

ABSTRACT

Brian V. Mathis, IMPROVING TEACHER RETENTION IN THE GRANVILLE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (Under the direction of Dr. James McDowelle). Department of Educational Leadership, April 2017.

Teacher attrition continues to be a problem in many communities throughout North Carolina and the United States. Research indicates salary, student discipline, and administrative support as leading causes of teacher turnover. This study is exclusive to the Granville County Public School District, located in north central, North Carolina. The Granville district has experienced two consecutive years of teacher turnover eclipsing 20%, causing much concern with school administration and within the community. This improvement study was conducted following a small-scale proof-of-concept, concentrated at a middle school within the district. Attempting to improve ill-structured problems such as teacher retention within a specific Local Educational Administration, forces one to investigate cause and effect, be it problem or solution. Supporting this investigation was Deming's approach of (a) systems, (b) variation, (c) knowledge, and (d) psychology, coupled with the methodology of Improvement Science.

This study revealed the importance of principal leadership at the school level relative to teacher attrition, by evaluation of specific strategies enacted at a selected middle school to improve perceptions of teacher appreciation, student behavior, and communication. A sequential process to improve teacher retention was also created to help school administrators identify specific problems in their respective institutions, formulate and initiate strategies for improvement, as well as determine effectiveness, with the end goal of improving teacher retention at the school campus and within the district.

IMPROVING TEACHER RETENTION IN THE
GRANVILLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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April, 2017

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GRANVILLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Naming and Framing the Problem

The Granville County Public School District is located in Granville County, North Carolina. Granville County is a rural county in north, central North Carolina that occupies approximately 59,900 residents (Granville County Government, Retrieved from <http://www.granvillenc.govoffice2.com/>). The school system educates approximately 8,000 students and employs approximately 940 people. 2014-2015 student racial/ethnic demographics are as follows: 47.4% white, 33.1% black, 14.5% Hispanic, 4% multi-racial, and less than 1% American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander. District-wide, 59% of Granville's student population received free or reduced lunch during the 2014-2015 school year (Dr. L. Baldwin, personal communication, July 6, 2015). Granville County Public Schools (GCPS) is comprised of six high schools, four middle schools, nine elementary schools, one alternative school that serve grades six through twelve, and one central services facility. In recent years, the county has experienced creation of two charter schools, which are not associated with Granville County Public Schools.

Teacher Turnover Compared with Past

Since 2010, GCPS teacher turnover rate has increased over 10% from 10.17 % in 2010, to 20.3% in 2014. In 2015, GCPS teachers continued to exit the school district as the turnover rate climbed slightly to 20.87% (2015a). This equated to 105 teachers leaving the district for a variety of reasons. Table 1 shows teacher exit data for school year 2014-2015, while Table 2 presents specific demographic teacher data regarding probationary and tenured turnover, along with movement to other districts and retirement (Granville County Public Schools, 2015a).

Table 1

Granville County Public School District 2014-2015 Teacher Turnover Data by Reason

Reason	Number of Teachers
Teacher in Another NC Public School	34
Retire with Full Benefits	13
Moved to a non-teaching position in LEA	8
Family Relocation	9
Teach in a Charter School	7
Teach in Another State	7
Health/Disability	4
End of Teach for America term	3
Retire with Reduced Benefits	3
Other	3
Dissatisfied with teaching	3
Family Responsibility/Child Care	3
Continue Education/Sabbatical	2
Career Change	1
Reason Unknown	1
Deceased	1
Moved to a non-teaching position in another LEA	1
Did not obtain/maintain license	1
Interim Contract Ended	1
Total	105

Note. Data obtained from Granville County Public Schools Human Resources Department.

Table 2

Granville County Public School District 2014-2015 Additional Information of Interest

Additional Information	%
Tenured teachers who left	51
Probationary teachers who left	49
Teachers teaching in another district	31
Teachers retiring	15

Note. Data obtained from Granville County Public Schools Human Resources Department.

Teachers leaving Granville County Public Schools to teach in other school district is the leading data point and promotes concern for school administrators. Out of the 34 teachers who left, 23 continued their career in the Wake County Public School district, with neighboring Vance and Franklin counties receiving a combined total of 5 teachers. Teachers leaving for reasons initiated by the district total five in 2014, and three in 2015.

Teacher Turnover Compared to Others

Compared to neighboring districts with similar demographics Granville County Public Schools consistent negative trend in teacher retention creates concern for district administrators. Vance, Franklin, and Person school districts all border Granville to the East and West and are viewed as competitors of the district. Table 3 exhibits Granville's consistent climb in teacher turnover and helps frame this problematic situation compared to surrounding districts.

The consistent increase in teacher turnover has caused Granville County Public School's administration to implement teacher retention initiatives as priority and formally address teacher retention in the District Improvement Plan in 2014 and 2015. In 2014, Goal 3A states: "Every student has excellent educators and supporters; Objective 1. Recruit and retain highly effective teachers" (Granville County Public Schools District Improvement Plan, 2014). And currently, the revised 2015 Granville District Improvement Plan states: "District Goal 2 – Every student has highly qualified and effective teachers and learners through recruitment, retention and professional development; Objective 1: Reduce the teacher turnover rate by 10% by April 2017" (2015b). With a clear commitment to helping improve teacher retention, school officials know and understand effects of teacher turnover and are focused on improving this metric to help provide a quality education to the students of Granville County Public Schools.

Table 3

Teacher Turnover Statistics 2010 – 2015 Compared to Neighboring Districts and North Carolina

District	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Granville	10.17	13.53	17.29	17.51	20.3	20.87
Vance	17.58	17.5	16.7	22.69	20.72	18.98
Franklin	7.64	6.64	8.59	20.24	15.47	18.31
Person	18.55	15.65	22.19	18.4	13	19.94
North Carolina	11.1	11.17	12.13	14.33	14.12	14.84

Note. Teacher Turnover Data Adapted from the 2013 – 2014 & 2014 - 2015 Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Highly Leveraged Problem

There is a strong correlation between improving teacher retention in the educational setting and its influence on (a) student achievement and teacher effectiveness, (b) fiscal programming, and (c) teacher morale. Retaining educators for sustained periods of time in consistent teaching assignments creates a ripple effect throughout the school setting where growth can occur for both students and staff.

Student achievement and teacher effectiveness have been linked to teacher retention through numerous studies (Gu, 2014; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Teacher consistency and commitment are valued traits in education. Extended time and exposure to quality teachers may qualitatively benefit pupils (Ingersoll, 2002). Furthermore, teachers have the greatest impact on student's educational attainment and long-term success (Public School Forum, 2015). Gu (2014) studied relational resilience with students and found this to be true. His research found teachers with positive student relations demonstrated more resilience and demonstrated a higher level of commitment to student achievement. Hanushek (2012) sums it up best as he states "good teachers have an extraordinarily powerful impact on the future lives of their students" (p. 6). During my tenure in public education, I see this phenomenon to be true as a teacher and administrator. Teachers have the advantage of daily contact with students, while administrators have great influence on policy, processes, and opportunities, both of which contribute to a meaningful educational experience for the student.

Granville County Public Schools teacher retention dilemma can be viewed as a district-wide problem, but current school accountability data clarifies potential building level concerns paired with composite Grade Level Proficiency (GLP) data on North Carolina end-of-grade and end-of-course examinations, and Educator Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) growth

designations. Schools not accounted for in this comparison include a local early college high school, a magnet school, and an alternative school due to employing less than 12 teachers in each school.

Schools listed in Table 4 have turnover rates higher than that of the Granville County Public School District of 21.43%. Seven out of twenty-one schools account for 54% of the teacher turnover. End-of-Grade proficiency data for the 2014-2015 school year reflects an average GLP of 38.7% respectively, with four schools not meeting growth and no schools exceeding growth as designated by the EVAAS program. While schools below the district turnover average (see Table 5) demonstrated an average GLP of 48.3%, with three schools not meeting growth and four schools exceeding growth as measured by EVAAS. This data supports Hanushek and Rivkin's (2007) study that demonstrated less effective teachers produced more occurrences of attrition and movement of teachers between schools and districts.

Borman and Dowling (2006) predict that annual costs for recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers consume \$2.2 billion per year of educational funds. The Texas Center for Educational Research (2002) estimates spending \$329 million annually to recruit and retain teaching personnel. During 2007, Granville County Public School District participated in a study supported by the National Commission on Teaching and Americas Future. This study (Barnes, Crowe, & Shaeffer, 2007) focused on the fiscal impact of teacher turnover in a variety of settings and chose GCPS to represent a *rural* school district. This research project proved for every teacher lost in Granville's district, a loss of \$9,875 was incurred. As inflation has occurred and overall funding has decreased, turnover in 2015 may be more devastating for present and future generations.

Table 4

Schools in the Granville County Public School District above the District Average in Teacher Turnover Compared to NC Grade Level Proficiency, Educator Value-Added Assessment System Growth

School Name	Turnover Percent	GLP Proficiency	EVAAS Growth
A Elementary	39.13	27.4	Not Met
B Elementary	37.50	27.8	Not Met
A Middle School	33.35	50.7	Not Met
B Middle School	29.59	32.4	Not Met
C Middle School	27.72	33.7	Met
A High School	25.00	63.7	Met
C Elementary	24.76	35.3	Met

Note. 2014-2015 data collected from the Granville County Public Schools Human Resources and Testing and Accountability departments, August 2015.

Table 5

Schools in the Granville County Public School District below the district average in Teacher Turnover compared to NC Grade Level Proficiency, Educator Value-Added Assessment System Growth

School Name	Turnover Percent	GLP Proficiency	EVAAS Growth
D Elementary	0	46.3	Exceeded
B High School	5.13	37.8	Exceeded
E Elementary	7.92	46.9	Met
F Elementary	8.78	58.2	Not Met
G Elementary	13.66	35.8	Met
C High School	15.91	29.1	Not Met
D High School	16.67	63.7	Met
D Middle School	16.68	49.6	Exceeded
H Elementary	17.53	68	Not Met
I Elementary	17.56	61.6	Exceeded
D High School	18.75	34.4	Met

Note. 2014-2015 data collected from the Granville County Public Schools Human Resources and Testing and Accountability departments, August 2015.

Teacher morale and satisfaction have been credibly linked to educator retention (Huysman, 2008). Current political unrest regarding local governing bodies, coupled with past administrator salaries, may have negatively impacted Granville County Public Schools teacher turnover rate. Huysman (2008) states “As a result of the difficulty of keeping professional and social relationships separate, a blurring of roles surfaced encompassing the relationships between faculty members, building district administrators, the support staff, and the personal relationships with school board members and the district superintendent. Corresponding actions, reactions, beliefs, and attitudes with the ambiguous relationships have directly impacted teacher satisfaction, quality, and retention” (Huysman, 2008, p. 34). This reference to dysfunctional relations is directly applicable to the awkward, negative experiences that have led to poor self-image, negative perception, and strained political relations in Granville County.

Problem Statement

With teacher turnover rates trending upward since 2010, and 2014 - 2015 data at 20.87%, the Granville County Public School District teacher turnover rate is too high as compared to past history and other neighboring districts (Dr. M. Wilson, personal communication, December 5, 2014). For these reasons, I am proposing a project exercising methodology in *Improvement Science* to help improve teacher retention in the Granville County Public School District.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Retention

The National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey (2013) shows 15.8% of the teachers in the United States left their current school or changed careers altogether. The North Carolina Public School Forum (2015) ranks teacher retention number six in their *2015 Top 10 Education Issues*. Teacher retention efforts in the Granville County Public School District have been examined due to continually increasing teacher turnover. District and school administrators are cognizant of the negative effects losing quality teachers has on school climate, district perception, and student achievement. Superintendents and principals have felt these negative effects in Granville County and are continuously navigating local and state *political waters* to help retain quality staff. Haar (2007) emphasizes that keeping quality teachers should be a foundational goal for administrators to improve student achievement. Research indicates possible school characteristics and operating principles (Ingersoll, 2001) may help improve teacher retention, which may also have a ripple effect for improvement in student achievement and teacher effectiveness (Gu, 2014; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004) throughout the district.

Retention Characteristics

Age/Experience

A person's age and/or experience proves to be a viable factor affecting teacher attrition as shown in the Teacher Follow Up Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics in 2013. "The highest turnover rates seen for teachers occur in their first years of teaching and after many years of teaching when they are near retirement, thus producing a U-shaped pattern of attrition with respect to age and experience (Brown & Wynn, 2009, p. 40).

Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) study further reinforces this U-shaped phenomenon for attrition as it relates to *human capital*. Human capital "is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them act in new ways" (Coleman, 1988, p. S100). Young teachers leave education due to dissatisfaction or family reasons (Hughes, 2012). This early departure may account for 20% to 50% within the first five years of service (Hughes, 2012). Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) found nearly one-third left teaching within the first three years, and one-half found new careers after five years of service. A 1997 report from the National Center for Education Statistics reinforced this problematic issue, as 9.3% of first year teachers left the classroom before completion of their initial year. The most recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reinforces age as a quantifiable characteristic to link teacher turnover. Table 6 compares teacher's age to turnover percentage. Note however, turnover includes *movers* and *leavers*. *Movers* left their current school for a different school and stayed in the teaching profession. *Leavers* exited the teaching profession altogether.

Many studies have indicated that the teacher age has determined duration of practice in the teaching field (Hanusheck, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Kirby, Grissmer, & Hudson, 1991). Age relates to both young and aged persons entering and leaving the teaching profession. Grissmer and Kirby (1997) identified retirement as the most significant factor in teacher turnover.

Although, Ingersoll (2001, 2002) noted teacher retirement accounts for only 12% of the national turnover each year. Noted in Table 6 is Grissmer and Kirby's (1991) U-shaped trend reflecting theory of human capital to be of importance with teachers under 30 years of age and over 50 years of age reporting approximately 20% turnover.

In a Texas study involving teacher turnover, Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) found teachers with zero to two years of experience were two times more likely to leave the profession and four

Table 6

Teachers Age and Its Impact on Teacher Turnover

Teachers Age	Turnover Percentage
Less than 30 years	21.2
30-39 years	13.8
40-49 years	9.9
50 or more years	19.7

Note. Adapted from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS).

times more likely to move to another district. Accumulation of experience and professional development are proven factors to help retain teachers in the classroom. Teachers who accrue 10 years of service in the educational profession are most likely to remain educators (Hughes, 2012). The concepts of persistence and longevity are linked to the seminal work of Coleman (1988), and studies by Grissmer and Kirby (1991) regarding human capital theory.

Advanced pedagogy, classroom management practices, or knowledge in curriculum are all examples of investments in human capital through appropriate professional development. Creating human capital to improve teaching demands time and effort, which in turn, gives novice teachers training and additional strategies to justify longevity in the profession. The 2013 National Schools and Staffing Survey prove Hughes (2012) correct regarding longevity of service and teacher intention to remain in education (see Table 7). Movers and Leavers are calculated as turnover statistics in Table 7. During the 2011-12 through 2012-13 reporting period, Movers with 1-3 years of experience accounted for 38% of the mobility within the school district, while 56.7% reported leaving their district for employment in another district. Data referring to teachers with four or more years of experience is quite the contrary as 63.5% migrated to another school within the district and only 34.1% found work in a different school district. This leads one to believe teachers are more likely to move across district lines early in their career, while veteran staff are more likely to settle within one district.

Teacher Preparation

People entering the teaching profession today have different avenues they may follow to achieve employment. Traditional teacher education programs through college/university settings

Table 7

Teachers Experience and Its Impact on Teacher Turnover

Teaching Experience	Turnover Percentage
1-3 Years	19.6
4-9 Years	18.5
10-19 Years	11.5
20 Years or More	19.7

Note. Adapted from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS).

are still the norm, but many alternative approaches to obtain licensure are being pursued. Lateral entry, Teach for America, Troops to Teachers, and Visiting International Faculty are just a few non-traditional teacher employment programs being used. With increased difficulty in recruiting math, science, exceptional children, and technology education certified teachers, school administrators' welcome alternative programs such as these. While mentioned options may help in recruiting potential teachers, these approaches have been shown to produce higher attrition (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2006). Standardized test score performance by prospective teachers has also shown to be a factor in predicting turnover in the teaching profession (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2005; Podgursky, Monroe, & Watson, 2004). Teachers who score higher on standardized tests and graduate in the top-third of their graduating class are more likely to leave the classroom, or not enter teaching at all (Auguste et al., 2010; Boyd et al., 2005). Hughes (2012) reinforces this assertion, stating teachers who stay in the profession often do not hold graduate degrees and score lower on standardized tests.

School Characteristics/Working Conditions

The school environment and working conditions have been studied and linked to teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2001). These characteristics include; low salary, excessive student discipline issues, lack of administrative support, class size, inadequate planning time, and reduced opportunity for professional advancement (Ingersoll, 2001). Conditions such as these, build a school climate that discourages commitment to the organization and sabotages the intrinsic drive of teachers to positively impact the school community.

Wynn, Carboni, and Patall (2007) surveyed beginning teachers about why they may leave teaching. Most reasons cited were attributed to school climate and culture. Although, salary

was the leading factor, followed by disruptive students, administrative support, lack of parental involvement, and working conditions. Table 8 shows the results of Wynn's study.

Salary

Challenges with teacher salary continue to be a factor in teacher attrition and teacher salaries on average are approximately 20% lower than other occupations with comparable education and training requirements (Darling-Hammond, 2003). According to Lortie (1975) this trend has existed since colonial times, as teachers were paid on par with skilled artisans, but less than ministers, physicians, and lawyers (as cited in Elsbree, 1939). Unfortunately, the school administrator/principal has little control over salary schedules for his/her staffs. This factor, although highest in Wynn's study, may not be as important as one might assume. Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) note characteristics of suburban schools (which traditionally have less turnover) and contend higher student achievement may be more important than salary. Also, Auguste, Kihn, and Miller (2010) found working conditions and school leadership more influential on teacher retention than competitive pay. Although, Brewer (1996) found teachers are more likely to quit when they work in lower paid districts. While this paper focuses on teacher retention, it is worth noting that salary does seem to have a viable impact on teacher recruitment (Auguste et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999).

Through conversations with many teachers and based on my experiences during the past 16 years, teacher pay is important, but not nearly as important, as school climate and culture. Disruptive students, administrative support, parental involvement, working conditions, professional recognition, and collegiality all encompass school climate. These characteristics are controllable, to some degree, by the school-based administrator (i.e. principal).

Table 8

Reasons Teachers May Leave the Profession

Reason	Percentage
Salary	82%
Disruptive Students	58%
Administrative Support	43%
Lack of Parental Involvement	42%
Working Conditions	38%
Lack of Professional Prestige	31%
Personal Reasons	30%
Lack of Collegiality	19%

Note. Adapted from Wynn et al. (2007).

Student Discipline

Student discipline issues are one of the leading causes in teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Leob, & Wycoff, 2011; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Wynn et al. 2007). Negative behaviors exhibited by students on a consistent basis in the K-12 setting will impact the educational professional in a number of ways. Teachers frequently exposed to poor student behavior may experience dissatisfaction in their work (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003), question their effectiveness (Huysman, 2008), and exhibit reduced resilience (Gu, 2014). Most teachers enter the teaching profession to help students be successful academically and help prepare them to be successful in life. Combating students, who are disruptive and disrespectful, negates this intrinsically motivated mission and leads the affected teacher to doubt his or her efficacy. On the contrary, Hughes (2012) found no statistical significance between classroom management problems and teachers' decision to teach until retirement. In fact, teachers reported they were more likely to remain in education while teaching in *high poverty* labeled schools versus those that taught in wealthier school communities (Hughes, 2012). Although some research may conflict, student behavior and lack of motivation are still critical factors that must be addressed and are linked to teacher satisfaction (Boyd et al., 2011). Supporting teachers through effective discipline policies should be one approach by school administrators to build confidence within the school staff and retain more teachers.

Principal Support

Research indicates that highly effective principals create a successful learning environment (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Haar, 2007) and impact teacher retention (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001; Wynn et al. 2007). Boyd et al.

(2011) study based in the New York City Public School District found school administrators have a profound impact on teacher attrition, and was found to be the leading cause of teacher dissatisfaction and turnover in their study. Furthermore, research cites principal leadership as a prime indicator of whether a teacher decides to stay or leave their current teaching assignment (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Branch et al. (2007) found that principals considered *effective* had high teacher turnover rates for teachers deemed *least* effective. While teachers considered effective, remained in place. This study helped reinforce the value of school leadership and its effect on creating a climate conducive to teaching and learning.

Many studies have been conducted regarding trait identification and effective school leadership. In fact, trait leadership “was one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership” (Northouse, 2016, p. 19). With relevant studies spanning a century in length, Northouse (2016) identified five Major Leadership Traits: (a) Intelligence, (b) Self-Confidence, (c) Determination, (d) Integrity, and (e) Sociability. I would argue, these five traits hold true to effective educational leadership characteristics today and build a pillar of sustainability on which the leader can depend upon through varied circumstances. Through personal and observed experiences working as a public school educator, I have witnessed many circumstances in which these leadership traits have been exhibited and either alleviated or exacerbated a potential issue, causing parties involved to form a sense of confidence or doubt in their leader.

Another study (Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004) relating directly to educational leadership found “principals who retain teachers are successful entrepreneurs who believe that strong instructional, operational, and strategic leadership have equal importance” (Brown & Wynn, 2009, p. 43). The study also noted “feedback, direct assistance, collaborative working

conditions, and involvement in meaningful decision making were perceived to be important” (Brown & Wynn, 2009, p. 43).

Brown and Wynn (2009) found three *organizing tenets* and associated *emerging themes* respectively. Through study and interview with school principals, Brown and Wynn (2009) categorized the first tenet as: *Finding-Shared Values*. Principals reinforced the importance of finding the right *fit* for their specific vacancy and solidifying the candidate’s commitment to children. This phenomenon pertains to linking the candidate’s traits, values, strengths, and deficits to the job assignment and all roles associated with the position. The second tenet identified as *Supporting: Needed Resources*, pertains to the principal’s commitment of support for their teachers through time and money. Supporting teachers through communication, mentoring (Ingersoll & Smith, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014), and visibility (Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014) in classrooms help sustain new and veteran teachers. This helps promote interest in the individual staff member and intrinsic sense-of-worth for the teacher.

Gaining access to necessary resources through fiscal means can help provide the teacher with tools to facilitate teaching and learning (Wynn et al., 2007). Teachers need textbooks, technology, manipulative resources, and other materials to create engaging learning environments. As principal, allowing teachers access to these resources promotes a sense of caring and helps build *togetherness* in the school. The final tenet identified by Brown and Wynn (2009) is titled: *Keeping-Bending and Building*, also known as the *Gumby philosophy* due to the flexibility and agility the principal must exhibit to adapt to individual circumstances (Brown & Wynn, 2009). During interviews, principals stated “the importance of establishing relationships, of building community, and of instilling confidence through honesty, fairness, and consistency” (Brown & Wynn, 2009, p. 54) are key behaviors in creating a supportive

atmosphere. Building healthy work relationships where children are the focus, help administrator and teacher work productively toward common goals.

Congruent with the premise of the Gumby philosophy, principals demonstrate flexibility in varied circumstances and exhibit situational leadership qualities as their approach to combat specific nuances encountered on a routine basis. The situational approach refers to leadership actions in different situations and warrants the leader to reference two dimensions, directive and supportive, given the circumstance (Northouse, 2016). Access of these dimensions depends upon needs of followers. With fluid characteristics of the principal-ship, finding the appropriate balance between supportive and directive style may determine how effective the leader is from one situation to the next.

School administrators have the authority to set a standard of excellence in their respective school and community to promote a *culture of retention*. Establishing a clear, concise mission and vision, supporting teachers and students in the classroom, both instructionally and managerially, and having an *authentic* approach to leadership may help attract and retain quality teachers.

Authentic Leadership

Auguste et al. (2010) found principal leadership to be an influence in promoting teacher retention for staff currently employed. Principal qualities that enhance the teachers working environment and create a culture of self-efficacy to educational practice are promoted through *authentic leadership* characteristics. This theory of leadership concentrates efforts on whether leadership is genuine and real (Northouse, 2016). Being relatively new to the area of research, authentic leadership is still in the infancy stage of development (Northouse, 2016). The acts of 9/11, large corporation debacles, and massive banking catastrophes have created a need for

leaders who value trust, honesty and moral behavior (Northouse, 2016). Upon further investigation of Northouse (2016) work regarding authentic leadership, I began to reflect upon past experience of my current school district. Actions over the past 24 months have created an aura of distrust and divisiveness within the school district and community. Interactions between local governing boards have become contentious, which has hindered efforts of school administration and has ultimately impacted students in a negative fashion.

The parallels between corporate downfalls and school district challenges began to surface in this literature review. The need for authentic leadership became more concrete. Bill George's (2003) (George & Sims, 2007) authentic leadership approach concentrates on characteristics of authentic leaders (Northouse, 2016). "George found that authentic leaders have a genuine desire to serve others, they know themselves, and they feel free to lead from their core values" (Northouse, 2016 p. 197). These statements remain steadfast as attributes for educational leaders who value student and teacher interests. Administrators are under a watchful eye daily and must be agile dealing with varied circumstances all in the name of doing what is best for children. George's five characteristics of authentic leadership may help the school administrator be more effective in accomplishing this task. The five characteristics are: "(1) They understand their purpose, (2) they have strong values about the right thing to do, (3) they establish trusting relationships with others, (4) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their values, and (5) they are passionate about their mission" (Northouse, 2016 p. 197).

Leadership in education requires a sense of purpose and direction, a *calling* of sorts. This calling helps identify the mission of the educator and sets course on student improvement. Throughout this journey, the authentic leader will be tested and rely on strong values to hold their course true. Relationships with followers help the authentic leader achieve their mission.

This reciprocal process of leader-follower interaction helps build trust and security in the organization, which leads to commitment and loyalty (Northouse, 2016).

School district faculty, community members, and the county at-large may benefit greatly from the characteristics of authentic leadership. Freeman and Randolph (2013) give this advice: “As an administrator do not be concerned about popularity, rather be concerned for being fair and doing what is right. If a person loses the respect and trust of those who work in the organization, then you will not be effective and morale will suffer” (Freeman & Randolph, 2013, p. 9). Exhibiting these values and actions would help create, repair, and sustain productive interactions among school personnel, community members, government agencies, and local governing bodies to help encourage and support the school district for future success.

Student/Teacher Demographics

Public schools today in North Carolina are diverse communities of learners where many race, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds collide to create a separate micro-system of culture. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found student race and low socioeconomic status characteristics to be strongly related to teacher turnover, even more so than salary. The Texas study further promotes strong evidence that teachers favored high achieving, nonminority, non low-income pupils (Hanushek et al., 2004). Furthermore, additional studies have demonstrated schools and districts with large concentrations of non-White, low achieving, low-socioeconomic students risk higher levels of teacher turnover (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Boyd et al., 2005). Reduced perceptions of working conditions have also been associated with schools serving large numbers of students receiving subsidized lunch as well as higher proportions of Black or Hispanic students occupying the school (Boyd et al., 2011).

Within these systems lie varied levels of diversity pertaining to teacher demographics,

and in my experience working in a rural area, I have noticed teacher demographics seem disproportionate to the number of minority students served in the district. This imbalance of racial diversity, leaning towards a large Caucasian teacher population, may promote turnover within the district. Borman and Dowling (2006) found White teachers were 1.36 times more likely to leave the classroom than minority staff. With higher numbers of White employees, one may expect higher attrition. This finding has been consistently cited in studies by Kirby, Grissmer, and Hudson (1991), and Ingersoll (2001).

Parental Involvement

It is noted that parent involvement contributes to teacher attrition and migration (Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll 2001; Robinson, 2007; Wynn et al., 2007). This persistent problem is usually associated with poverty and the limits poverty places on parents to be an active participant in their child's education (Robinson, 2007). In Robinson's (2007) study, the lack of parental involvement was a leading complaint among designated *poor* schools. Several schools in the Granville district have seen the effects of reduced parental commitment, abolishing booster clubs and Parent Teacher Organization's (PTO). Administrators and teachers must overcome this obstacle on a daily basis to effectively teach children in the inner city or rural community. This chronic behavior of parents works against school goals and negatively impacts student engagement. In many circumstances, student discipline problems can be associated with poor parental involvement. These compounding effects create frustration on the teacher and school community, which may lead to a voluntary change of placement for the employee.

Working Conditions/Environment

It is widely accepted in the education field that positive working conditions promote teacher retention and satisfaction. Auguste et al. (2010) found current teachers viewed better

working conditions to be a more important factor influencing teacher retention than competitive salary. These working conditions not only pertain to the environment in which teaching takes place, but social interactions between staff and students as well. Environmental conditions are controllable to some degree by school administrators and worth focusing efforts toward in order to retain quality teachers and staff. *Migration* from school to school is represented abundantly in teacher turnover statistics (Ingersoll, 2002). The 2013 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) by the National Center for Educational Statistics shows *Personal Life Factors* and *School Factors* as the leading reasons for public school teacher movers to change venue. These statistics were 22.7% and 22.6% respectively. Personal life factors include health problems, family relocation, pregnancy, and child rearing obligations (Ingersoll, 2002). School factors refer to job dissatisfaction related turnover (Ingersoll, 2002). Reasons stated include the following (Ingersoll, 2002):

- Poor Salary
- Poor Administrative Support
- Student Discipline Problems
- Lack of Faculty Influence (shared-decision making)
- Poor Student Motivation
- Unsafe Environment
- Inadequate Time
- Class Size Too Large
- Intrusions on Teaching
- No opportunity for Advancement
- Lack of Community Support

Ingersoll (2002) found (a) low salary, (b) poor administrative support, (c) lack of student motivation, (d) student discipline problems, and (e) lack of teacher influence in decision making as top reasons for departure. While Lortie's (1975) Five-Towns study, found lack of advancement to be a key factor in men educators not staying in the classroom and women base their decision to depart upon life-factors, such as marriage or child rearing. These issues have plagued K-12 education for many years, and continue to do so.

Leavers, those defined as exiting the teaching profession, accounted for 7.7% of teacher turnover in the 2013 TFS (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). More than 9% left education involuntarily, which in many cases can be attributed to poor performance and effectiveness. With teacher effectiveness being the most important factor influencing student growth from one year to the next (Brown & Wynn, 2009), involuntary turnover is needed to ensure quality teachers inhabit public school classrooms. The TFS (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013) lists Personal Life factors and Career Factors as the two leading reasons for teachers voluntarily leaving the education profession between school years 2011-12 and 2012-13. Examples of personal life factors have been previously stated. Career factors include pursuing a better job or another career outside of education (Ingersoll, 2002). Statistics for leavers are overwhelmingly positive as it relates to improvement after leaving public school teaching. This does not bode well for current and future generations who rely on the public school system for employment and education. Table 9 illustrates these statistics from the 2013 TFS from the National Center for Education Statistics.

Viewing this data is very disturbing and demonstrates the monumental task school administrators are presented in keeping teachers supported throughout their educational careers.

Table 9

Public School Leavers Who Rated Current Profession as Better

Aspects of Current Occupation	Better in Teaching	Better in Current Position
Salary	19.7	43.5
Opportunities for advancement	17.6	48.9
Opportunities for PD	21.2	45.7
Relationships with colleagues	17.8	32.6
Administrator support	12.5	44.9
Influence over policy	8.4	58.5
Autonomy	11.7	57.4
Professional prestige	8.4	52.2
Manageability of workload	16.2	51.2
Balance life and work	12.9	60.8
General work conditions	13.8	52.8
Intellectual challenge	10.7	55.1
Sense of accomplishment	11.2	43.9
Making a difference in lives of others	24.5	44.1

Note. Adapted from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2013. National Center for Education Statistics.

Surprisingly, the category *Making a Difference in the Lives of Others* was 20 percentage points higher in careers outside of education. Through many formal and informal conversations with educators during my tenure as an educator, this intrinsic factor of motivation is a primary reason many educators are teaching young people today. To note, the only areas rated *Better in Teaching* were *Benefits* and *Job Security*.

Shared decision making has been noted to influence teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This premise of allowing teacher voice in creating school-based policy, influencing a specific procedure, or allowing input on curriculum decisions all seem to be valuable actions to promote a culture of teacher empowerment. School based leadership teams, and establishing an organizational hierarchy within the teaching ranks, are examples of conditions that may enhance this premise to allow administrators an opportunity for buy-in with staff before initiatives are enacted.

The Impact of No Child Left Behind

The George W. Bush administration reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2002, renaming it No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (U.S. Department of Education). NCLB has six basic tenets (a) accountability, (b) highly qualified teachers, (c) scientifically-based instruction, (d) local flexibility, (e) safe schools, (f) parent participation and choice (Turnbull, 2005). The highly qualified (HQ) teacher component is linked to accountability of schools as it relates to achievement (Dwyer, 2013). Highly qualified teachers are deemed proficient to teach specific disciplines according to State Board of Education policy. This HQ mandate has caused much concern with human resource departments at the local level (Dr. M. Wilson, personal communication, December 5, 2014).

The highly qualified provision under NCLB requires teachers comply with this mandate

as determined by state authority or risk sanctions and loss of funding (Strawn et al., 2008). This legislation has impacted rural school communities to a great degree (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Monk, 2007). Small student populations produce fewer funding dollars from state and federal agencies, which in turn, create staffing challenges for rural school administration. Teachers in small, rural settings may need to teach multiple subjects to help meet the needs of their students. According to NCLB and the HQ provision, this teacher is required to be highly qualified in each subject area taught. This circumstance frequently leads to teacher attrition or leads to schools only offering basic courses to educate their respective population (Monk, 2007). Content areas such as math, science, exceptional children, and English language learners at the Elementary level, have been deemed as *difficult to fill* in the Granville district due to the HQ requirements that are extremely difficult to meet (Dr. M. Wilson, personal communication, December 5, 2014). These rigid parameters affect all districts, but create difficult issues for rural districts, like Granville County Public Schools.

Rural Education

Rural communities have been identified by the U.S. Census Bureau (2015) as “all population, housing, and territory not included in an urban area”. Urban areas are defined by being an Urbanized Area (UA) and/or an Urban Cluster (UC) (U.S. Census). A UA is defined as an area of 50,000 or more people, while UCs are areas of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 (U.S. Census). Communities identified as rural can be vast in area but sparse in population or small but dense in membership (Monk, 2007). Common characteristics include small in area, sparsely populated, limited services as related to retail, schools, and medical facilities, and a general trend of business in agriculture (Monk, 2007). These populations have been defined by job loss due to closure of blue-collar industry, aging residents, and population decline (Monk,

2007). Industrial shutdown has led to poverty in many rural areas throughout the United States. Malhoit (2003) suggests 244 of 250 of the poorest counties in the U.S. are deemed rural. Approximately 8 million children attend rural public schools and 2.5 million live in poverty (Malhoit, 2003).

According to the 2013 Schools and Staffing Survey, the rural community school experienced 15.4% turnover, second only to city community schools. Teachers chose to leave rural communities in greater numbers with an 8.4% attrition rate as compared to city leavers at 7.9% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Rural settings attract teachers with less experience and training (Monk, 2007). These factors lead one to assume beginning teachers are hired in rural settings, and leave once marketability has improved. Although, small educational communities have shown to promote cohesiveness and greater satisfaction in the workplace (Monk, 2007), one may be led to believe, other cultural characteristics may stimulate an elevated attrition rate. An increased sense of satisfaction by the teacher may be attributed to higher intrinsic reward in the rural setting (Goodpaster, Adedokun, & Weaver, 2012). Goodpaster et al. (2012) found teacher efficacy as great motivation to continue to *make a difference* in the lives of young people. This demonstration of service promotes strong relations between students, staff, and community. These relationships can be multi-faceted and either work for or against the rural educator.

Social Capital Theory

James S. Coleman's (1988) seminal work regarding social capital and its function among different entities proves to be relevant in rural educator relations. Coleman (1988) states:

Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure,

and they facilitate certain actions of actors-whether persons or corporate actors-within the structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible. Like physical and human capital, social capital is not completely fungible but may be specific to certain activities. A given form of social capital that is valuable in facilitating certain actions may be useless or even harmful for others. (p. S98)

Building social capital in a rural community promotes trust and positive rapport with those involved. Rural communities have unique cultures and beliefs that must be learned by the educator to help facilitate educational goals and enrich the learning environment. Goodpaster et al. (2012) found “strong social networks in rural communities engendered a sense of trust but also threatened teachers reputations when their actions were inconsistent with community norms” (p.19). Teachers from outside the community must take these norms into account when making decisions. Lortie (1975) found teachers *thinking twice* about their interactions in the community and how they are perceived outside of the school setting. Parents in a rural community want to trust their child’s teacher and know the teacher has their child’s best interest in mind. If the educator acts in a way that violates norms and hinders trust, the teacher may find the work environment unbearable due to exterior stressors in the community. The parents and community may create negative perceptions of the teacher, which lead to poor reputations, and may create a toxic atmosphere that the teacher cannot bear, leading to possible turnover. School administrators must be aware of culture and norms in the school community and educate staff to help inform decisions and be proactive to prevent problems.

Multiplex Relations

Teachers in rural educational environments are placed in varying circumstances and

assume multiple roles throughout their tenure. “The central property of a multiplex relation is one that allows the resources of one relationship to be appropriated for use in others (Coleman, 1988, p. S109). It is not uncommon for a teacher to be a school-affiliated coach, club sponsor, recreational athletic coach, neighbor, church member, or family friend to those he or she is involved with in the educational setting. This multiplex relationship can be an asset or hindrance in the realm of rural education.

Teachers operating in a rural school community may or may not deem this relationship as challenging. Goodpaster et al. (2012) found “multiplex relations enhance communication and interaction with students, parents, other teachers, administrators, and community members” (p. 19) creating a strong sense of trust and valued partnership. Relations such as these can create a learning community where the teacher and student feel valued, thus building efficacy within the teachers psyche and promoting sustained tenure in the teaching role. On the contrary, teachers sustained in this multiplex relationship reported there was reduced time for personal life and obligations due to students and families knowing them outside the context of education (Goodpaster et al., 2012). As an educator in a rural community for many years, I have seen this complex interaction between teacher, student, and adult be of benefit or hindrance, which is consistent with Goodpaster et al. (2012) findings. Teachers have capitalized on strong partnerships to help build programs and strengthen the academic presence in their school to create a reciprocal relationship of trust. On the other hand, I have seen relations turn sour, resulting in a toxic atmosphere, where the teacher *from the outside* is the loser and leaves his or her assignment.

Administrators are not immune to this phenomenon either. McClelland (1997) found parents had connections that were varied and over-lapping with school executives. Operating

under such conditions on a daily basis is likely to bring about awkward circumstances that may influence pivotal decisions to prevent future problems. Coleman (1988) states, “it is resources in the form of other persons who have obligations in one context that can be called on to aid when one has problems in another context” (p. S109). This exchange of *tokens* can be a valuable benefit for the school administrator, but lead to tumultuous relations in times of adversity. Once again, calling upon authentic leadership practices and trusting the administrator to *do the right thing* for the good of the school and its students should be the primary objective.

Human Capital Theory

Sustained practice in the K-12 teaching field builds experience and knowledge, which helps the teacher grow professionally. This accumulation of human capital has been shown to improve teacher retention (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991; Hughes, 2012). Hughes (2012) also found teachers who accumulate 10 or more years of service are likely to remain in the teaching field, from either satisfaction of teaching or investment of time and resources in the profession. Teachers’ gaining experience and human capital traditionally takes time and investment, which reinforces Grissmer and Kirby’s (1991) U-shaped pattern of attrition as it relates to the age of teachers and when they exit the profession.

Grissmer and Kirby (1991) relate the human capital theory to teacher attrition in four tenets, (a) occupational choice, (b) occupation-specific, (c) location-specific, and (d) firm-specific. The tenet of occupational choice states “individuals or households make systemic assessments of the likely net monetary and nonmonetary benefits from different occupations and make systematic decisions throughout their careers to enter, stay, or leave an occupation” (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991, p. 36). Benefits may include promotion opportunities, health and life insurance, and retirement benefits (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Non-monetary benefits relate to

working conditions, colleague support, work schedules, equipment, and student characteristics (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Prospective college bound students have the daunting task of weighing the importance of these variables as they decide on a future in education, but according to college/university admissions data (Browder, 2014 via Public School Forum, 2015), many are choosing other professions.

Occupation-specific human capital suggests the employee “stays in a profession, he/she accumulates occupation-specific human capital which translates into wage premiums that are available as long as the individual works within that occupation” (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991, p. 37). This creates an obstacle to vacating the occupation due to the possibility of obtaining lower wages in the subsequent job (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Since wages are traditionally lower in entry-level school teaching positions, teachers may exit the profession early in their career to pursue a more monetarily rewarding career (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991).

Another tenet of human capital theory as it relates to teacher attrition is that of location-specific capital. Home ownership, family proximity, spouse work location, and secondary employment opportunities are all factors that build location-specific capital (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). As teacher’s age and gain experience, occupation-specific capital is accrued, which affords additional resources such as purchasing real estate. Grissmer and Kirby (1991) reinforce that early attrition is more pronounced, as age is related to additional capital.

Lastly, firm-specific human capital relates “to factors not transferable to other schools or school districts and its presence serves to deter moving from a school or school district” (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991, p. 37). Acquiring tenure, knowledge of organizational structure, school programs, and school practices are all related to firm-specific capital (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). Accumulation of monies in a local or state maintained retirement system also attributes to

longevity in the school or school district and reinforces the notion of novice teachers exiting the profession as opposed to veteran (Grissmer & Kirby, 1991). As stated, the theory of human capital relates to teacher attrition in a number of ways and gaining this knowledge may help school and district administrators retain quality staff members to better serve their students.

Potential Strategies for Improvement

Researchers have provided many strategies to improve teacher retention in public schools, be it, rural, urban, or suburban. Many studies have suggested a raise in teacher pay may improve teacher retention (Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014). While certainly a worthy cause, this effort requires navigating bureaucracy and is not controllable by school-based administrators in the public education setting. North Carolina's Governor Pat McCrory instituted a new pay scale for public school teachers in 2015, and raised beginning teacher salaries to \$35,000 per year of employment (NCDPI, 2015). Measures such as these are noble, but may not be enough in the short term to retain quality staff in our public schools.

Teachers depend upon school administrators to support them in managing disruptive student behavior. Negative student actions, and management of these actions has been linked to teacher retention in the public school setting (Ingersoll, 2002; Wynn et al., 2007). School leaders are tasked with creating an atmosphere conducive to learning and enforcing policies in a fair and equitable manner when deviations occur. Supporting teachers in the classroom through the discipline process helps teachers focus on educating children, not being managers of the classroom. An example of a policy tied to student discipline school administrators can reference may be found in one of Granville County's high school handbooks and reads:

Granville is dedicated to the principle that teachers have the right to teach and students have the right to learn. Furthermore, we believe every student has the right to be free

from distractions and harm caused by others' inappropriate behavior. The entire school community is responsible for ensuring that the best possible learning environment is established and maintained. A role of the school is to teach and guide students toward responsible behavior. The discipline program of Granville is one strategy in fulfilling this role and teaching students to take responsibility for their behavior and actions. (Granville High School Parent Student Handbook, 2016, p. 11)

Faculty and staff participation in decision-making at the school level has shown positive effects in regards to promoting teacher retention (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Certo & Fox, 2002; Haar, 2007; Ingersoll, 2002; Wynn et al., 2007). Creating and sustaining Professional Learning Communities, school based leadership teams, and school improvement teams are all strategies that promote teacher input. Allowing teachers to contribute in school-level policy helps create buy-in and promote sustainability of policy or practice (Ingersoll, 2002).

Increased new teacher support from school administrators leads to fewer incidents of attrition and migration in respect to new and veteran teachers alike (Hughes, 2012; Huysman, 2008; Ingersoll, 2002; Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014; Wynn et al., 2007). This support can include professional development, mentor assistance, coaching, additional technology, curriculum resources, and purchase of consumable teaching supplies. Access to these resources is important to allow teachers effective facilitation of current curricula associated with Common Core State Standards.

Other strategies to improve teacher retention may include (a) improving parent participation (Hughes, 2012; Robinson, 2007), (b) sustained principal involvement with continuing licensed teachers (Huysman, 2008; Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014), (c) establishment of teacher recognition programs (Huysman, 2008), (d) facilitation of community engagement

(Goodpaster et al., 2012), (e) elimination of ineffective teachers (Branch et al., 2013), (f) expanded leadership opportunities for teaching staff (Brown & Wynn, 2009) (g) promoting visibility and an open door policy (Brown & Wynn, 2009), (h) working together toward shared goals (Brown & Wynn, 2009), and (i) exhibiting a sense of *we*, emphasizing *togetherness* (Brown & Wynn, 2009).

Interventions to keep highly qualified teachers are influenced by district level superintendents, principals, and assistant principals. Wynn et al. (2007) contended as teacher satisfaction with principal leadership increased, intentions to remain in the current school district and site also increased. Daily actions of principals *set the tone* for the school environment and affect staff and student attitudes. Freeman and Randolph (2013) identified several examples of principal actions that reinforce authentic leadership principles (Northouse, 2016) and may promote teacher retention.

- Leave a complimentary note when visiting a classroom
- Know the names of your staff members and call them by name
- Do what is fair and right
- Listen attentively to your teachers

One could argue the suggestions stated are simplistic and not innovative. As a current school administrator, these seemingly minute actions lead to large dividends, which enhance the work environment and create a sense of appreciation and trust to allow a focused approach on serving students.

Fostering Teacher Resilience

A teacher will experience moments of euphoria and defeat throughout his or her career, be it abbreviated or tenured. To help teachers navigate these wide ranges of emotions and trials,

administrators may want to help promote a sense of *resilience* within their faculties. Gu (2014) defines teacher resilience as “a dynamic quality which enables teachers to maintain a sense of moral purpose and commitment to help children learn and achieve in their everyday world of teaching” (p. 503). Gu (2014) found relationships to be a building block of the resilience process. These relations were classified as (a) teacher-teacher relations, (b) teacher-principal relations, and (c) teacher-student relations (Gu, 2014).

Teacher Relations

Building and sustaining collegial relationships among teachers seems to be an important factor in promoting longevity in the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Gu, 2014). Creating a teacher support system should allow the novice or veteran teacher to build coping skills and strategies to build resilience, which may allow for longevity in the profession (Doney, 2013). Darling-Hammond (2003) found implementing and supporting a high-quality beginning teacher-mentor support program as key to curbing early teacher attrition. Not only is this beneficial for the novice teacher, but veterans alike view this as an incentive to remain in teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003). School and district level administrators may help promote meaningful, productive teacher-teacher relationships through mentor assignments, beginning teacher support programs, faculty socials, planning time for department meetings or professional learning communities, and strategic personnel placement among grade-level or department.

Gu (2014) found communication between teachers and school leaders essential in the development of relational trust. This trust should help foster a sense of togetherness and unify the collective body, or engender a sense of community. Teachers communicated the importance of this teacher-leader relationship by expressing levels of commitment, participation, and appreciation as they relate to the overall mission of the school (Gu, 2014). Doney (2013) found

bringing attention to, and fostering the concept of resilience in teachers can promote retention. School leaders are only as good as the staff they have working with them. Building resilience, relational trust, and appreciation from administration to staff should allow for a productive school climate and strengthen a culture of retention.

Fostering and maintaining teacher-student relationships have shown to be valuable in teacher efficacy and commitment to their profession (Gu, 2014). This valuable interaction is at the very heart of the teaching and learning process. Gu (2014) found “teachers who enjoyed positive teacher-student relations were more likely to report a sustained sense of resilience and commitment to making a difference to students’ learning and growth” (p. 519). This data helps reflect the importance of teacher satisfaction and commitment to the profession as well as why teachers may leave the profession if teacher-student relations are not deemed effective.

Doney (2013) found resilience can be learned and is a product of successfully overcoming adversity. Teachers experience adversity in the school setting on a frequent basis and how they deal with each experience may solidify or weaken this behavior. Administrators may help teachers understand that resilience is a process that occurs over time, providing support as each situation warrants, and coaching resilience as a learned behavior, which may encourage sustained actions, to improve teacher retention.

Certo and Fox (2002) provide school leaders with district and school level recommendations to encourage teacher satisfaction and longevity in a school and/or district.

District level recommendations include:

- Be creative in implementing policy that promotes teacher professionalism
- Increase visibility in classrooms by central office staff
- Listen to teachers needs and positions, and respond adequately

- Ensure professional development is meaningful to all staff
- Plan meetings in advance
- Reduce paperwork for special education teachers
- Recognize all teachers for their individual accomplishments
- Maintain facilities appropriately
- Provide all schools with needed resources and supplies
- Encourage advancement and certification
- Increase planning time and compensate after hours efforts
- Work toward reducing class size
- Enhance mentoring programs and compensate mentors
- Provide career pathways where job opportunities vary throughout the career

School level recommendations include:

- Increase administrative support for teachers and expand teachers decision making roles
- Cease practice of assigning inexperienced teachers the most difficult courses to teach
- Follow best practices of mentorship; carefully select and match mentors and beginning teachers, like teaching assignments should be valued
- Emphasize classroom management and student discipline in new teacher induction programs
- Entertain more planning time for staff
- Recognize teachers for the efforts and accomplishments
- Reduce administrative tasks for teachers
- Attend to special education teachers and show interest in their children

Stated recommendations are specific strategies for school leaders to employ in their workplace. School leadership practices strongly influence teacher commitment, efficacy, and attitude, which promote a culture of retention in the school and district. As Freeman and Randolph (2013) suggest: “(1) Do what is right, (2) What you do, do well, and (3) Treat others as you would like to be treated” (p. 15). Solving teacher retention problems today may come down to getting back to the basics.

Summary

With continuous upward trends in teacher turnover data, Granville County Public School District school-based administrators and district officials are faced with adversity in already challenging times in public education. Studies in the pertinent literature promote school climate, working conditions, and leadership as areas of influence for keeping teachers in the classroom. Lortie’s (1975) seminal work *Schoolteacher* proposed the career system of education does not favor retention of teachers, but only recruitment, as few employees are devoting life-time commitments to classroom service. Although dated, this information seems congruent with many 2015 standards and is certainly information to reflect upon. Add the fact of Granville’s rural environment, and additional challenges literature states may be impacting teacher retention. The proposed project plans to investigate mentioned areas, and possibly others, which have yet to be determined by the improvement team.

Beesley, Atwill, Blair, and Barley (2010) sum up the effort to improve teacher retention stating, “rural specific challenges in teacher recruitment and retention are most successfully addressed with rural specific solutions” (p. 8). This improvement project hopes to identify potential causes of teacher turnover and attrition in the rural Granville County Public School District, and implement strategy or strategies that will improve teacher retention. This

improvement will be tested on a small-scale and depending upon success and direction of district administration, large-scale implementation may occur. Identified strategy may possibly help school-based administrators and superintendents glean knowledge about what teachers need and want, to promote longevity in a specific school and/or school district. This gained knowledge will aid educational leaders in making critical decisions regarding school policy, as it pertains to teacher satisfaction, working conditions, and school climate.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Improvement Science

Granville County Public School District involves stakeholders through formation of committees that focus on continuous improvement of specific systems to benefit the entire organization. The committee utilized in this proposal is the Granville County Public Schools (GCPS) Recruitment and Retention Team. This team consists of principals, assistant principals, central office administrators, and the current Granville County Schools Teacher of the Year. The plan of improvement focuses upon my leadership of a sub-committee of the Granville County Public Schools Recruitment and Retention Team. This committee will be composed of one elementary school teacher, one middle school principal, the Director of Recruitment and Retention in the district, and myself, a high school principal. Composition of this group of participants allows all grade levels to be represented, helping account for different teaching and working experiences within the district. While leading this committee, I will use Improvement Science as an approach to help identify problems, create predictions, and form strategy to improve teacher retention in Granville County Public School District.

Combatting ill-structured problems, like teacher turnover, will not necessarily lead to a solution (Archbald, 2014). Although, reducing the action of teacher attrition and migration in the district should improve system operations, truly *solving* the problem is unlikely. Improvement is the goal of this project.

Foundation of Improvement Science

W. Edward Deming's *System of Profound Knowledge* provides the theoretical basis for Improvement Science practice (Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, & Provost, 2009).

“Deming defined the System of Profound Knowledge as the interplay of the theories of systems,

variation, knowledge, and psychology” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 75). Understanding these four areas and how they interrelate should help organizational leaders identify, approach, act, and improve problems.

Appreciation for a System

In Granville County Public School District, there are a number of systems in place. In fact, Granville’s set of Core Values lists *Systems Thinking* as, “A system is a series of activities or processes that work in conjunction to benefit the entire organization”. Each activity or process must work together to make our school system successful” (Taken from Granville County Schools CORE VALUES document, 2015). While Langley (2009), defines a system as “an interdependent group of items, people, or processes working together toward a common purpose” (p. 77), systems within Granville County Public Schools can be viewed as macro-level, district-wide, or micro-level, school-wide/classroom environment. All systems are working toward specific goals, which should be aligned to overall district objectives. Although systems may be inter-dependent, improving one system may have beneficial effects upon another, which Langley et al. (2009) define as *leverage*. The intent of improving teacher retention in Granville County Public Schools, may lead to improvement in other systems at the micro and/or macro level.

Understanding Variation

Walter A. Shewhart’s work on variation identifies the value of plotting data over time (Langley et al., 2009). Observing trends over time one may identify predictable and unpredictable patterns of performance (Langley et al., 2009). To better understand these patterns, Langley et al. (2009) identifies two causes of variation, *common* and *special*. Common causes are inherent in the system over time (Langley et al., 2009). They affect all persons involved and

all outcomes associated (Langley et al., 2009). Special causes are those not part of the system the entire time and do not affect all persons involved, but are created due to specific circumstances (Langley et al., 2009).

Looking at teacher turnover in the Granville District shows a steady ascent in teacher attrition/migration over the past 6 years. Delving more into variation, specifically, types of process may help the team identify causes of turnover. “A process that has only common causes affecting outcomes is called a *stable* process” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 80), which reflects variation is constant and predictable over time (Langley et al., 2009). The only way to drastically change performance or variation in this process is to fundamentally change the system (Langley et al., 2009).

Unstable processes are defined by outcomes affected due to common and special causes of variation (Langley et al., 2009). This process denotes magnitude is unpredictable from one marking point to the next (Langley et al., 2009). By identifying special causes in the process, original levels of performance can be reestablished (Langley et al., 2009). Analyzing 6 years of past turnover data in Granville County Public Schools, variation from year to year is listed in Table 10.

Identifying appropriate cause in variation may help school leaders affect variation in a positive manner, resulting in improved system performance. Langley et al. (2009) warn against misdiagnosing cause variation by treating “common cause variation as if it is due to special causes and adjust or reset the system, when in fact the only way to improve the system is by fundamentally changing it. The second mistake is to accept special cause variation as if it were all due to common causes and miss an opportunity to fix a problem” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 81).

Table 10

Variation in Teacher Turnover Data in Granville County Public Schools

School Years	Variation Percentage
2010 – 2011	3.36
2011 – 2012	3.76
2012 – 2013	.22
2013 – 2014	2.79
2014 – 2015	.57

Note. Teacher Turnover Data Adapted from the 2013 – 2014 Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

School officials must exhibit patience in practice and understand trends in variation to effectively bring about change in systems at all levels.

Building Knowledge

Employees have directed many efforts at all levels of education to improve operations and achievement in the Granville district. The human resources department of the district, along with myself, and members of the recruitment and retention team inquire about, and will continue to study, effects of teacher turnover in the district. With many years of teaching experience in Granville's system, the committee has built a formal and informal knowledge base about what may or may not promote teacher retention in the county. This knowledge will allow the retention team to formulate theories about what strategies may improve teacher retention and increase the likelihood that improvement will occur (Langley et al., 2009).

Deductive and inductive learning will be leveraged as part of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. The deductive approach involves testing a strategy based on a prediction (Plan to Do), as well as observation, in which variances in predictions are recorded (Do) (Langley et al., 2009). The inductive approach takes place from Do to Study, where differences in hypothesis are studied and strategy is adjusted (Langley et al., 2009).

Human Side of Change

Improvement Science takes into account human reaction and interaction with each other and within a specific system (Langley et al., 2009). This psychological approach should help the retention team better account for potential problems that may be encountered during the study and better combat issues when presented to influence the improvement process. Langley et al. (2009) identify several factors the team may want to consider while navigating through this project. They include:

- Differences in people
- Behavior is driven by motivation
- Fundamental attribution error
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
- Attracting people to change

As leader of this sub-committee, I plan to employ these principles to help guide the team through the improvement process.

Plans on Using the Model for Improvement

Leading this team, I will help the recruitment and retention sub-committee identify the three fundamental questions of Improvement Science. (1) What are we trying to accomplish? (2) How will we know that a change is an improvement? (3) What changes can we make that will result in improvement? These questions will be addressed with the understanding that fundamental changes that improve systems “(a) alter how work is done, (b) produce visible, positive differences relative to past performance, and (c) have a lasting impact on the organization” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 16).

The team will collect, analyze, and interpret belief and attitude data from the Granville County Public School District’s exit survey to help create strategy for improvement. During this process, the team may employ the use of an affinity diagram to help group data by association. To further help the sub-committee identify potential turnover causes, the team may use a cause-and-effect diagram or fish bone diagram. This will help the team organize current knowledge regarding turnover to allow a focused approach and prepare successful strategies to implement. Granville’s retention team will utilize the literature review in this document to educate committee participants about teacher turnover and discuss potential parallels between the review

and current circumstances in the Granville district. Once data is collected, and information is organized through the use of a fish bone diagram, one or more Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycles will be initiated. The strategies implemented through PDSA cycles will be tested on a small scale to determine effectiveness before large scale application occurs.

Plan-Do-Study-Act

Implementing a PDSA cycle using strategy to improve teacher retention is the foundation of this project. The PDSA cycle is broken down into four major steps. (1) Plan: During this phase, the team will establish objectives, create questions and predictions, formulate a plan to carry out the cycle, and plan for data collection. (2) Do: This is the “action” phase of the plan. The team will implement the strategy for improvement, observe and document problems, and initiate data analysis. (3) Study: This phase involves the team completing data analysis, comparing data to predictions, and determines effectiveness. (4) Act: The team will decide what changes need to be made with the strategy (if any), and determine the next cycle of implementation (Langley et al., 2009).

Measure of Improvement

As referenced earlier, the Granville County Public Schools District Improvement Plan aims to reduce the teacher turnover rate to ten percent by 2017 (2015b). Attaining this goal, equates to a five percent improvement over two consecutive years. Improvement district-wide will be determined through teacher retention data collected through Granville County Public Schools Human Resources department for the school year of 2015 -2016. Due to official teacher retention data being collected from April through March, the team will focus efforts in an isolated setting (one school) to form a better understanding of teacher turnover during the 2015-2016 school year. For this small-scale proof-of-concept, the team will be working to improve

teacher retention with one specific school in the Granville district. Strategy will be implemented to determine overall effectiveness on teacher retention as compared to the previous year.

Retention data will be based on the number of teachers who move or leave the chosen school site for study as of July 31st, 2016. Teacher turnover will include those teachers who move within the district, as well as those who leave the district. The team will then determine effectiveness of the strategy and facilitate next steps for implementation. The superintendent will be informed of results and consulted to determine necessary steps to implement in other schools, district-wide, or not at all.

Teacher Retention Team Meeting 1: 9-23-15

The Granville County Public School Teacher Retention Team met to begin the improvement process as it relates to teacher retention in a school-based environment, which may potentially affect the entire district. Teacher turnover data for the district was reviewed with all committee members. Steps towards establishing a charter for improvement were taken, but not completed. Essential question number one was answered, “What are we trying to accomplish?” The committee agreed that identification of reason or reasons for turnover was important. Then based upon *why* turnover was occurring, identification of strategies that evoke improvement would follow. Subsequently, implementing proposed strategies in a small-scale improvement project, specifically *Middle School B*. Selection of the school was determined by willingness to participate in the improvement project from the school administrator and local political factors, to ensure no individual school or administrator would be negatively impacted by the study.

The team determined data regarding the 34 teachers who vacated the district between 6/17/14 and 9/21/14 needed to be disaggregated into sub-groups to help clarify why teachers were leaving. This data was found by using the Granville County Public Schools Exit Interview,

which was created by the Human Resources department of the district. Although not all 34 staff members completed the survey, the team agreed the information was viable. This will be collected by the team leader, and then presented in October during the second meeting.

Located in Table 11, data shows teachers leaving the district to teach in another Local Educational Administration (LEA) as the primary reason for teachers exiting the Granville district, while retirement is cited as the second leading reason for attrition.

Teacher Retention Team Meeting 2: 10-21-15

Referenced in Appendix C, the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team focused their second meeting on completing a formal charter for improvement, reviewing disaggregated data from the Teacher Exit Survey generated from the Human Resources department of the district, and identify potential causes about why teachers are leaving the district. Figure 1 addresses the charter for improvement, which will help guide the team throughout the improvement process.

After creation of, and reviewing the charter, the team reviewed teacher exit survey data to better determine why teachers are leaving the district. Through discussion, it was determined that *Teach in Another LEA* and *Dissatisfied with Teaching* were two areas of focus that the team could have meaningful impact on through the improvement process.

The team was then led through an exercise to identify potential causes on why teachers were leaving the district. The activity was facilitated by Brian Mathis, and used the aid of a cause-and effect diagram (see Appendix D) to help the team organize thoughts and information regarding teacher turnover. The team identified eight primary reasons why teachers may be leaving the Granville district for other teaching opportunities. These reasons are:

Table 11

Reasons for Leaving the Granville County Public School District

Reason for leaving GCPS	Percent
Teach in Another LEA	50%
Retirement	21%
Family Relocation/Moving Closer to Family	15%
Dissatisfied with Teaching	12%
Health Issues	1%
Pursuing Higher Education	1%

Note. Data was disaggregated from the Granville County Public Schools Human Resources Exit Survey.

Improvement Charter for Teacher Retention in
Granville County Public School District

General Description

Improving Teacher Retention

- The GCPS Teacher Retention Team will improve teacher retention in the

Reason for the Effort

- Highly leveraged problem
- Possibly improve school climate, student achievement, community perception,
- Identify potential shortcomings that may harm perception of employees,
- Teacher turnover data has eclipsed 20% for two consecutive years

Expected Results

Expected Outcomes

- Reduction of teacher turnover rate on a small scale (school setting) by 50%,

Measurements

- Teacher turnover data on small scale (school setting)
- Qualitative data regarding administrator, teacher, and Team perception
- Measures used: teacher perception, administrator perception, school level

Boundaries

Initial Activities

- Cause and Effect Diagram

Limitations

- Financial resources are unknown, time, small scale implementation,

Time Frame

- Team will meet monthly for 1 hour
- Team Leader (Mathis) may visit school of implementation frequently
- Create strategy for implementation by Jan. 2016
- Implement strategy on small-scale by Feb. 1, 2016

Participation

Team Membership

- Mr. Brian Mathis – Team Leader/Facilitator
- Dr. JC – GCPS Director of Teacher Retention
- Ms. LA – Principal, B Middle School
- Ms. LM – Teacher, B Elementary School

Sponsorship

- Dr. MW – Director of Human Resources, GCPS

Note. Created by the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team on 10-21-15.

Figure 1. Charter for Improvement.

- More Money
- Beginning Teacher Support
- Political Unrest
- Administrative Leadership
- Student Behavior
- Teacher Self Efficacy
- Collegiality
- Frequent Changes in Principal Assignments

After potential causes were listed and discussed, the team identified specific actions or activities within each area that may lead to turnover or retention. Team members relied on personal experiences and informal qualitative data to communicate findings. Teacher pay was the first reason stated from the team, although important, the team decided there was little immediate control over this financial procedure and determined not to speculate on why Granville's pay may be lower than surrounding districts. Furthermore, the teacher representative did state, "If other conditions in the school are better, teachers will work for lower pay." (Mrs. L. Morris, personal communication, October 21, 2015). Consequently, the team agreed, if there is issues that could be directly addressed through financial remuneration, recommendations regarding compensation would be communicated to the superintendent of the district. The team then discussed each cause and cited specific examples related to the category that may lead to potential teacher turnover or teacher retention. Listed below are team theories related to teacher turnover in the Granville County Public School District.

- New Teacher Support
 - Mentors, excessive training

- Beginning teacher support staff, lack of relative experience
- Continuous support
- Behavior management
- Modeling effective teaching practice
- Time to build skills
- Political Unrest
 - Poor relations between local governing bodies
 - Poor relations between local business leaders
 - Poor relations between Central Office and Schools
 - Poor community perception
- Administrative Leadership
 - Defined vision
 - Inexperience
 - Teacher support
 - Communication
 - Organization
 - Visibility
 - Principal funnels tasks to teachers
- Student Behavior
 - Administrative support
 - Processes and procedures
 - Visibility
 - Teacher training

- Expectations
- Parental support
- Teacher Self Efficacy
 - Student success
 - Positive reinforcement by administration
 - Special recognitions
- Collegiality
 - Administrative relationships
 - Teacher socials/activities
 - “Spirit” committees
 - Administration providing opportunities for socialization
- Frequent changes in principal assignments
 - Fear of the unknown
 - No time to build relationships
 - Consistency in policies and programs
 - Expectations

Combatting ill-structured problems such as teacher retention within a specific Local Educational Administration, forces one to investigate cause and effect, be it problem or solution. Sustaining this inquiry will be Deming’s approach of (a) systems, (b) variation, (c) knowledge, and (d) psychology, girded with the practice of Improvement Science. Pending approval, the Granville County Teacher Retention Team will continue to collaborate in the coming months and create strategy for improvement, followed by implementation of Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles to determine effectiveness and relevance towards a large-scale initiative.

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION, RESULTS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The Granville County Schools Teacher Retention Team began a quest to improve teacher retention in the district through a small-scale proof-of-concept exercise grounded in the principles of Improvement Science. This improvement team consisted of four members. These people were employed as a middle school principal, district level director, elementary school teacher, and myself, a high school principal. The beginning of the improvement process addressed the three fundamental questions of Improvement Science, (1) What are we trying to accomplish? (2) How will we know that a change is an improvement? (3) What changes can we make that will result in improvement? These questions were addressed with the understanding that fundamental changes that improve systems (a) alter how work is done, (b) produce visible, positive differences relative to past performance, and (c) have a lasting impact on the organization (Langley et al., 2009). Through inquiry and conversation the team proposed potential causes regarding teacher turnover, sought to find alleged causes of teacher turnover through data collection, and began work on identification of specific strategies of improvement to implement within Middle School B.

These strategies were conducted through the use of the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) method of improvement. The PDSA cycle is broken down into four major steps. (1) Plan: During this phase, the team established objectives, created questions and predictions, formulated a plan to carry out the cycle, and planned for data collection. (2) Do: This is the action phase of the plan. The team implemented the strategy for improvement, observed and documented problems, and initiated data analysis. (3) Study: This phase involved the team completing data analysis, comparing data to predictions, and determining effectiveness. (4) Act: The team then decided

what changes needed to be made with the strategies (if any), and determine the next cycle of implementation (Langley et al., 2009). Four strategies were identified and implemented in the hopes of improving teacher retention at Middle School B.

The measure of improvement is identified in the retention team's charter for improvement and specified a reduction of 50% in teacher attrition from Middle School B, which equated to six or fewer certified teachers. The team agreed this was an achievable goal and promoted validity within the improvement project. If successful, the teacher retention team would advocate for similar strategies to take place across the district.

Improvement Project Implementation

Three Fundamental Questions

The Granville County Teacher Retention Team addressed the three fundamental questions of Improvement Science; with the first being, "What are we trying to accomplish?" Through much discussion, the team agreed the goal for the study was to improve teacher retention in the Granville County Public School District by identifying causes of teacher turnover, creating strategies to combat the issue, and implement the strategies through PDSA cycles. This would be accomplished by focusing on a small-scale approach, and specifically targeted Middle School B in the district. The principal of Middle School B agreed to participate in this study and was supportive of this plan.

The second question, "How will we know that a change is an improvement?" was pondered with much discussion. The team agreed improvement would be identified by a 50% reduction in teacher attrition from Middle School B as a quantifiable target. Middle School B lost 12 teachers the prior year. Other discussion occurred within the team meetings regarding

qualitative data analysis, specifically teacher and administrator perception. This conversation led to a principal initiated survey, which is addressed later in this document.

Lastly, the final question, “What changes can we make that will result in an improvement?” was presented to the team and discussed in several meetings. The team discussed alleged causes about why teachers were leaving the district and documented many including higher wages, beginning teacher support, political unrest, administrative leadership, student behavior, teacher self-efficacy, collegiality, and frequent changes in principal assignments. These assumptions were supported by the team’s personal experiences and informal conversations while working in the district. Once predictions were established, teacher exit survey data was reviewed and disaggregated by the team. Fifty percent of teachers, who completed the exit survey distributed by Granville’s Human Resources Department, indicated leaving for another district. After discovering this, the team focused on this data point as *priority one*, feeling this reason posed the highest threat to the district.

Through continued conversation about what changes can we make to improve teacher retention in the district, it was concluded that the team needed more information to accurately devise a plan of strategic implementation at the school level. The team proposed that a principal led survey may help identify site specific needs of the teaching staff and allow more focused intervention on the campus. The principal agreed, and distributed an anonymous survey through Google Forms, for which the district has rights.

The principal created the Google Form and posed the question, “What could Middle School B and the Granville County Public Schools do to ensure that you return to work in our school next year? You are an important resource and we value your feedback. Please be as specific as possible” (see Appendix R). The Google Form was then distributed electronically to

the staff at Middle School B. Fourteen responses, out of a possible 28 respondents, were given and analyzed by the teacher retention team at the next meeting. Upon analysis, three major themes arose, (a) incentives and recognition, (b) communication, and (c) student discipline.

Once identified, the team began categorizing potential strategies, keeping in mind relevant teacher retention research and predictions made. With many pertinent ideas from the team, one member brought up the suggestion to implement another principal-led survey with the teaching staff to gain knowledge on their opinion. Although many valid strategies were discussed, the team agreed this step in the process would be beneficial and allow stakeholder participation. The principal at Middle School B created and implemented a second Google Form to the teaching staff outlining the findings of the first Google document. The Google Form read as follows:

After analyzing the results of the first survey regarding teacher retention at Middle School B, we have categorized the comments. We would like your input on specific strategies we could implement for each of these areas. Please try to provide solutions to concerns.

- Incentives and Recognition
- Communication
- Student Discipline

The Google Form was formatted with short answer text boxes to elicit responses from teaching staff and provide the teacher retention team as much specific information as possible that may help create school-specific strategies to implement in PDSA cycles. Eighteen teachers out of a possible 28 teachers responded to this survey (see Appendix S).

Through this unpredictable process of improvement, and unplanned survey to gain

teacher input about what can Middle School B can do to help retain teachers, as well as what strategies would be favorable to implement at Middle School B, the team was able to sufficiently address the final question of “What changes can we make that will result in improvement?” The changes made are outlined in PDSA explanations later in this document. Also, agendas and minutes for each teacher retention team meeting may be viewed in Appendices B - N.

During this improvement process, I had the opportunity to present teacher turnover research in a public forum. The superintendent asked my participation in his monthly Superintendents Parent Advisory Council meeting. I presented current statistics regarding teacher turnover in the Granville County Public School District and how the district compared to neighboring districts. The agenda for this meeting can be viewed in Appendix Q. Periodic communication with the Director of Human Resources and the Superintendent of Granville County Public Schools was maintained to inform them of progress and next steps.

Variation

Worthy of noting, variation was discussed during this process to better help understand teacher retention in the Granville County Public School District and ensure proposed strategies were appropriate in addressing teacher attrition. The team reviewed variation data for teacher turnover from 2010 through 2015 (see Appendix G). Team members discussed potential reasons why there was an increase in teacher attrition during years 2010/2011, 2011/2012, and 2013/2014, with low variance occurring in 2012/2013 and 2014/2015 school years. Through personal experience and reflection by team members, it was agreed that elevated causes of attrition in the district during the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 school years may have been caused by a reduction-in-force (RIF) and budgetary reductions in the district, and 2013/2014 attrition due to perceived turmoil regarding senior level leadership and neighboring districts

implementing hiring incentives in high-need subject areas. Due to these observations of variation over time, it was determined that teacher retention data could not be accurately predicted, and affected by both common and special causes of variation, therefore defining an unstable process (Langley et al., 2009).

Plan-Do-Study-Act Strategies

The Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team used the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as the structure to implement change and improvement. Through the use of a tree diagram (see Appendix I), the team outlined improvement objectives and PDSA cycles to help conceptualize the scope of the project at Middle School B. After analyzing principal survey data, teacher retention research in literature, proposed causes of teacher attrition, and professional experience in the district, the team decided to implement four PDSA cycles at Middle School B focusing on (a) incentives & recognition, (b) communication, and (c) student discipline. Three strategies of improvement were identified relating to the area of incentives & recognition, while one strategy was created to address communication and student discipline in a combined approach. These strategies were deemed low-risk strategies by the team and with time constraints being defined by the traditional academic calendar, it was determined the *Just Do It! Approach* (Langley et al., 2009) of implementation would be used for Falcon Phenoms, Falcon Fridays, and the Unified Discipline Alert System, while the Hallway Huddle Revision would be implemented using the *Parallel Approach* (Langley et al., 2009).

Brown and Wynn's 2009 study found principal support as a primary factor in retaining teachers, while working conditions (Ingersoll, 2001; Wynn et al., 2007) also proved relevant in sustaining teacher longevity, with both factors having a dramatic impact upon teacher retention.

The team agreed Middle School B should benefit from an enhanced effort by the administration to recognize teachers for their efforts and offer incentives to create a sense of appreciation.

Strategy 1: Falcon Phenoms

The objective of this strategy aimed to improve staff awareness of teacher success and promote teacher efficacy, both intrinsically and within the school culture. During the brainstorming process to create Falcon Phenoms, the team questioned the principal to gain knowledge about current recognition programs that may be occurring and any processes or procedures that may be hindered by this improvement effort. The principal admitted recognitions and incentives needed to be improved campus-wide and this strategy would not impede any normal operations of the school day. Predictions by the team were: (1) Falcon Phenoms would improve teacher efficacy, (2) promote a sense of community, and (3) foster an attitude of appreciation from the administration to the teaching staff. The principal would facilitate this initiative once a week.

Materials used in the Falcon Phenom program are formatted documents that allow staff to share compliments and celebrations of exemplary actions. Administrative personnel placed this form in teacher mailboxes on a weekly basis. The document was then completed by the teacher and placed in a drop-box located in the front office, deeming the teacher eligible for a weekly drawing, with the winner gaining a duty-free lunch or duty-free morning/afternoon (depending on teacher). The drawing was executed by the principal and announced publicly (see Appendices O-P).

During the initial stages of implementation, the frequency of participation was low, with only approximately 10 forms being completed. The principal attributed this to a managerial practice of leaving the Falcon Phenom documents beside the drop-box for teachers to obtain and

fill out. To enhance participation efforts, the principal decided to eliminate this structural barrier and manually place the Falcon Phenom form in the teacher's mailbox. This greatly improved teacher participation throughout the remainder of the project.

Strategy 2: Hallway Huddle Revisions

The administration at Middle School B conducts weekly faculty meetings during the morning before students enter the building. Prior to this improvement strategy, the staff recognized other teachers publicly as a way to improve efficacy and value within the organization. Through conversation with the principal and other retention team members, the group agreed to continue this practice, but focus recognitions on student accomplishments. This strategy was selected due to the perceived need by the administration to promote positive student behavior on campus, as perceptions of negative student behavior were prevalent.

The objective of this strategy was to improve perception of student behavior campus-wide by publically recognizing student accomplishments academically, athletically, and/or behaviorally with staff members. Team members inquired about other student recognition programs occurring, while district programs continued to exist and the traditional honor roll program was sustained, no other formal school-based program was in action. Participation of teachers was discussed, with the principal admitting, the effort may need to be modeled by a select few, to allow other staff members' comfort levels to rise to the point of expected participation.

Predictions by the team included, (1) the teachers may be hesitant in the initial stages of implementation, (2) the strategy should help promote positive behaviors and accomplishments of students, and (3) the strategy would foster a positive sense of self-efficacy among the teaching staff. The principal would facilitate this initiative and may consult specific teachers before the

meeting occurs to encourage participation, especially during initial implementation. There were no special materials needed for this strategy unless teachers felt the need to bring student artifacts to the meeting for staff to view.

After three implementation trials during the Hallway Huddle, the principal was not satisfied with teacher participation and even experienced difficulty with sarcastic behavior from staff. This prompted the principal to send frequent reminders to the teachers via email to present an example of student achievement at the next meeting. The team discussed these behaviors and agreed this was a culture change effort and the strategy needed to continue. With consistent effort and coaching by the principal, teacher participation did increase (although not to the principals expectations), and according to the principal, the majority of staff members appreciated hearing student accolades instead of magnifying discipline issues.

Strategy 3: Falcon Friday

Continuing the effort to recognize teachers and show appreciation, the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team decided to implement Falcon Friday as a third strategy to improve teacher retention at Middle School B. This strategy was unlike any prior initiative and welcomed by the teachers at Middle School B. The objective of this strategy was to improve teachers' perception of value and appreciation by the administration and create a collegial atmosphere to build community. Team members began discussion of this strategy by asking the question, "What do you do at your specific school or work site that may improve teacher appreciation?" Team members presented ideas and three procedures were agreed upon to complete the strategy of Falcon Friday, (a) school spirit dress, (b) weekly snack/refreshment, and a (c) monthly staff breakfast.

Predictions from the retention team stated Falcon Friday would (1) promote a sense of

value from the administration to the teaching staff, (2) improve teacher perception about the administration, and (3) help nurture collegiality and community within the school. The principal, with help from the team's leader (B. Mathis) would facilitate this strategy each Friday morning. Teachers and staff were allowed to wear denim pants to school paired with a Middle School B shirt or sweatshirt. This strategy was in conflict with school district expectations, although the district's superintendent granted permission for implementation by the teacher retention team. The school's Parent Teacher Organization funded snacks and refreshments, with monthly breakfast being funded by the teacher retention team and Middle School B general funds. Throughout this cycle of operation, the schools principal varied snacks and refreshments weekly, along with breakfast options which were perceived by the principal as welcomed additions to the school day by the faculty. It is also worth addressing, Falcon Phenom recognitions were integrated into this event strategically by the principal with documents posted in the conference room where breakfast was served and the weekly drawing occurred during this social time to further entertain the idea of togetherness.

Strategy 4: Unified Discipline Alert System

The teacher retention team determined communication, specifically addressing student discipline, needed to be improved. This notion was evident through collected principal survey data from the teaching staff at Middle School B. After analyzing survey data, there seemed to be a perception of inconsistency in the enforcement of the discipline program among administrative staff at Middle School B. The objective of this strategy was to improve communication from administration to staff regarding discipline procedures, improve teacher perception of administrative fidelity as related to the discipline code, and improve consistency of operations within the administration as related to interpretation of discipline events and consequences.

Questions presented by the team to the principal included (1) “What are current discipline policies and procedures at your school?” and (2) “Why do teachers perceive a lack of communication?” Through conversation with the principal, the team agreed to enact two processes to help improve communication and perception within the discipline program at Middle School B. The first action proposed required (a) daily email communication from administrative staff to all teachers regarding student discipline efforts of the current day, and (b) the creation of a behavior support team within the school.

Predictions from the teacher retention team stated the Unified Discipline Alert System would (1) improve communication between administration and staff, (2) improve teacher perception about consistency of adherence to discipline policies by the administration, (3) promote consistent actions in enforcement of discipline among administration, and (4) foster understanding of discipline policies among teaching staff. The principal would be responsible for delivery of student discipline actions to staff and be the leader of the behavior support team. The support team would meet weekly at Middle School B and be composed of administrators, counselors, and the school-based data manager. Team goals may include:

- Identification of changes in student behavior patterns and behavior plan review
- Monitoring assigned consequences and ensure teacher follow-up if consequences deviate from stated policy
- Monitor and review managerial procedures

The behavior support team met consistently in initial stages of implementation and was a welcomed initiative by the teachers at Middle School B. The principal admittedly lost *focus* as time progressed and meetings were missed during implementation due to obligations not associated with this project. The team was aware of other challenges occurring on campus at this

time and agreed the Behavior Support Team was too valuable to terminate and continued to support implementation of this effort.

Predictions vs. Performance

While implementing the four teacher retention improvement strategies via PDSA cycles in concurrent fashion, the Granville County Teacher Retention Team met on a monthly basis to review processes and effectiveness of implementation and determine if changes in the strategy needed to occur, or the strategy itself needed to cease existence. Another important concept to the PDSA process is formulating predictions of strategy effectiveness and reviewing alignment of these predictions relative to current progress of the strategy being employed. Consultation with the principal was the primary means of evaluating progress of each strategy and the school leader's opinions and comments were held to high standard in determining next steps and effectiveness. There were also frequent visits to Middle School B by the team leader, Brian Mathis.

Strategy 1: Falcon Phenoms

Predictions by the Granville County Teacher Retention team were: (1) Falcon Phenoms would improve teacher efficacy, (2) promote a sense of community, and (3) foster an attitude of appreciation from the administration to the teaching staff. During PDSA implementation and at the conclusion of the PDSA cycles, the team determined Falcon Phenoms would help to improve teacher efficacy, enhance a sense of community, and foster positive relations between administration and teaching staff. The team's stance on the strategies effectiveness is reliant upon the principal's authentic observations, principal's report about staff interaction, and principal's survey data. There was also great feedback from the principal regarding the incentive

of no duty during lunch or non-instructional time and that teachers appreciated this effort. The team agreed that this strategy has merit and should be continued.

Strategy 2: Hallway Huddle Revisions

Predictions by the teacher retention team included, (1) the teachers may be hesitant in the initial stages of implementation, (2) the strategy should help promote positive behaviors and accomplishments of students, and (3) foster a positive sense of self-efficacy among the teaching staff. After consultation with the principal and data analysis, the team feels they were correct in their prediction about hesitant behavior of teachers getting involved in the student recognition program during the Hallway Huddle but, according to the principal, once established, it seemed valued by the staff. The team also agreed the predictions of promoting student accomplishments and improving teacher self-efficacy was correct. The principal agreed that this strategy helped bring *fresh air* into conversations about students and take focus away from poor behavior. The team's view was congruent with the principal's and felt this strategy was valid depending upon the current climate of the school.

Strategy 3: Falcon Friday

Predictions from the retention team stated Falcon Friday would (1) promote a sense of value from the administration to the teaching staff, (2) improve teacher perception about the administration, and (3) help nurture collegiality and community within the school. After reviewing principal survey data and consultation with the principal, this strategy's outcome was very consistent with the team's predictions. The relaxed dress code emphasizing school pride, snacks, and breakfast all seemed to create a sense of appreciation among teachers, forge positive relations between administration and teachers, and help promote community within the school. Falcon Friday's small celebrations allowed teachers a change of pace and created variety within

the school day to help encourage them during difficult circumstances and reinforced a sense of appreciation and value. Although somewhat costly, the team agreed that this strategy or a variant of should be continued.

Strategy 4: Unified Discipline Alert System

Predictions from the teacher retention team stated the Unified Discipline Alert System would (1) improve communication between administration and staff, (2) improve teacher perception about consistency of adherence to discipline policies by the administration, (3) promote consistent actions in enforcement of discipline among administration, and (4) foster understanding of discipline policies among teaching staff. Potentially the most powerful strategy implemented, the team agreed that consistency of implementation proved fatal for this initiative. After consultation with the principal and reviewing principal survey data, the team agreed, if implemented with fidelity, great improvements could occur, primarily with the implementation of the behavior support team. The team's perceptions, although not achieved, were accurate in the potential effectiveness of this strategy. Email communications occurred on a regular basis, but concerns still loomed from teachers upon completion of the PDSA cycle.

Improvement Project Results

According to the charter of improvement established by the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team, the measure of improvement was identified as a reduction of the teacher turnover rate on a small-scale (Middle School B) by 50%. Middle School B's teacher turnover rate was 29.59% in school year 2014-2015, which equates to 12 teachers lost. Thus, a reduction of 50% in turnover on the campus of Middle School B equates to six teachers leaving the school. This turnover encompasses all reasons teachers may leave the school, be it positive or

negative. Let it be known, promotions within the district do count as turnover statistics, although this movement is identified as positive turnover.

Upon conclusion of the study, according to measure of improvement guidelines, was July 31st, 2016, the following teacher turnover occurred at Middle School B:

- Teacher transfer – within the district due to programming change
- Teacher transfer – within the district due to promotion
- Leave of Absence – to complete administrative internship
- Teacher resignation – moving out of state
- Teacher resignation – leaving to teach in another district in NC

With a reduction in attrition by seven teachers from the prior school year, the district saved \$69,125 (Barnes et al., 2007) in personnel expenses and costs associated with hiring/training new employees. This financial benefit should surpass most concerns regarding cost of improvement initiatives at the school level.

After reviewing all teacher attrition and causes of, the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team met their specified measure of improvement with five teachers leaving Middle School B in the 2015-2016 school year. Relevant data from a principal led follow-up survey also helped the team determine specific strategy effectiveness and help decide next steps of implementation.

Principal-Led Survey Results

Middle School B's principal created and distributed an electronic survey via Google Forms to help obtain data regarding teacher's perception of effectiveness for each strategy employed by the retention team. The survey was created using a Likert-Scale as measure of effectiveness in determining teacher perception; as to the degree of effectiveness the strategies

implemented supported longevity of teacher employment on the campus of Middle School B. The ratings listed were 1 through 5, with 1 defined as *No Impact*, 2 defined as *Little Impact*, 3 defined as *Moderate Impact*, 4 defined as *High Impact* and 5 defined as *Significant Impact*. The teacher retention team agreed that ratings 3 or above would constitute a measurable degree of effectiveness when analyzing the data in the survey. Twenty-two, out of a possible 28 teachers responded to this survey. The survey was anonymous and data was collected by the principal and disseminated to the team leader, Brian Mathis (see Appendix T).

Strategies 1 through 4: Survey Results

The principal of Middle School B chose to combine Falcon Phenoms and Hallway Huddle Revisions into one survey, while Falcon Friday and the Unified Discipline Alert System were recorded separately in the post-implementation survey (see Figures 2, 3 & 4).

Collection of teacher perception data regarding effectiveness of specific strategies implemented through a principal-led survey helped the teacher retention team conceptualize a broad scope of effectiveness and determine next steps of action. Upon analyzing data listed in Figure 2 through Figure 4 and principal perception regarding degree of effect, the team established the following conclusions:

- Falcon Friday was the most effective strategy implemented and met the team's objective in helping foster teacher appreciation and value.
- Hallway Huddle Revisions were improving through continued implementation and have merit, but continued efforts need to occur to integrate this concept into the culture of the school.
- Falcon Phenom's was a success, meeting the team's objective of building collegiality and positive recognition within the faculty.

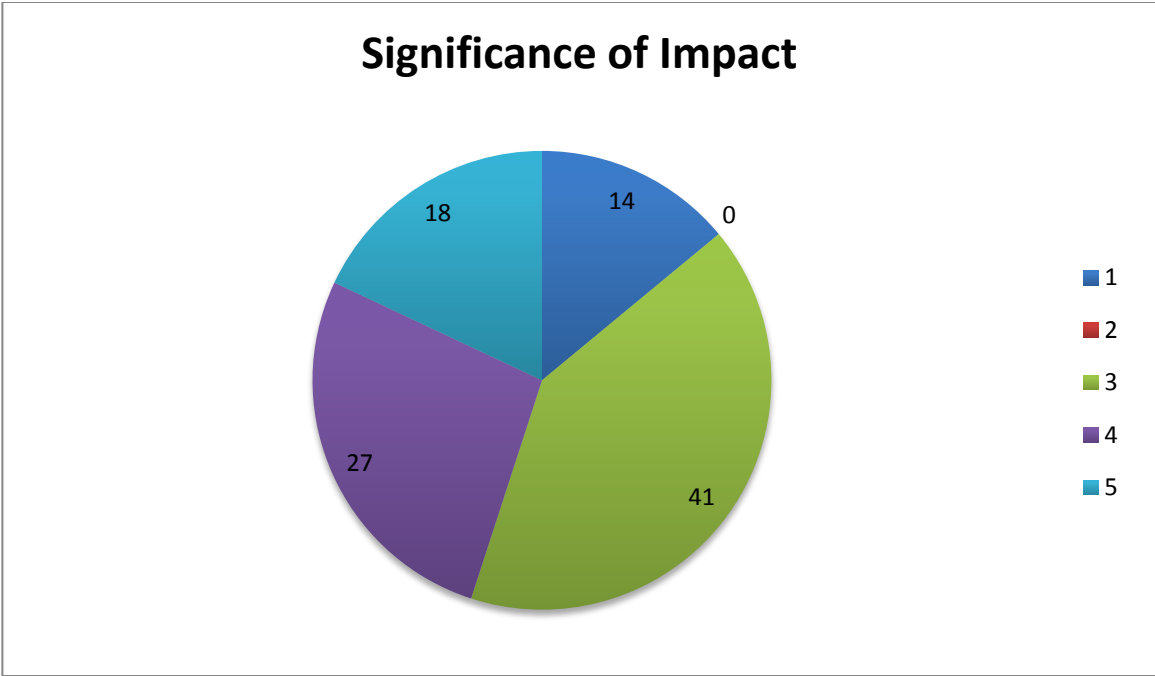


Figure 2. Significance of impact data about the Falcon Phenom and Hallway Huddle Revision strategies.

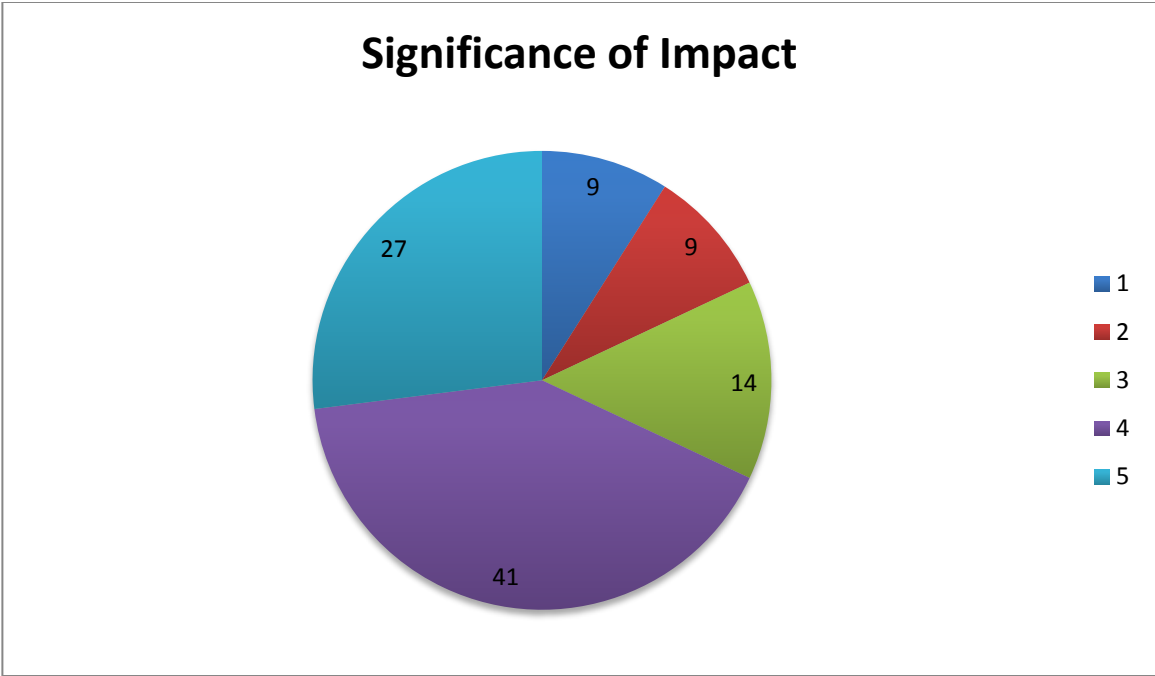


Figure 3. Significance of impact data about the Falcon Friday strategy.

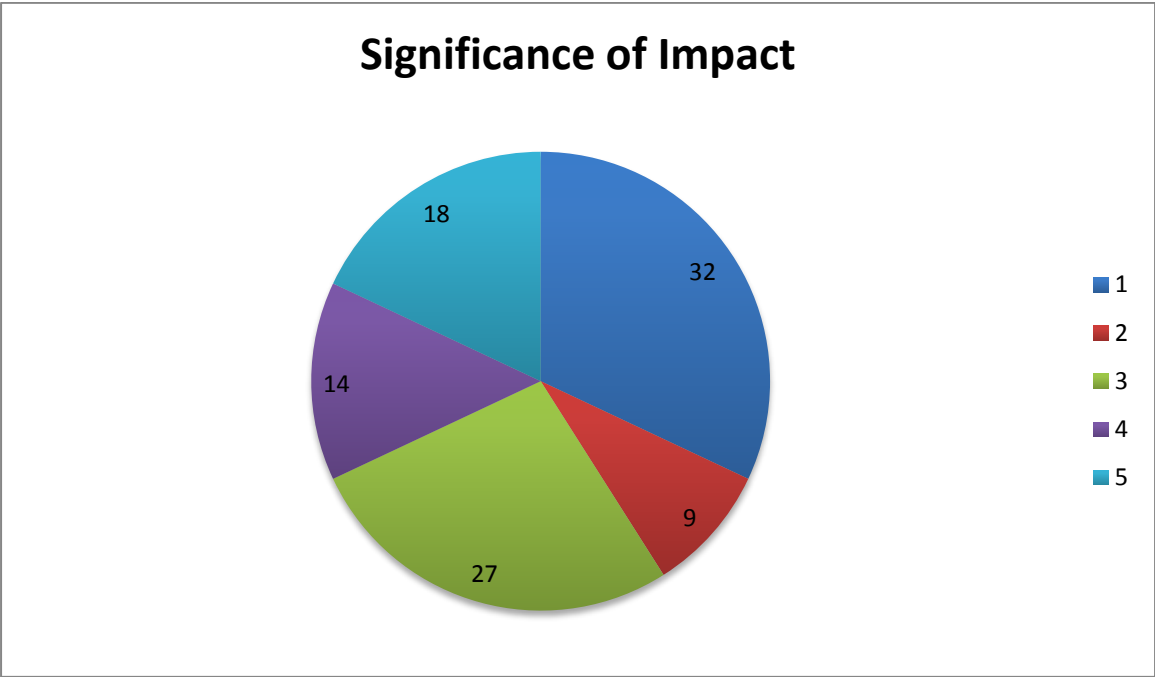


Figure 4. Significance of impact data about the Unified Discipline Alert System strategy.

- Unified Discipline Alert System was not as effective as the team predicted, although it may have the most potential in improving communication and understanding relative to discipline processes on campus and poses to be a valuable strategy to continue to enhance and implement in the school.

Unexpected Findings

As this improvement project on teacher retention was conducted and implemented in the fluid environment of a public middle school, the retention teams efforts revealed an area of improvement not predicted while planning. Through analysis of the principal-led survey, it was observed that teachers perception of professional development on the campus of Middle School B were viewed as *excessive* and indirectly as a form of punishment. This prompted Middle School B's principal to investigate these interpretations of professional development on the campus of the middle school, which in-turn spawned a restructuring effort on how professional development was executed.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) identified Middle School B as Low Performing during the 2015-2016 school year. Being so, the school was required to participate in additional surveys and protocol to begin improvement efforts in academic performance. Through conversation with the principal at the beginning of the teacher retention improvement project, there was pause and anxiety, and a prediction that this status may cause teachers to leave Middle School B. Upon conclusion of the project, the principal noted these strategic efforts to improve teacher retention played major role in *getting them through* the processes of North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction Low Performing sanctions. This phenomenon of acquiring unexpected knowledge through the improvement process bolsters

value in the Improvement Science methodology and demonstrates leveragability of process improvement.

Recommendations

While implementing this small-scale proof-of-concept improvement project, it became evident that I was managing not only the PDSA process, but also applying the process through specific strategy based upon the determined needs of the school. This finding was discussed with the teacher retention team at the conclusion of the project to identify sustainability and spread efforts within the Granville County Public School District. Consensus by the team established our improvement project on teacher retention defined a process of implementation to help improve teacher retention in the Granville district. The sequential process was deemed generalizable across the district (large-scale implementation), with application (strategy) defined as school-specific. This belief allows participating schools to create specific strategies that meet their needs, as each campus affords its own culture and climate. This finding in no way discounts the strategy employed by the teacher retention team, but clarifies flexibility while conducting the process of improving teacher retention across the district. The team recommends principals experiencing difficulty retaining quality teachers engage in this sequential process to help teacher retention efforts at their respective schools. The formal process deemed worthy of a spread initiative in the Granville County Public School District is outlined as follows.

The school building principal may:

1. Establish a school based team dedicated to improving teacher retention
2. Analyze current/past teacher retention data
3. Record predictions about why teachers may be leaving

4. Create and distribute a principal-led survey asking staff what efforts could be done to improve teacher retention on campus
5. Analyze survey data and draw parallels with proposed predictions
6. If needed, conduct a 2nd survey outlining findings of the previous survey to help gain teacher input on specific strategy (This helps account for Langley et al's, (2009) human side of change).
7. Create specific strategy based off of collected data
8. Implement strategy through Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle(s)
9. If needed, conduct a 3rd survey identifying effectiveness through teacher perceptions
10. Determine effectiveness, spread-ability, and sustainability

The Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team demonstrated great effort and growth throughout this process and based on data presented, actions toward improving teacher turnover on a small-scale approach were successful, thus recommends large-scale implementation. The spread effort district wide will focus on the process presented above, with rich conversation regarding strategy at school sites to help improve teacher morale, efficacy, value, and culture. By improving these intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics, the school administrator may help improve teacher retention in the school setting, which should reinforce district teacher retention efforts.

With the teacher retention team's effort magnifying the importance of principal support, influence of student discipline on teacher attrition, effects of teacher rewards and recognitions, and how these phenomena affect teacher morale and school culture, I suggest institutions of higher education offering education leadership development programs integrate and/or expand upon these concepts in their curriculum and teaching. Intentionally addressing these areas in

leadership preparation programs may better prepare future school leaders to effectively engage teachers in a diverse learning environment.

Current Improvements in the Granville District

It is worth noting, since the inception of this improvement project, the Granville County Public School District has made great strides towards improving teacher retention. According to the Granville County Public Schools Human Resources Department, the district's teacher turnover rate dropped to just over 16% for 2016 (Dr. M. Wilson, personal communication, August 3, 2016). Just recently, the Granville County Board of Commissioners approved a five-cent tax increase to allow for a 3% increase in the certified teacher local supplement. This equates to a 10% overall supplement for certified teachers in Granville County's public school district, proving competitive or out-performing neighboring districts of like demographics. With educational research sustaining the importance of salary relative to attrition, this action is monumental. Cooperative efforts such as this, demonstrate improved relations between the local school board and board of commissioners, which aid in the improvement of community perception and effectiveness of the Granville County Public School District.

North Carolina state government and educational leaders have made changes in lateral entry requirements for teachers not eligible for a certified license. According to Dr. J. Carraway, (personal communication, July 22, 2016) Director of Licensure for the Granville County Public School District, lateral entry teachers no longer have to complete six semester hours of university level coursework each year to maintain employment, but all coursework must be complete by the end of their third year of designated lateral entry status. This minor shift in management of teaching personnel has allowed Granville's school district to retain teaching staff during this three-year period, but is still uncertain as to how it will affect longevity in the profession.

Finally, Granville County Public School District administration has established a renewed awareness and focus on teacher retention in the district and what we as administrators can do to help continuously improve teacher retention in our schools and district. The district's human resources department has intentionally integrated professional development into district leadership team meetings with a concentration on school culture and how it relates to teacher retention. I have been fortunate to present teacher turnover data to my colleagues during this initiative and received positive feedback on increasing awareness regarding teacher retention. These work sessions have also created meaningful conversation about what we as school leaders can do to improve school culture in our buildings, which should improve teacher efficacy and retention to aid in creating a workplace where teachers *want* to educate our students.

Epilogue

Conducting this Problem of Practice about teacher retention, and leading the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team has helped me grow as an educator through intensive study and real-world application. Current and past research, point toward salary, student discipline, and administrative support as priority areas to address when looking to improve teacher retention in school buildings and districts. I would argue, these three areas might have the highest leveragability as educators strive to improve retention in their respective districts. At the onset of the improvement project, the team speculated why teachers were leaving the district at an alarming rate, and these areas were identified as viable characteristics that promoted teacher turnover. Through small-scale implementation, further discussion, inquiry, and action, the teacher retention team found incentives and recognition, communication, and student discipline as areas of teacher concern in Middle School B. After analyzing the findings and

consultation with the school principal, the team was able to triangulate the data and create a perception of current culture within Middle School B.

Execution of this process and implementation of Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles allowed the team to create a formal process that can be generalized throughout the district that will help school principals and district administrators work toward improving teacher turnover in all schools. Understanding teacher concerns and formulating a perception of culture should help the school principal and others associated with the improvement initiative address specific issues on campus that are directly associated with the feelings and needs of his or her teaching staff. It is important that a *team* approach be used, even though the building principal may be uncomfortable discussing teacher concerns with others, it will allow for professional growth and collaboration in the district to better meet the needs of the teaching staff within the school.

I am proud of this team's effort as we worked toward improving teacher retention on the campus of Middle School B, and did so, meeting our improvement goal, and according to principal survey data, improving areas of noted concern by the teachers, which should lead to an enhanced school culture and improved teacher retention statistics. Upon completion, the team agreed that the school's culture was directly influenced by the strategies that were employed and that there seemed to be a shift in Middle School B's perception of culture by the teachers employed there. The teacher retention team feels this change in culture prompted teachers to feel more appreciated and fostered a sense of value between the administration and teaching staff that engendered a sense of community.

Our team did not identify an exact cause associated with teacher attrition in the Granville District or Middle School B, but what we did solidify in our understanding, was the link between academic research and characteristics of *school life* that may lead toward enhanced teacher

longevity in a school building, along with the concept of school culture and its effects on teachers feelings, beliefs, and attitudes relative to their work environment. I would encourage school principals to engage in this process in a group setting to allow multiple viewpoints associated with the school to be expressed. Often times, we as educators fail to view problems or concerns through other lenses and the team approach will help the school leader formulate a better understanding of problems associated with the school's culture and how it affects teachers longevity of service in the building.

Knowing and understanding the long-lasting effects of teacher turnover in a school building and district should help administrators decision-making processes align with teacher values and needs to help sustain continuous service within the school building or district. While district level administrators are somewhat removed from this environment, great stress is placed on school building principals to retain teachers. Teacher movement within the district still places great hardship on respective schools, even though the teacher did not leave the system.

Principals are continuously challenged to create, sustain, and improve school culture, which in my opinion, helps promote teacher retention at the school level. This culture is the "superglue that bonds an organization, unites people, and helps an enterprise accomplish desired ends" (Bolman & Deal, 2008 p. 253). Knowing and understanding your purpose, leaning and acting on personal values, establishing trust and teamwork within the school, and basing all decisions on the best interest of students, may enable school administrators the opportunity to establish and sustain a culture of retention.

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APPENDIX A: INSTUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · www.ecu.edu/irb

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Brian Mathis](#)
CC: [Jim McDowelle](#)
Date: 3/3/2016
Re: [UMCIRB 16-000193](#)
Improving Teacher Retention

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 3/2/2016. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period. The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

**APPENDIX B: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA
AND MINUTES, 9-23-15**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

9-23-15 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Discuss Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Knowledge of teacher turnover data for GCPS
2. Begin to Establish a Charter to help guide the improvement effort

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Turnover Data	Present Discuss Clarify	Mathis	15
2. Est. Charter	Present Discuss	ALL	40
3. Set Date for Next Meeting	Discuss	ALL	3

Charter Guiding Questions

What are we trying to accomplish?

How will we know that a change is an improvement?

Performance Measures and Goals? Where are we now? Where do we want to be?

Possible Elements to include:

The system to be improved

The population of focus

What is expected to happen?

Timeframe

Goals (Predictions)

Guidance (Identify boundaries, Identify strategies)

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
September 23, 2015
County Office—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA and LF as the recorder. Absent from the meeting was L M.

Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with thanking everyone for agreeing to participate in the Teacher Retention Team. He explained what East Carolina University's (ECU) requirements are and one being to identify a problem that is backed by data. He indicated that he has included a sheet with the data in the folders that he passed out to the members.

After looking at the data from neighboring districts, it was pointed out that Granville County's teacher turnover is too high. JC pointed out that whatever the team's outcome reveals, you need to test the strategy on a small scale before moving to a larger scale. There needs to be a process that the team will look at. Reasons for change—leave to teach at charter school, career change, dissatisfied with teaching, etc. The team needs to come up with a strategy to share with fellow principals and school officials. Mr. Mathis pointed out that some turnover is good because you want the teachers who are not very good at teaching to move on. Also, sometimes there is nothing you can do to compete with the reasons why teachers are leaving. Mr. Mathis gave an example from his school, one left to teach at the North Carolina School of Math and Science, difficult to compete with. He had another teacher leave to teach at the Charter School in Henderson because all three of his children attend that school. The team again reviewed the data for teacher turnover. LA commented that she was surprised at the turnover rate for Granville County. Mr. Mathis agreed and pointed out that Granville County has gone up 10% since 2010.

Mr. Mathis asked, what the team wanted to try to accomplish. He needs everyone's opinion because this will be a team approach. How will we know? There needs to be a target amount and it needs to be an obtainable number. We need to focus on highly leveraged problem (teacher retention) that may improve in Granville County: attendance, student achievement. JC pointed out do we want to know why we are losing 20 percent or why we still have 80 percent. Why are they still here? Ms. Allen asked is it reason specific. It was pointed out that not everyone completed the exit survey. Reasons sometime are beyond people's control or lack of effort.

The two schools with the highest turnover are W O Elementary School with 39 percent and C Elementary School at 37 percent. It was asked do we want to look at a particular school or all schools. It was suggested that the turnover rates at the northern end of the county as opposed to the southern end of the county could be looked at. Mr. Mathis said he wanted to keep G C out because that could be a conflict of interest. He asked LA if she wanted to include B S Middle School in the list. LA said she did not mind either way. It was suggested that we just include the traditional schools with 12 or more teachers in the study. Mr. Mathis reviewed the turnover rate that he had compiled, listing different schools and he commented that he did not include any school with less than 12 teachers. At the next meeting, we will discuss potential causes as to why teachers are leaving.

JC suggested that the team use the criteria that they are above the State or District average and have the same principal for 5 or more years, a veteran principal. Using these criteria would give

you two good schools to include in the study--H Middle School and S G High.

After you break it down, why? What do we want to accomplish? Identify the reason of turnover. Based upon the why, we want to identify strategies and implement them. The next question is improvement. How will we know if a change is working? In order for a change to occur, a fundamental change in behavior must take place. Do we use teacher turnover data? Teachers working conditions? We need to interview the principals first and get their perception because that is what you will get from them. Mr. Mathis commented that we may need to create a principal's questionnaire.

A discussion was held as to what draws teachers to a rural community and what keeps them in a rural community. We need to look at the identifiers for why they leave—family, money, shorter commutes, etc. Younger generations will have more jobs in their lifetime than older generations.

How will we know if it works? Principal's Perception? Need to do a pre-survey and an end survey.

Survey responses--actual reasons why teachers leave. We need to code the reasons—family, relocation, money, etc. Reasons why they stay—like the quieter community.

Implement strategies in the spring is our goal. Mr. Mathis said that he would like to see the results this year so we will need to implement by February or at the latest, first of March. One question for principals is what positive traditions do you have in place at your school for teachers.

Criteria—Why teachers are leaving? And to develop strategies to counter why they are leaving. We need to analyze the data of why they are leaving.

Next meeting will be October 21st at County Office in JC's office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 9-23-15.

APPENDIX C: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA

AND MINUTES FROM 10-21-15

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

10-21-15 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Discuss Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Established a Charter for Improvement
2. Identified potential causes for teacher turnover in GCPS

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Charter	Present Discuss Clarify	Mathis	25
2. Review exit survey data	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
October 21, 2015
County Office—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LM and LF as the recorder. Absent from the meeting was LA.

Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with introductions and by discussing the Charter for Improvement. He wants input and basically help set a guideline for teacher turnover improvement. Reasons were discussed for improving teacher retention. Improve school climate, physical practices, administrative retention will give teachers consistency with a veteran principal. (Veteran principal = 5 years or more)

By looking at some of the problems or shortcomings, it may harm perception of employees and schools. This will be something to think about.

Mr. Mathis would like 5% to be the expected result. (There has to be a number) He went on to explain to LM what he hopes the team will accomplish, and procedures to implement. LA from B Middle School has agreed to be the test school. Does everyone feel like 5% is doable? It would be tried out on a small scale before going countywide. There will need to be boundaries and constraints.

The team will meet monthly for 1 hour. Mr. Mathis will meet more often with LA at her school. We need to have a strategy by January 2016 and begin implementing by February 1, 2016. That way there would be 3 or 4 months to evaluate and make changes along the way. This would be a fluid process, nothing set in stone. Mr. Mathis asked if there was anything that we need to change?

Exit Survey Results 6/17/14 – 9/21/15

Teach in Another LEA	50%
Retirement	21%
Family Relocation	15%
Dissatisfied with Teaching	12%
Health Issues	1%
Pursuing More Education	1%

What we can help change:

Family Relocation—Having ties to Granville County—family, forming extended family. “Grow Your Own”—could be a good strategy, i.e...Sub, TA, Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, etc.

Need Sponsorship—Granville Ed, Rotary Club, need help with encouraging people monetarily to return to GCPS and teach

Potential causes as to why teachers are leaving

More Money—Money is major issue, but as a school leader that is beyond your control.

New Teacher Support—What mechanisms are/or are not in place. Excessive Training for Mentors—GCPS requires over and above what is required to be a mentor. Specialists do not always have the credentials. There is a lack of continuous support , curriculum planning , demand of the job, behavioral management of the class, stuck in their classrooms. Teachers need time to build their skills to be an effective teacher. More BT support staff.

Political Unrest—Negative relations between Boards and Commissioners, Schools and Central Office Leadership, all stake holders, businesses, negative community perception, community unrest.

Administrative Leadership—Things that principals do or lack of to keep teachers: clear vision, clear purpose, strategic plan and following it, supportive, clear communication, organization, principal funnels what actually goes to the teachers.

Behavioral Problems—Lack of administrative support, lack of clear consequence for processes and procedures, visibility, expectations school wide, training techniques, parental involvement.

Self-Efficacy—Do I make a difference? Positive reinforcement, success with the students, self-doubt, peer pressure, teachers need the tools. Behavior first and then curriculum will come. Special recognition, positive notes, positive reinforcements, texts, notes.

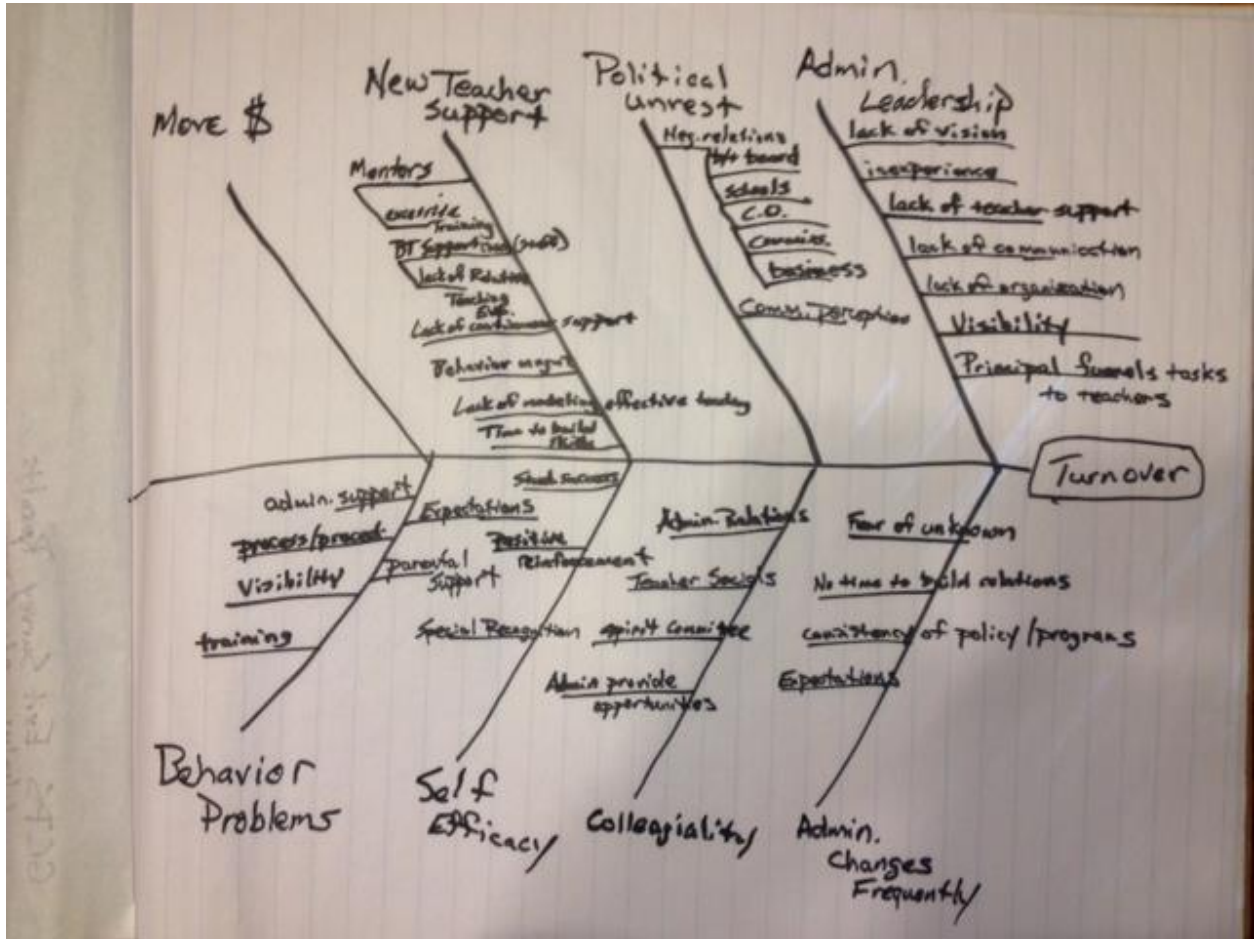
Collegiality—Positive relationships with teachers, being supportive of each other. Socials for teachers, spirit committee (once a month on Friday), Professional Learning Communities, finding connections with the teachers, administrative relations.

Administrative Changes Frequently—Fear of the unknown, relationship building with the administration, consistency of policies and practices and programs. Expectations are unknown, county office, state and other agencies.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at County Office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes from 10-21-15.

APPENDIX D: FISH BONE DIAGRAM



Created by the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team on 10-21-15.

**APPENDIX E: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA
AND MINUTES, 11-18-15**

**GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda
11-18-15 / 4:00 – 5:00pm
GCHS**

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Discuss Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review of Fish Bone Chart –Potential Causes of turnover in GCPS
2. Review potential causes of turnover in literature
3. Gain knowledge about variation as it relates to teacher turnover

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Charter/Fish Bone Chart	Present Discuss	Mathis	10
2. Review potential causes of turnover in literature	Present Discuss	Mathis	15
3. Discuss Variation in turnover. Identify common	Present Discuss	Mathis	30
4. Discuss next steps	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
November 18, 2015
G C High School—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, and LF as the recorder. Absent from the meeting were LA and LM.

Mr. Mathis open the meeting with an overview of what has been reviewed thus far and stated that he would like to review potential strategies at the next meeting. At this point he wanted to review the fish bone chart of hypothetical reasons why teachers leave.

Causes for Turnover in Literature in Literature:

- Leadership
- Student Discipline
- Lack of Administrative Support (also ties in with Leadership)
- Salary
- Parental Involvement
- Age/Experience
- Working Conditions
- Self-Efficacy
- Teacher Preparation
- Student/Teacher Demographics

Age/Experience discussion. There is a U-Shape trend in education—1 to 3 years and at the end of your career.

Mr. Mathis also prepared a Run Chart for Granville County Public Schools Teacher Turnover based on data that has been collected for the last 6 years.

Look at variation but also look at the trend.

Causes of variation—inherent in the system.

Special variation—arises because of specific circumstances.

Stable/Unstable Processes.

Stable Process—common causes.

Unstable Process of variation—common and special variations (this will be in this study).

How to predict turnover? Set goals—some things cannot be predicted. So many factors are involved. It is not possible to predict Granville County Public School's turnover. We will focus on LA's School, B Middle School. Last year they had a 29.59 turnover rate. We need to set some goals. How many teachers do we want to try to reduce the turnover rate by—6 teachers, or more? We need to BSMS's numbers, how many teachers does she have, we need to get her ADM.

An example: If she has 32 certified teachers and 9 left, our goal should be to try to save 6 of those teachers from leaving.

JC stated that if we use only a small cite, B Middle School, our reduction should be 50% in

teacher turnover. With using a small scale, our window of time will be February – June to reduce the B Middle School turnover rate by 50%. The data will be collected through July 31, 2016. Teachers who leave this school (for this study) will include both movers/leavers. The next meeting will be Monday, December 14th at 4:00 pm at County Office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 11-18-15.

**APPENDIX F: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA AND
MINUTES, 12-14-15**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

12-14-15 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office – Dr. C’s Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Discuss Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review of Fish Bone Chart – Potential Causes of turnover in GCPS
2. Review potential causes of turnover in literature
3. Gain knowledge about variation as it relates to teacher turnover

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Variation of data/Run Chart	Present-Run Chart Discuss	Mathis	10
2. Discuss strategies for improvement	Tree Diagram	Mathis	45
3. Next Steps	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

**Teacher Retention Team Minutes
December 14, 2015
County Office—4:00 P.M.**

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA, LM and LF as the recorder.

Mr. Mathis open the meeting with an overview of the fishbone diagram on possible theories for why teachers are leaving--more money, new teacher support, political unrest, administrative leadership, behavioral problems, self-efficacy, collegiality and frequent administrative changes.

Charter of Improvement—a small scale project working in Middle School B. LA said B Middle School lost 12 teachers last year. This year our goal is 6 or less with a 50% reduction of teachers leaving.

Run Chart—variation, is it predictable? 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, there was a reduction of force in TA positions. Causes—hiring freeze in Wake County lifted, special cause in variation—lost some of our positions due to RIF.

2013 (2.79)—loss of EC teachers to Wake County when they offered signing bonus. Also, EC Director’s change.

2014—change of administration, political unrest.

Tree Design--

STRATEGIES

	Improvement Objectives	Potential PDSA Cycles
Improve Teacher Retention @ MS B	Instructional Support New Teacher Support	

After further discussion of the tree design, it was decided among the group that a survey be implemented for the teachers at the school level B Middle School). Items to include in the survey would be Instructional Support, Induction Program, BT Program, Incentives (staff celebrations, planning time, etc. After further discussion among the group it was decided that the principal’s teacher retention survey be:

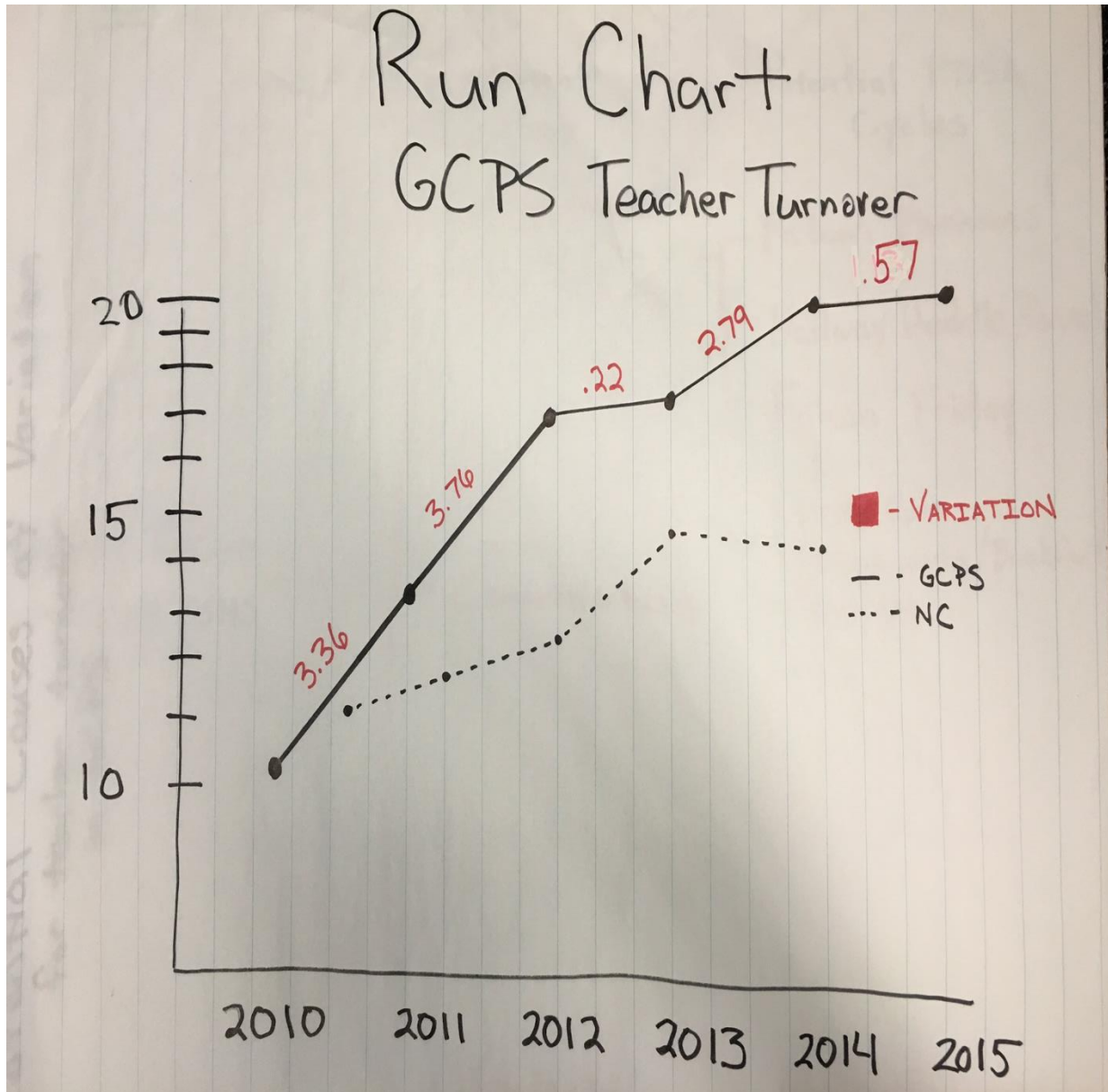
What can GCPS/B Middle School do to ensure that you return to us next year?

LA said that she would be meeting with her teachers at 8:00 a.m. for a huddle the next morning and that she would speak with them about the survey at that time.

Next meeting with be Thursday, January 6, 2016 at 4:00 pm at County Office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 12-14-15.

APPENDIX G: RUN CHART DIAGRAM



Created by B. Mathis to present to the Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team.

**APPENDIX H: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA
AND MINUTES, 1-29-16**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

1-29-16 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office – Dr. JC’s Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Discuss Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review Google Survey to teachers
2. Formulate strategy for potential PDSA cycles
3. Determine PDSA cycles for IMPLEMENTATION upon IRB Approval

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Google Survey	Present Discuss	Mathis	20
2. Determine PDSA Cycles for Implementation	Tree Diagram	Mathis	35
3. Next Steps	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
January 29, 2016
County Office—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA, and LF as the recorder.

Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with an overview of the first survey that was completed at B Middle School by the teachers. A second survey was sent back out with more defined criteria to comment on by the teachers. The criteria for the survey was, Incentives and Recognition which received 18 responses, Communication which received 17 responses and Student Discipline which received 18 responses.

Incentives and recognitions and also communication were discussed and Mr. Mathis asked LA, Principal of B Middle School, how she recognized the teachers and what incentives were provided. LA discussed the hallway huddle that they have once a week and that she recognizes teachers and also asks for them to recognize each other's accomplishments. She also puts out a weekly memo that contains upcoming events for the next week, weekly reminders other miscellaneous information. She could start adding recognitions in this memo as well. Mr. Mathis suggested a monthly staff breakfast. He does that at his school, and the faculty is very appreciative. JC also suggested a box for recognition that teachers could complete recognitions for each other. Everyone suggested "Falcon Phenoms" would be a good name for the recognition. It was also suggested to have "Falcon Friday" and let the teachers wear jeans and they would be required to wear their falcon shirt. Snacks would be provided and post the recognition. JC suggested a rewards bundle pack. You could pull a name from the box of recognitions and the lucky winner would receive something special such as a special parking place or even a duty free week.

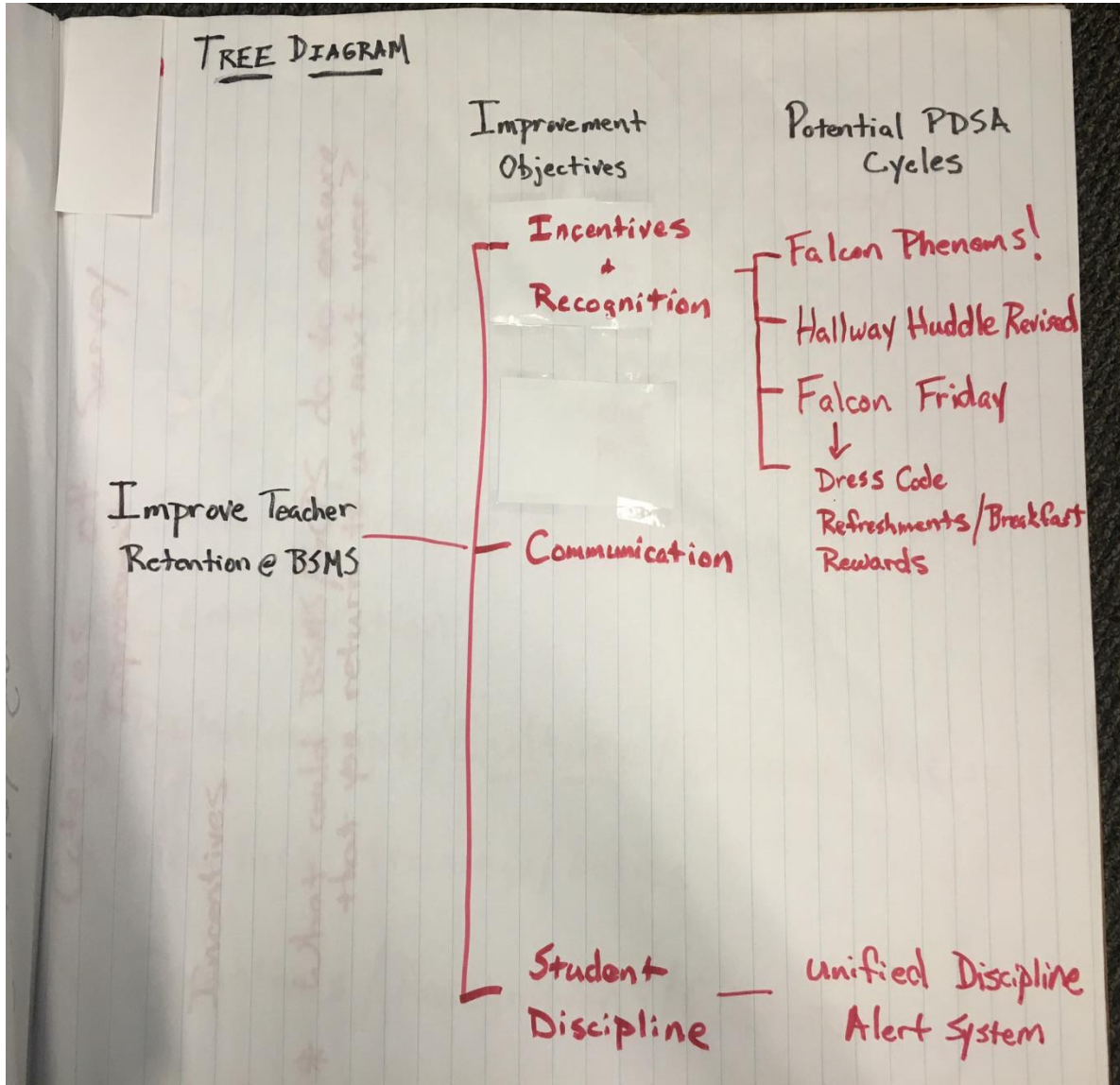
The next item was Student Discipline. This year the discipline form they used had a place for teachers to indicate what level the offense was instead of submitting the referral and the administrators indicate what the level is. Ms. Allen stated that the teachers get upset when the administrators change the level from what they had indicated on the referral but they don't always have the correct level and offense on it. Mr. Mathis commented that she should revise the form and remove the level of discipline that the teachers put on the referral and LA agreed that she would do that for next school year. Also, the handbook needs to be reviewed with the teachers and the Principal, Assistant Principal and the Dean of Students need to be consistent with each other in assigning discipline. A unified discipline alert system needs to be prepared.

Mr. Mathis prepared a Tree Diagram of the suggestions. He also stated that each time we meet we would do a status check and see what is working and what is not.

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 4:00 pm at County Office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 1-29-16.

APPENDIX I: TREE DIAGRAM



Created by Granville County Public Schools Teacher Retention Team.

**APPENDIX J: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA AND
MINUTES, 2-25-16**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

2-25-16 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office – Dr. JC’s Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Improve Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review Implementation Strategies
2. Review PDSA Cycles
3. Determine next steps in PDSA process

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Strategies	Present Discuss	Mathis	10
2. Review PDSA Cycles	Present Discuss	Mathis	40
3. Next Steps /Changes to PDSA Strategies.	Present Discuss	Mathis	10

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
February 25, 2016
County Office—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA, and LF as the recorder.

Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with an overview of the strategies that the team has agreed to use. Incentives and Recognition, Unified Discipline Alert System, Falcon Friday and Falcon Phenoms.

PDSA#1 Falcon Phenoms—Staff awareness, award in huddle on March 10th, Core Teachers get duty free, Encore Teachers get no morning and afternoon duties. All recognitions will be posted in the conference room and be visible for everyone to see when they eat their snacks on Falcon Friday. **No changes to be made at this time.**

PDSA#2 Hallway Huddle Revisions—Staff informed, changed to focus on student accomplishments and celebrations. All feedback was positive from faculty. A follow-up memo to faculty will be sent after next hallway huddle, asking for feedback thus far. **No changes to be made at this time.**

PDSA#3 Falcon Friday—This item will be implemented March 11th, school spirit dress and refreshments (refreshments, juice, coffee and donuts) and social time. The staff was informed. **No changes to be made at this time.**

PDSA#4 Unified Discipline Alert System (UDAS)—Staff informed, email communication sent to all staff who have ISS, OSS or suspension, daily. Weekly meetings with Behavior Support Team (Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Counselors and Student Information Data Manager). Their goals are to identify changes in behavior patterns, monitor assigned consequences. If consequences deviate from policy, follow-up with affected teacher. Monitor and review managerial procedures. Full implementation begins the week of March 7th. **No changes to be made at this time.**

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 4:00 pm at County Office.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 2-25-16.

**APPENDIX K: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA
AND MINUTES, 3-10-16**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

3-10-16 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

Central Office – Dr.C’s Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Improve Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review Implementation Strategies
2. Review PDSA Cycles
3. Determine next steps in PDSA process – FULL IMPLEMENTATION/IRB APPROVED

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Strategies and determine implementation	Present Discuss	Mathis	10
2. Review PDSA Cycles	Present Discuss	Mathis	40
3. Next Steps/Changes/Additions to PDSA Strategies	Present Discuss	Mathis	10

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
March 10, 2016
County Office—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA (by phone), and LF as the recorder.

Mr. Mathis opened with the meeting discussing the PDSA cycles—do we continue as planned or do we discontinue anything?

PDSA#1-Falcon Phenom--The recognition is pulled on Tuesday and an email is sent out as a reminder to teachers to recognize their peers. Core teachers get duty free lunch and encore teachers get morning and afternoon duty free. This will continue with one process check—LA will not attach the recognitions to the wall until after they are announced.

PDSA#2-Hallway Huddle—LA has had 3 so far. She will send reminders to share about their students for the next hallway huddle. It can be academic, athletics or whatever they recognize as being positive. She is working on improving the quality of the celebration and constantly coaching the staff on sharing their student's success. There was one teacher who tried to share a sarcastic celebration but that teacher was redirected.

PDSA#3-Falcon Friday—LA said the staff is excited about jeans day. There have been positive responses from the faculty about this and about putting treats in their boxes. Mr. Mathis is ordering biscuits for the next breakfast on March 24th.

PDSA#4-Unified Discipline Alert System (UDAS)—There has been no feedback as of yet from the staff. Teachers need to be refreshed on the meanings of discipline levels. Stronger investigations by Dean of Students. Mr. Mathis advised that she needs to take detailed notes on any changes that need to be put in place. School Improvement Team, Planning needs—got good feedback. Teacher focus group did not bring it up, mostly instruction.

What impact can we have on teachers before June 7th? Low performing school status may affect what we do. Our goal on teachers that leave would not be more than 6. Ms. Allen talked about the training that they are having at their school that teachers can opt to participate in instead of the regular professional development.

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 21, 2016.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 3-10-16.

**APPENDIX L: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA
AND MINUTES, 4-21-16**

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

4-21-16 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

GCHS-Conference Room

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Improve Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review & Discuss PDSA Cycles
2. Determine next steps in PDSA process

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review PDSA Cycles	Present Discuss	Mathis	10
2. Next Steps/Changes/Additions to PDSA Strategies	Present Discuss Problems, unexpected obs.	Mathis	45
3. Schedule Next Mtg	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
April 21, 2016
G C High School—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LA, and LF as the recorder.

Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with a review of the PDSA cycles. He asked LA how everything was going, what is the staff's response, good or bad, and is there anything that needs to be changed or fine-tuned.

PDSA#1-Falcon Phenom—LA stated that she had adjusted this a little by putting the nomination forms in their boxes instead of them picking them up. This seems to be working better for the teachers. (**Structural Barrier**) Same process is still followed where LA draws a name out of the box and that teacher receives a duty free day.

PDSA#2-Hallway Huddle—The Hallway Huddle is going much better. Teachers are really taking the time to recognize their students for their successes and have gotten past the negative comments that were being made previously.

PDSA#3-Falcon Friday— Almost everyone is on board with this, participating with wearing their school shirts with their jeans. Some teachers just do not choose to wear this and that is their choice. The food and snacks are very much appreciated from everyone. Cost is a factor. The teachers have verbally said how much they appreciate this being done for them. They enjoy the fellowship with their peers.

PDSA#4-Unified Discipline Alert System (UDAS)—This is an area that LA and her team need to improve. The meetings need to be more consistent. The suggestion was made to get feedback from the team as to how often they need to meet. Refocus needs to be made with the behavior support team. Anytime the handbook is not followed, the administrators give immediate feedback to teachers and explain why the changes were made. Daily emails are being sent out. Time has been the main issue for the team not meeting as often as they should have.

Through the survey the teachers completed earlier in the year, it was found that the teachers felt like they were being punished for having to attend excessive professional development. Based on this, LA gave them the choice to continue professional development as they have in the past or they could participate in a pilot program through Haiku where they complete so many steps to receive badges and achieve a mastery level.

A survey will be sent out prior to May 20th for the teachers to complete based on the strategies that have been put in place. The survey should include all the strategies (4) and list the things in each item that have been done. They need to use the Likert Rating for their feedback. The team will discuss the feedback at the next meeting and determine if the strategies that were put in place affected the retention of the teachers at B Middle School. The next meeting will be Tuesday, May 24, 2016.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 4-21-16.

APPENDIX M: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 5-24-16

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

5-24-16 / 4:00 – 5:00pm

GCHS-Conference Room

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Improve Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review & Discuss PDSA Cycles
2. Determine next steps in PDSA process and determine effectiveness
3. Discuss end of project timeline

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review PDSA Cycles	Present Discuss	Mathis	25
2. Determine Next Steps and effectiveness	Present Discuss Problems, unexpected obs.	Mathis	35
3. Schedule Next Mtg	Present Discuss	Mathis	5

Teacher Retention Team Minutes
May 24, 2016
G C High School—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LM, and LF as the recorder. Absent from the meeting was LA. Mr. Mathis spoke with her before the meeting by phone for her input. Mr. Mathis opened the meeting with an overview of the teacher losses that LA will have at B Middle School this year. Also, he reviewed the PDSA cycles that have been put in place at B Middle School.

So far LA is losing a teacher who is moving to Colorado and one teacher who is an Administrative Intern that they are losing. LA indicated that all PDSA cycles were going well and end-of-the-year testing is underway.

The group went on to discuss what the next steps would be. A principal made survey needs to be prepared and distributed to the faculty. Review the data at the last meeting, which will be in June.

It was determined that all strategies may not work across the board and that each school will develop their own strategies, if this improvement project structure is used in Granville County.

The final recommendation was to look at the data in June and put a process in place. Propose it to the Leadership Team to work on and they each principal can develop their own strategies.

LA relayed to Mr. Mathis that they would be having their last breakfast this week. The only concern LA had is that the Hallway Huddles are not going as well as she would like them to be. Mr. Mathis commented that he would review the Hallway Huddle with LA to get a clearer understanding of what her expectations are Dr. JC pointed out that the faculty needs a clear understanding of what her expectations are and what the criteria for Hallway Huddles is going to entail.

Another survey will be sent out to see if the strategies made a difference with the teachers.

Next meeting will be, where to go next?

The next meeting will be June 22, 2016 at G C High School.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 5-24-16.

APPENDIX N: GRANVILLE COUNTY TEACHER RETENTION TEAM AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 6-22-16

GCPS Teacher Retention Team Meeting Agenda

6-22-16 / 4:00 – 5:10pm

Central Office

PURPOSE/CONTEXT: Improve Teacher Turnover in GCPS

DESIRED OUTCOME (S): By the end of this meeting, participants will have...

1. Review Principal Survey Data
2. Discuss overall effectiveness of each PDSA cycle/strategy
3. Determine next steps of implementation

WHAT (Content)	HOW (Process)	WHO (Facilitator)	TIME (Minutes)
Welcome	Present	Mathis	2
1. Review Principal Survey Data	Present Discuss	Mathis	20
2. Determine Effectiveness of PDSA	Present Discuss Problems, unexpected obs.	Mathis	30
3. Determine Next Steps of Implementation	Present Discuss	Mathis	15

Teacher Retention Team Minutes

June 22, 2016

G C High School—4:00 P.M.

Team Members: Brian Mathis, JC, LM. Recorder was absent and Brian Mathis was the recorder.

The meeting was held to review the principal survey data. Results are as follows:

Falcon Fridays—top strategy indicated by teachers. Principal is concerned about the sustainability of this financially. Principal stated staff appreciated it and was to continue strategy but the estimated cost was \$400.00 per semester. This is a continued communication between admin and staff showing appreciation from admin so teachers know they are appreciated.

Discipline communication—not as effective. Principal stated this strategy did not address discipline needs, although principal stated the Discipline Team did meet but many of the staff was unaware of or not noticeable. Principal wants to continue to address consistency of awarding consequences and differences in levels of discipline.

Falcon Phenom's—very successful, make sure office staff places form in box of teacher to ensure participation.

Principal states she wants to continue to implement all the strategies next year and that all the strategies seemed valuable.

School began Comprehensive Needs Assessment due to low performing school. Principal was concerned how this affected the staff's morale. Principal stated strategies helped “get them through” a difficult period of high stress due to the assessment.

Current turnover at this time: 3 people (Goal was 6 or less and this was achieved)

1—moved out-of-state because of military

1—moved to district position

1—moved to administrative position

Next Steps—Teacher Retention Team needs to:

- Create action steps to help with the teacher retention for the county.
- Implement this process with each school, PDSA processes district wide.
- Strategies may be different according to school/teacher needs.
- Teacher Retention Team will grow in number and continue meeting to help improve retention across the district.
- School Principals will execute this process with school based leadership team.

The Team feels this process will help school administrators improve teacher morale, sense of value and school culture, which will, in turn improve teacher retention in Granville County Public Schools.

Granville County Teacher Retention Team agenda and minutes, 6-22-16.

APPENDIX O: FALCON PHENOM INSTRUCTIONS

FALCON PHENOM INSTRUCTIONS

Take a blank from the envelope. Complete it and leave it in the box. The box will be emptied each Friday and those recognized will be listed, along with the reason they were recognized in the next week's Falcon Memo. One person will be drawn at random, recognized at the Hallway Huddle and receive a duty-free day.

Falcon Phenom Instructions created by the principal at Middle School B and distributed to the teachers at Middle School B.

APPENDIX P: FALCON PHENOM DOCUMENT

AGILITY - CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT - CUSTOMER FOCUS - DATA-DRIVEN MANAGEMENT - LEADERSHIP - LEARNING-CENTERED EDUCATION
FALCON PHENOMS
LONG-TERM COMMITMENT - OUR WORKPLACE IS ABOUT PEOPLE -
PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT - SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - SYSTEMS THINKING
- TEAMWORK
I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE _____
FOR THE CORE VALUE _____
BECAUSE _____

Distributed by the principal at Middle School B.

**APPENDIX Q: GRANVILLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT'S
PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL AGENDA FOR 3-21-16**

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council

**March 21, 2016
6:00 – 7:00 PM
Central Office Board Room**

- Welcome.....Dr. Dorwin L. Howard, Sr.
Superintendent
- Introductions.....All In Attendance
- Presentation on Teacher Retention.....Mr. Brian Mathis
Principal, Granville Central High School
- Dr. Jennifer Carraway, Director
Licensure
- Parent Workshops Idea.....Dr. Howard and Group
- Update on Student DisciplineDr. Howard
- Closing Remarks

Granville County Public Schools Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council agenda for 3-21-16.

APPENDIX R: PRINCIPAL LED SURVEY NUMBER ONE

Teacher Retention Survey Number 1

What could Middle School B and the Granville County Public Schools do to ensure that you return to work in our school next year?

Your answer

SUBMIT

Principal led survey number one, created and distributed by the principal of Middle School B. Facilitated through Google Forms.

APPENDIX S: PRINCIPAL LED SURVEY NUMBER TWO

Teacher Retention Survey Number 2

Staff,

After analyzing the results of the first survey regarding teacher retention at Middle School B, we have categorized the comments. We would like your input on specific strategies we could implement for each of these areas. Please try to provide solutions to concerns.

- Incentives and Recognition
- Communication
- Student Discipline

Thank you for your participation in this improvement project.

Incentives and Recognition

Your answer

Communication

Your answer

Student Discipline

Your answer

SUBMIT

Principal led survey number two, created and distributed by the principal at Middle School B. Facilitated through Google Forms.

APPENDIX T: PRINCIPAL LED SURVEY NUMBER THREE

Teacher Retention Survey Number 3

Earlier this year, you participated in surveys to identify areas for improvement to reduce our teacher turnover rate at Middle School B. Please rate each of the strategies below indicating how much making that change has had on your desire to stay at Middle School B next year.

Discipline - Staff receives daily emails from Dean of Students indicating who has ISS, OSS, or CIL.

No Impact

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Significant Impact

Falcon Fridays - On Fridays, staff members wear jeans and receive a small gift in their mailbox. On the last Friday of each month, a staff breakfast is provided.

No impact

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Significant Impact

Falcon Phenoms - Staff members recognize each other for excellence. Those staff are recognized in the Falcon Memo and one staff member is chosen for a duty-free day each week. Students are celebrated during weekly Hallway Huddles.

No Impact

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Significant Impact

Principal led survey number three, created and distributed by the principal at Middle School B. Facilitated through Google Forms.

