogy and instructional methodology in teacher preparation programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities from colleges and universities to enhance the student teaching experience and ensure high quality feedback from frequent observations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive induction programs that span multiple years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same subject/grade level mentors who work with beginning teachers and provide ample time for collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for beginning teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms during</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

#### Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Induction</th>
<th>High quality assessment feedback from both formal and informal observations for beginning teachers</th>
<th>Recruitment (hiring) practices completed in a manner to ensure adequate time for teacher preparation prior to the start of the school year</th>
<th>Recruitment (hiring) practices include opportunities for clear understanding of expectations from the perspectives of the district and teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**44. Which one of the following areas do you perceive as being the MOST important factor to increase teacher retention? (Please check only one.)**

- Adequate salaries that are competitive with surrounding districts and other professions
- Adequate resources (facilities and instructional materials)
- Support from administrators
- Opportunity to provide input into the school’s decision-making process
- Fair and appropriate teaching assignments and workloads (number of preparations and grade/subject levels)
- Appropriate student behavior
- Teacher accountability based on student performance
- Extensive coursework in pedagogy and instructional methodology in teacher preparation programs
- Opportunities from colleges and universities to enhance the student teaching experience and ensure high quality feedback from frequent observations
- Comprehensive induction programs that span multiple years
- Same subject/grade level mentors who work with beginning teachers and provide ample time for collaboration
- Opportunities for beginning teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms during induction
- High quality assessment feedback from both formal and informal observations for beginning teachers
- Recruitment (hiring) practices completed in a manner to ensure adequate time for teacher preparation prior to the start of the school year
- Recruitment (hiring) practices include opportunities for clear understanding of expectations from the perspectives of the district and teacher
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

**Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers**

45. Which one of the following areas do you perceive as being the LEAST important factor to increase teacher retention? (Please check only one.)

- Adequate salaries that are competitive with surrounding districts and other professions
- Adequate resources (facilities and instructional materials)
- Support from administrators
- Opportunity to provide input into the school's decision-making process
- Fair and appropriate teaching assignments and workloads (number of preparations and grade/subject levels)
- Appropriate student behavior
- Teacher accountability based on student performance
- Extensive coursework in pedagogy and instructional methodology in teacher preparation programs
- Opportunities from colleges and universities to enhance the student teaching experience and ensure high quality feedback from frequent observations
- Comprehensive induction programs that span multiple years
- Same subject/grade level mentors who work with beginning teachers and provide ample time for collaboration
- Opportunities for beginning teachers to visit other teachers' classrooms during induction
- High quality assessment feedback from both formal and informal observations for beginning teachers
- Recruitment (hiring) practices completed in a manner to ensure adequate time for teacher preparation prior to the start of the school year
- Recruitment (hiring) practices include opportunities for clear understanding of expectations from the perspectives of the district and teacher
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

Part VIII - Open Response Questions

46. What do you perceive is/are the most influential reason(s) why teachers leave the teaching profession other than retirement? Please explain your response.

47. What do you perceive is/are the main reason(s) why teachers choose to remain in the teaching profession? Please explain your response.

48. What do you perceive is the most important action that any public school district can take to increase the likelihood for teachers to remain in the teaching profession? Please explain your response.
Appendix A

Online Survey Instrument

## Teacher Attrition - Perceptions of Teachers

### Part IX - VOLUNTARY Interview Information

THANK YOU for completing this survey, the first part of this study. The final part of the data collection for this study is to include information gathered from teachers who volunteer to be personally interviewed. All interviews will be conducted at your convenience with regard to date, time, and location. If you wish to be part of the interview aspect of this study, please send your intention to renaultd@comcast.net, the e-mail address from which you received this survey. This step will assist with providing confidentiality to your responses to the previous survey questions. Each interview should be approximately thirty minutes in duration.

Please be assured that all data collected in any part of this study will be kept confidential. Your consideration to participate in the voluntary interview and the time that you already invested in completing the survey are greatly appreciated.
Appendix B

Interview Questions for Personal Interviews with Teachers

1. What do you perceive are the major reasons why public school teachers choose to leave teaching other than for retirement purposes?

2. Of these reasons, do you believe one is more influential than the others and if so, which one?

3. Do you believe salary is a major factor in teacher attrition? Explain your answer.

4. Do you believe the area of working conditions is a major factor in teacher attrition? Explain your answer. (Note: If the respondent asks for an explanation for working conditions in this survey, the interviewer will define working conditions as the availability of resources, administrative support, teaching assignment, student behavior, teacher workload, teacher accountability, and stress.)

5. Is/Are there one or two areas of working conditions that you believe is/are more influential in teacher attrition than others? Explain your answer.

6. Do you believe the area of teacher preparation programs is a major factor in teacher attrition? Explain your answer. (Note: If the respondent asks for an explanation of teacher preparation programs in this survey, the interviewer will define teacher preparation programs as the level of preparation prior to entering teaching, pedagogical preparation, art of teaching courses, and time spent in student teaching with quality feedback and frequent observations.)

7. Is/Are there one or two areas of teacher preparation programs that you believe is/are more influential in teacher attrition than others? Explain your answer.

8. Do you believe the area of professional development is a major factor in teacher attrition? Explain your answer. (Note: If the respondent asks for an explanation of
professional development in this survey, the interviewer will define professional
development as the areas of induction programs, same field/grade level mentors,
opportunities to observe and visit other classrooms, and formal and informal
assessment feedback once the teacher is employed.)

9. Is/Are there one or two areas of professional development that you believe is/are
more influential in teacher attrition than others? Explain your answer.

10. Is/Are there one or two areas of recruitment practices that you believe is/are more
influential in teacher attrition than others? Explain your answer. (Note: If the
respondent asks for an explanation of recruitment practices in this survey, the
interviewer will define recruitment practices as areas involving the timing of when
the teacher is hired and the full disclosure of expectations of both the teacher and
district.)

11. What do you perceive is/are the main reason(s) why teachers choose to remain in the
teaching profession? Explain your answer.

12. What do you believe can or should be done by districts to increase the likelihood for
teachers to remain in the teaching profession? Explain your answer.
Appendix C

Research Ethics Review Board Approval

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

Name of Researcher: David Renaut

Project Title: Factors Influencing Teacher Attrition: Teachers' Perceptions

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:

X Approved

Exempt
Expeditied
Full Review
Conditionally Approve
Do Not Approve

Signature: [Signature]

November 15, 2012

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

DATE
Appendix D

Letter to Superintendent of Participating School District

Dear _______________________ (Superintendent of Participating School District),

My name is David Renaut and I am presently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department of Immaculata University. I am in the process of writing my dissertation on the topic of teacher attrition. The purpose of this study is to provide data involving teacher attrition that are more specific to the local area and to add to the larger pool of research in the area of teacher attrition.

In the process of conducting research for this study, I am respectfully requesting your permission to contact the teachers employed in the __________________ (participating school district) to solicit their perceptions regarding teacher attrition. Each potential subject will receive an online survey directly from me via e-mail that will include information about the voluntary nature of the survey and an invitation to participate in a voluntary interview with me following the completion of the survey. The survey, approximately fifteen minutes in duration, consists of multiple choice questions, open response questions, and directions on how to contact me if the staff member wishes to participate in the voluntary interview. All interviews, each approximately thirty minutes in duration, will be conducted at the volunteer’s convenience with regard to date, time, and location.

All responses will be recorded anonymously and secured in a confidential manner. Data will be analyzed and potential reporting will be done confidentially. Volunteers may choose to decline participation at any time without consequence or prejudice. All data will be stored in a secure manner for five years at which time they will be destroyed.

Thank you for considering my request for this study to be conducted in the ______________ (participating school district). Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be directed to me, the researcher, at 717-451-0960 or renautd@comcast.net or Dr. Thomas Compitello, Dissertation Chair, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3298) or tcompitello@immaculata.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board. Questions regarding the rights of research subjects may be directed to Dr. Thomas O’Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3221) or tobrien@immaculata.edu.

Sincerely,

David J. Renaut
Doctoral Candidate
Immaculata University
Appendix E

E-mail Communication to Principals of Participating Schools

Dear ______________________ (Principal of Participating School),

____________________ (Superintendent of Participating School District), Superintendent, recently provided me with permission to survey all teachers who are employed by the _______________ (participating school district). My name is David Renaut and I am conducting research as part of my dissertation within my doctoral program at Immaculata University. The survey contains questions involving teachers’ perceptions about the factors that influence teacher attrition and retention and what districts can do to increase the likelihood of teachers remaining in the profession. The purpose of this study is to provide data involving teacher attrition that are more specific to the local area and to add to the larger research in the area of teacher attrition.

This communication is to provide you with the basic information as to the process that I will use to contact staff within your building. While as an administrator, you are not part of the study’s subject group; you are certainly involved as your staff will be voluntarily completing the online survey with a deadline for completion of _______________ (date of survey completion deadline). The survey will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete and is completely voluntary. Teachers will receive an e-mail directly from me indicating permission for the survey to be conducted, the link for the voluntary online survey, information regarding confidentiality of the survey responses, and a note of my appreciation for their time. At the end of the survey, teachers will also be invited to participate in a brief interview at a date, time, and location that are convenient to the teacher. As much as possible, all interviews will be scheduled beyond the teacher’s workday. During this interview, that should be thirty minutes in duration, I will solicit responses to a few general questions regarding teacher attrition. Again, all identities and responses will remain strictly confidential.

Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be directed to me, the researcher, at 717-451-0960 or renautd@comcast.net or Dr. Thomas Compitello, Dissertation Chair, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3298) or tcompitello@immaculata.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board. Questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas O’Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3221) or tobrien@immaculata.edu.

Thank you for your time and cooperation with this study. I appreciate your allowing staff to participate in this voluntary survey.

Sincerely,

David J. Renaut
Doctoral Candidate
Immaculata University
Appendix F

E-mail Communication to Staff of Participating Schools

Dear _________________ (Name of Participating School District) Teacher,

My name is David Renaut and I am presently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department of Immaculata University. _________________ (Superintendent of Participating School District), Superintendent, recently provided me with permission to survey all teachers who are employed by the _________________ (participating school district). The online survey contains questions involving teachers’ perceptions regarding the factors that influence teacher attrition and retention and what districts can do to increase the likelihood of teachers remaining in the profession. The purpose of this study is to provide data involving teacher attrition that are more specific to the local area and to add to the larger research in the area of teacher attrition.

The voluntary online survey contains questions involving teachers’ perceptions about the factors that influence teacher attrition and retention and what districts can do to increase the likelihood of teachers remaining in the profession. In order for me to complete this study, I am asking for your voluntary participation in completing this survey electronically by _________________ (date of survey completion deadline). All data will be analyzed and potential reporting will be done confidentially. Your responses will be secured in a confidential manner without any identifying attributions possible.

You will notice at the end of the survey that you will also be invited to participate in a brief interview. More specific details regarding a voluntary interview can be found at the end of the survey. For your information, it will take you approximately fifteen minutes to complete this online survey. The interview is expected to be no longer than thirty minutes in duration if you choose to participate in one.

You can access the survey by clicking on this link: _________________________

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this study. Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be directed to me, the researcher, at 717-451-0960 or renautd@comcast.net or Dr. Thomas Compitello, Dissertation Chair, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3298) or tcompitello@immaculata.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board. Questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas O'Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3221) or tobrien@immaculata.edu.

Sincerely,

David J. Renaut
Doctoral Candidate
Immaculata University
My name is David Renaut and I am presently a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership Department of Immaculata University. The interview will consist of questions involving teachers’ perceptions regarding the factors that influence teacher attrition and retention and what districts can do to increase the likelihood of teachers remaining in the profession. The purpose of this study is to provide data involving teacher attrition that are more specific to the local area and to add to the larger research in the area of teacher attrition.

Questions used during the interview will be open-response, and you may be asked to clarify or explain an answer. The researcher will record the interview for transcription. Transcriptions will be sent via e-mail to you to ensure their accuracy. Each interview should take no longer than thirty minutes. The information that you provide during the interview will be kept anonymously once the transcription is verified and then any identifying information will be removed. All response will be kept in strict confidence. As you know, your participation in this survey is voluntary. Please understand that you may decline from answering any question posed to you during this interview without consequence or prejudice.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this study. Any questions or concerns regarding this study may be directed to me, the researcher, at 717-451-0960 or renaudt@comcast.net or Dr. Thomas Compitello, Dissertation Chair, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3298) or tcompitello@immaculata.edu. This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Review Board. Questions regarding your rights as a research subject may be directed to Dr. Thomas O’Brien, Chair of the Research Ethics Review Board, at 610-647-4400 (ext. 3221) or tobrien@immaculata.edu.

Your signature below represents that you have read and understand the contents of this consent form and you agree to take part in the interview segment of this study. Signing this form will not waive any of your legal rights.

Participant’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: __________________
Researcher’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: __________________
Participant’s Name: ________________________________
Participant’s Telephone Number: _______________________
Participant’s Position with the School District: ________________
Participant’s School: __________________________________