

ABSTRACT

Ervin D. Patrick, THE IMPROVEMENT OF A BEGINNING TEACHERS SUPPORT PROGRAM TO ENHANCE TEACHER RETENTION (Under the direction of Dr. James McDowelle) Department of Educational Leadership, March 2018.

This study was designed to improve the current beginning teacher support program and address the problem of beginning or early career teachers leaving the district. Researchers have found that as many as 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). This study proposed changes to the Beginning Teacher Support Program that would positively impact the turnover rate. The study focused on Craven County Schools, located in eastern North Carolina. The district has experienced three consecutive years of teacher turnover greater than 15%, causing a high degree of concern within the district. This improvement study was conducted following a small-scale proof of concept in an elementary school within the district. Supporting this study is the model of improvement offered by Langley et al. (2009), joined with the methodology of Improvement Science.

There were five improvement strategies implemented in the school during the study including: (a) mentor beginning teachers through years four to six, (b) employ an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher as a beginning teacher mentor, (c) assign buddy teachers in the same subject as the beginning teacher, (d) employ additional beginning teacher mentors and (e) implement mentor and beginning teacher support meetings. The goal of this study and the implementation of these strategies was to reduce teacher turnover to 10% in the school. Although the goal was not reached during the current school year, at the conclusion of the study, the improvement strategies were deemed effective and comprehensive enough for a large-scale implementation across the district.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF A BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM TO
ENHANCE TEACHER RETENTION

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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March, 2018

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Dr. Eleanor B. Patrick, who has been a source of constant support and motivation throughout this process. She has forgiven and loved me when my attention was devoted to this work rather than to her. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Sherol, who instilled the value of an education in me at a very young age. The fortitude that she displays in life is remarkable and I aspire to be as strong as she is. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my grandparents, Dorethea and Rigdon. While they are no longer with me physically, their legacy of love, their pursuit of knowledge and their words of wisdom will inspire me for remainder of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My mother and grandparents taught me that if I got an education, I could get a great job and take care of myself and provide for my family. Those lessons have proven to be true, although I never imagined continuing my education for so long that I would obtain a terminal degree. There were times that I questioned if this was something that I really wanted, but I saw how proud it made my family for me to be pursuing this exceptional accomplishment and I continued to press on. I am grateful for their love and support and could not have made it through this process without them.

I must acknowledge my younger brother, James, who always gives me a hard time. Yet, he tells me that I am his hero and that I inspire him. I hope that he will accomplish even more than I have in the future. I would also like to recognize my nephew, Jaden, and my niece, Kayla, who are the apples of my eye. They sat and watched me work to complete this dissertation when they preferred to go and do something fun on the weekend. Whenever I got off task, Kayla had no reservations in telling me that I needed to do my homework! These two children will always motivate me to be my best in hopes of being a lasting and positive influence on their lives.

Many thanks to the members of my committee for their invaluable feedback throughout this journey. I am grateful for Dr. Meghan Doyle, her support, guidance and for allowing me to complete the study within Craven County Schools. I am especially thankful for my dissertation chair, Dr. James McDowelle. Without his guidance, advice and encouragement, this process would have been significantly harder to complete. His support and feedback kept me on track and I appreciate the assistance that he provided me. Lastly, I wish to thank the participants in my study. I could not have completed this dissertation without their assistance and I sincerely appreciate their involvement in this work.

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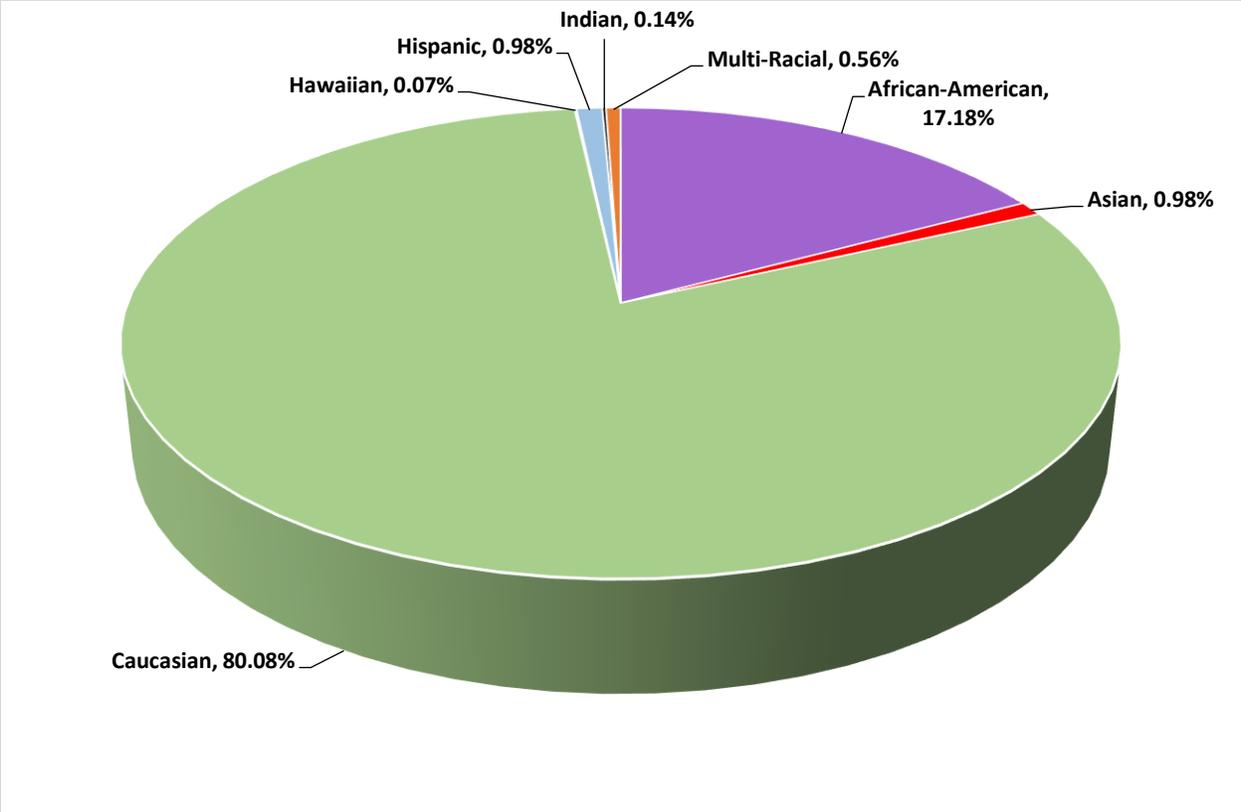
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Naming and Framing the Problem

The Craven County School District is located in eastern North Carolina and employs approximately 980 certified teachers. Currently, 100% of the teachers in the district are highly qualified in core content areas as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind standards (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2016). Twenty-five percent of the teaching staff holds advanced degrees and 5% are National Board Certified (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2014). Figure 1 shows the ethnicity of the teachers in Craven County Schools.

When looking at the experience of the teachers in the district, it is concerning to note the fact that more than half of the teachers have less than ten years of experience. Figure 2 illustrates the years of experience for teachers in Craven County Schools.

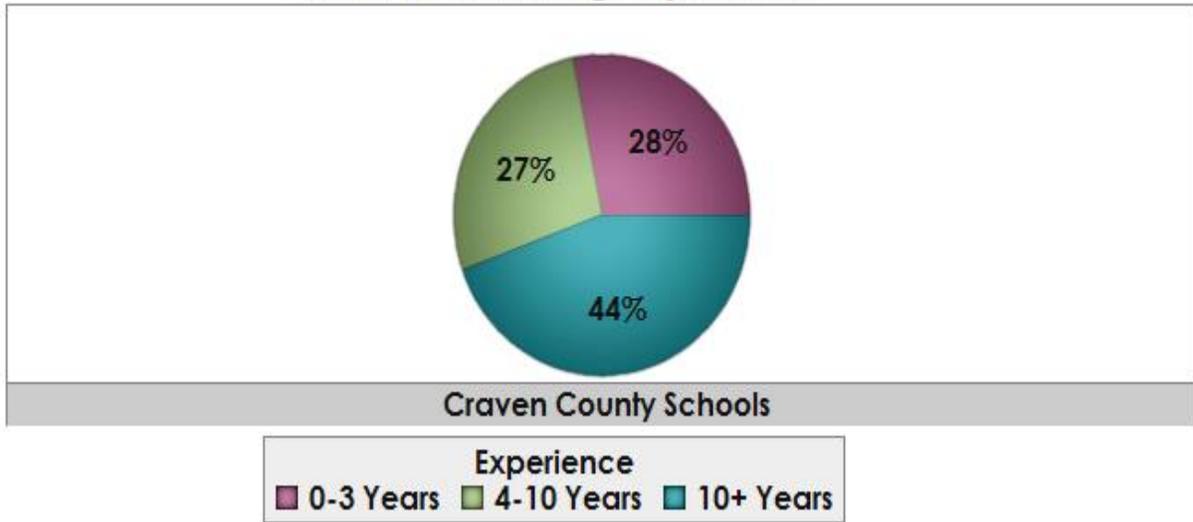
The Craven County School District consists of twenty-five schools that range from urban to rural; including six schools that house fourteen pre-k classrooms, fifteen elementary schools, five middle schools, three high schools and two early colleges. The student population of each school varies from low socioeconomic status and high free and reduced lunch populations, to schools with students from affluent homes, parents that are high-ranking military officers and homes with one parent in professional practice and the other parent staying at home to care for the family. The school district includes one of the largest attendance zones in the state of North Carolina and the district serves a 774 square mile area. Out of 115 school districts in the state, Craven County ranks 42nd in student performance based on composite scores (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2013). The district serves over 14,000 students and of these students, less than 1% are American Indian, 2% are Asian, 6% are



Note. Adapted from the 2016 SS200 Report, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Figure 1. Ethnicity of teachers in Craven County Schools.

Years of Teaching Experience



Note. Adapted from the 2016 School Report Card, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Figure 2. Years of experience for Craven County Teachers.

Hispanic, 36% are African American, and 56% are Caucasian (Craven County Schools, 2013). Other demographic information includes 58.5% of students qualifying for free and reduced meals, 12.4% of students are identified as having special needs, 8.3% of students are identified as academically gifted, and 4.2% of students are receiving English as a Second Language services (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2013). The district's four-year cohort graduation rate of 86% continues to be higher than the state graduation cohort rate of 82.5%, with one of the early colleges leading the high schools in Craven County at 95% (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2013).

The district currently has 25 principals and 33 assistant principals. Sixteen percent of the principals have completed an advanced college degree beyond a master's degree (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2016). The most recent principal turnover information indicates that the turnover rate is 0%, which is significantly less than the 10% state average (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction School Report Card, 2016). Given my position as the Director of Human Resources for Craven County Schools, I speculate that the lack of turnover among principals may be due to the relationship of having established a permanent residence in the county in which you work. Of the 25 principals in the district, 80% live in Craven County and of those who are married, 60% of their spouses work in Craven County. Of the principals that have school-aged children, 75% of them have their children enrolled in Craven County Schools.

Craven County has three distinct geographical regions. The western area is more rural with no industry and large farm communities, the central area is urban and has a historical district and local tourist attractions, and the eastern area is primarily military. These unique

regions, and their tendency for natural attrition, provide challenges for district administrators to recruit and retain highly effective teachers.

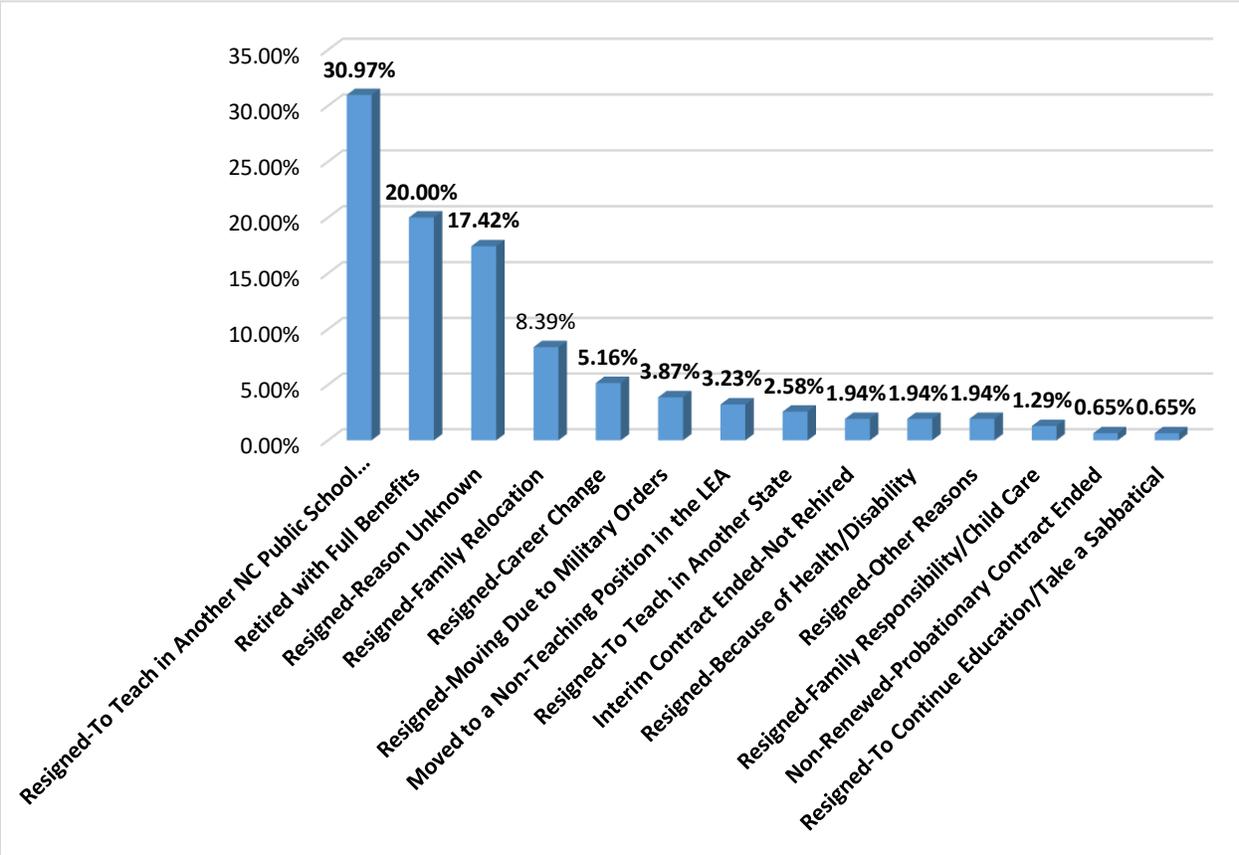
Recent Teacher Turnover Information

There is an average annual teacher turnover rate of 18% in Craven County (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Teacher Turnover Report, 2016). The teacher turnover rate for Craven County has continued to increase over the past five years. Since 2011, the teacher turnover rate has risen from 12% to 16%. The greatest increase occurred between the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 academic years, with turnover rising from 12% to 16% and 16% to 17%, respectively. The current teacher turnover rate is 16%, which is 3% above the state average (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Teacher Turnover Report, 2016), and was as high as 18% in 2015. Reasons indicated by the 155 teachers who left the district, according to the 2016 North Carolina School Report Card, are shown in Figure 3.

Teachers leaving to teach in other North Carolina LEAs are the largest source of loss and accounts for 31% of teacher attrition in the district. This is a cause of great concern for the Board of Education, District Administration and School Administrators in Craven County.

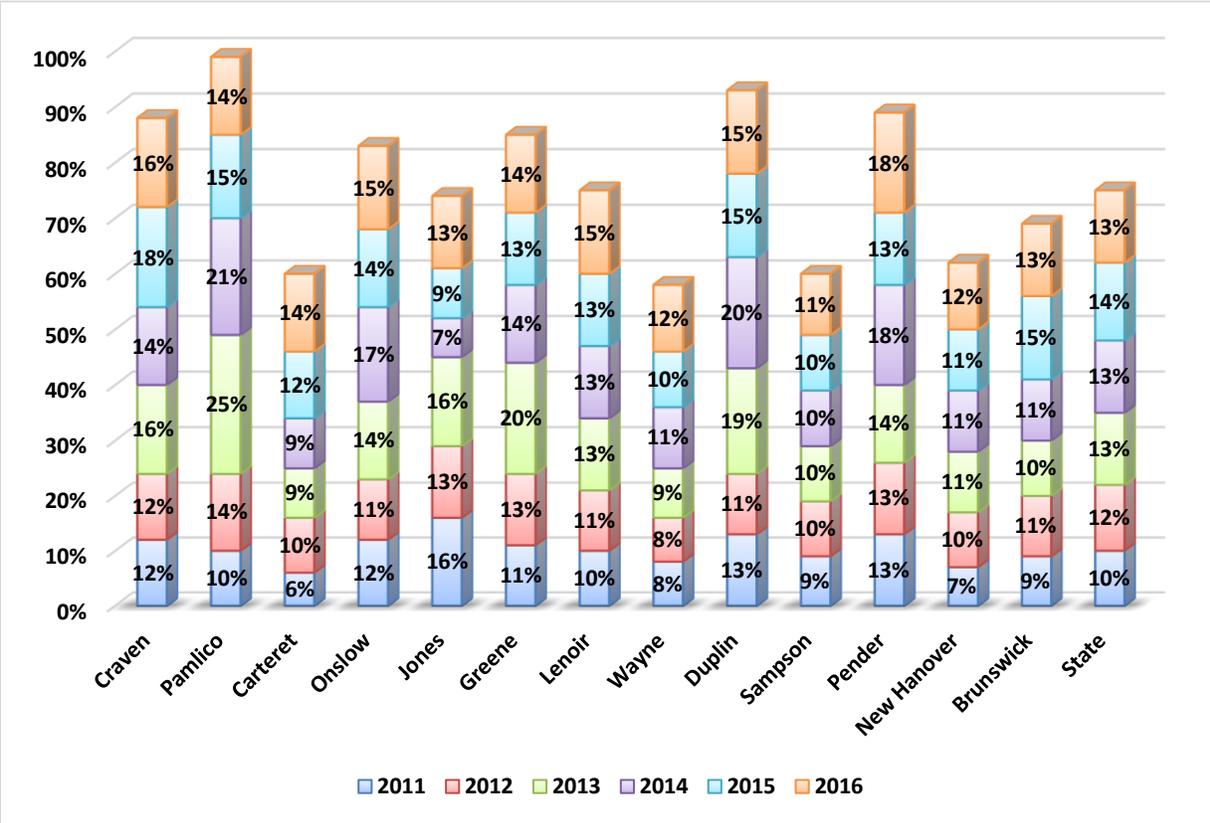
Teacher Turnover Compared to Districts in the Region

When comparing the teacher turnover in Craven County to other school districts in the region, Craven County is among the highest in the region and ranks above the state average. Lenoir County, Jones County and Carteret County all border Craven County and their teacher turnover averages are lower than Craven, but still above the state average. Figure 4 exhibits the increase in Craven County's teacher turnover in comparison to surrounding districts and helps to portray this problematic situation compared to surrounding districts.



Note. Adapted from the 2016 School Report Card, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Figure 3. Craven County Schools' 2015-2016 teacher turnover data by reason.



Note. Adapted from the 2016 Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Figure 4. Teacher turnover statistics 2011 – 2016 compared to neighboring districts and North Carolina.

The consistent increase in teacher turnover has caused district administration to formally address teacher retention in the Five Year Strategic Plan. One of the key strategies in the Strategic Plan under Goal 7 (Highly Effective Staffing) states, “The district will create and implement a comprehensive plan to develop, recruit and employ teachers and leaders to reflect the diversity of the student population” (http://www.craven.k12.nc.us/?page_id=367). Another key strategy under Goal 8 (Comprehensive Mentoring) states, “The district will sustain and continuously improve a New Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program in order to attract and retain new teachers” (http://www.craven.k12.nc.us/?page_id=367). The district and the Board of Education have committed themselves to improving teacher retention and a goal of this study will be to help the decision makers in the district understand the effect that increased teacher turnover has on the district and student achievement.

There is strong evidence that teacher attrition is most severe among beginning teachers but the likelihood of a teacher leaving declines significantly after they have been in the classroom for four to five years (Allen, 2005). Globally, the retention of early career teachers in the profession is a recurrent problem (Craig, 2014). According to estimates, it can cost between \$4,300 in a small rural district to nearly \$20,000 in a large urban district for each teacher that leaves (Shakrani, 2008). A number of factors contributing to teachers’ decisions to leave include too little support, student discipline issues, low salaries, little respect for the profession, self-efficacy, stress, problems with colleagues, school leadership, and safety (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Furthermore, the financial strain that has been placed on school districts by decreased funding from local, state and federal governments offers a bleak outlook on continuing to use financial resources as a retention tool. Money in the form of salaries seems to be more important to teachers during the beginning of their teaching career (Darling-Hammond, 2003). On average,

after five years into their teaching careers, between 40% and 50% of all beginning teachers have left the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Problem Statement

The teacher turnover rate for Craven County Schools has continued to increase over the past five years. Since 2011, the teacher turnover rate has risen from 12% to 16%, and was as high as 18% in 2015. As evidenced by the Beginning Teacher Turnover Report (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015), many of the beginning teachers remained in the district their first three years of teaching and left shortly thereafter for various reasons. The beginning teacher induction program in Craven County Schools has recently been modified and made more comprehensive with the addition of two full-time beginning teacher mentors. The intent of this modification was to provide more hands-on support for beginning teachers and have additional personnel to direct them towards beneficial resources. Due to the large numbers of beginning teachers served by the Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program, services have been tiered so that first-year beginning teachers receive more services and support than second-year and third-year teachers. This modification has not been as successful as was initially thought and will be addressed in this study. The object of the improvements to the Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program and overarching purpose of this problem of practice dissertation will be to reduce the growing teacher turnover rate in Craven County.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Teacher retention has been a challenge for the United States since the late 1950s (Scott, 1999). Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) found that the cumulative costs for schools and districts across the country to be over \$7,000,000,000 to recruit, hire, and train replacement teachers each year. This chapter presents a review of the literature in several areas that address the recruitment and retention of beginning teachers. The first section provides a review of research related to the conditions that beginning teacher's face and the impact that these conditions have on their decisions to stay or leave the profession. The second section provides a review of research related to the impact of preservice preparation and school system induction on beginning teacher retention. The third section discusses a review of research related to teacher recruitment and the barriers that school systems face in their recruitment and retention efforts. The final section includes a review of research related to various beginning teacher support systems that districts and school administrators have implemented to aid in the retention of beginning teachers.

It is estimated that almost one-third of America's teachers exit the profession sometime during their first three years of teaching, and almost one-half leave after five years (Curran & Goldrick, 2002). When teachers leave schools after only a few years of teaching, those schools incur considerable costs. In 2001, the Texas Center for Education Research calculated the financial impact of teacher turnover to be between \$329 million and \$2.1 billion, based on the turnover rate of 15.5% (Curran & Goldrick, 2002). The academic achievement of students will suffer due to turnover of this magnitude (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Retention of teachers should be of considerable interest to policymakers given that teacher attrition has financial and

academic consequences for districts and students (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). High levels of teacher turnover hinder a school's efforts to coordinate curriculum, track and disseminate information about students as they move across grade levels, and to maintain positive relationships with parents, stakeholders and the local community (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011). Although teaching practices and teacher retention are dependent upon many factors, researchers have yet to establish which factors influence them most (Cochran-Smith, Cannady, McEachern, Piazza, Power, & Ryan, 2011).

Factors Affecting Job Satisfaction

Collegial Relationships

Research shows that novice teachers generally leave within the first five years due to lack of support by colleagues and administrators and schools must provide support to new teachers in order to encourage their growth and success as teachers (Ingersoll, 2012). A professional culture among colleagues allows for beginning teachers to experience and share in the collective responsibility of a school. Edvantia (2007), an education research organization, researchers contend that schools could retain more teachers if school leaders promoted an atmosphere of collegial support. Smith, Guarino, Strom, Reed, Lamkin, and Rushforth (2003) analyzed school and staffing surveys and found lower turnover rates among beginning teachers in schools with induction and mentor programs, especially when the programs emphasized collegial support. There is considerable empirical evidence that interdependent work among teachers contributes to increased student achievement and teacher satisfaction (Johnson, 2006).

Qian, Youngs and Frank (2013), found that interactions between novice teachers and their veteran colleagues play an important role in beginning teachers' growth, and thus student learning. Kapadia, Coca, and Easton (2007) also found that beginning elementary teachers who

regularly collaborated with colleagues in other elementary grades were more likely to report having a positive teaching experience and an intention to remain in the teaching profession. Research has found strong ties between collegiality and students' academic success (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Colleagues gain from collaborative working experiences with other satisfied teachers, and students are likely to make academic progress through the exposure to positive teachers explained Fatima (2012) in his research on satisfaction of secondary school teachers.

Youngs (2007) also identified "the need for administrators to foster social trust between themselves and staff members so that teacher collaboration and development are enhanced" (p. 104). Communication, collegiality and trust are central in creating environments where teachers can flourish and work toward a common vision and mission, and will create a place where teachers want to stay and work. A collegial culture can be created schoolwide or within grade levels or departments (Siskin, 1994). Teachers should be able to trust their colleagues and their abilities and experiences as professionals. The culture of trust in a school determines how teachers approach and conduct their work together (Little, 1982).

The lack of strong collaboration creates a lack of sustainability in school improvement efforts, as teachers leave their schools due to dissatisfaction. Teachers in these schools often lack the leadership and support to develop communities that improve student achievement (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002). When teachers work in environments that are collaborative and collegial, their individual pedagogy is reinforced by this professional community and school improvement is promoted (Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) argue that teacher turnover disrupts instructional programs and further impedes efforts to develop collaborative networks of teachers within schools. One of the principal's main responsibilities is to foster an environment that creates professional learning

communities for teachers through staff development and mentoring. The importance of strong interpersonal relationships in retaining teachers is reflected in Ng and Feldman's (2007) findings that time spent in an occupation is associated with developing connections with others, contributes to occupational embeddedness, which are components that tie people to their occupations.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) contend that collaboration among veteran teachers and beginning teachers results in shared norms of practice and knowledge that leads to further development of the profession. Beginning teachers may be better versed on new instructional approaches, having just studied them in their preparation programs, and veteran teachers may benefit from collaboration with teachers new to the profession (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Some of the difficulties that beginning teachers face may be resolved through interactions with experienced teachers. Little (1982) found that students have better academic success in schools where teachers work collegially and share responsibility for their success. Principals play a substantial role in creating a positive environment for interactions between teachers and make collaboration and collegiality possible by creating systems that allow teachers to work together (Blase & Blase, 2000).

Working Conditions

Research has found that working conditions are a significant factor in teachers' decision to leave the profession (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2004). Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that teachers may even be willing to accept lower salaries in exchange for better working conditions. The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement (2007) studied the importance of supportive working conditions on improving teacher retention and found that teachers with positive views of their working conditions were more likely to stay at their current school than

teachers who held more negative opinions about the conditions of their work environment. In their discussion of problems in teacher education, Sykes, Bird, and Kennedy (2010) pointed out that “the conditions of work interact with and coproduce competence along with the knowledge and skills practitioners bring to the work setting” (p. 468). According to Johnson (2006) researchers find that once teachers are in the classroom, they are more likely to leave teaching because of poor working conditions rather than low pay.

The character of the workplace is important in determining who enters teaching and who stays (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999; Ingersoll, 2004; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Working conditions include the appropriateness of a first year teacher’s assignment, quality of induction and mentoring, curriculum alignment within the school and district, quality of professional development, the professional learning culture among teachers, adequacy of facilities and resources, and the quality of the building-level leadership (Liston, Borko, & Whitcomb, 2008). Research indicates that schools and districts that have more challenging conditions, such as large percentages of low-performing, low-income, poor physical resources, and unsupportive school climates, have a more difficult time retaining teachers than those with less challenging conditions (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). Many factors can be examined when considering teacher retention and according to Johnson (2006), teacher working conditions appears to be critical.

Given evidence that new teachers are likely to change schools or leave teaching if they are dissatisfied, schools must become more supportive workplaces if they are to attract and retain teachers of high quality (Johnson, 2006). Donaldson and Johnson (2011) conducted a study and found that teachers who remained in education but changed schools reported that their decisions were significantly influenced by working conditions.

Research studies confirm that a number of working conditions, including teacher autonomy, class size, and a collegial atmosphere, are factors predicting high teacher morale and are decisive factors related to success in recruitment and retention (Weiss, 1999). Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002) found that "more qualified teachers seize opportunities to leave difficult working conditions and move to more appealing environments" (p. 55), but their research leaves few clues as to what policymakers can do about the problem.

Brock and Grady (2001) assert that when new teachers teach in a school culture where the faculty share common goals and work collaboratively, they are more inclined to have a positive teaching experience. The ability of principals to create a culture in which teachers thrive and grow throughout their careers is a crucial ingredient in ensuring that there are quality teachers in all classrooms by reducing the staggeringly high rate of teacher turnover. Establishing such cultures in all schools is one of this nation's most significant educational challenges (National Staff Development Council, 2001). Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kaufman, Liu, and Peske (2001) state that innovative incentives may attract new teachers, but only improving the culture and working conditions keeps them. As policymakers create new programs to retain teachers, they should consider factors such as culture and influence that can be controlled to make better working environments (Sedivy-Benton & McGill, 2012).

Ingersoll (2003) concluded that efforts are needed to reduce teacher demand by increasing retention through better working conditions. As stated by Berry (2004), teachers will stay in the hardest to staff schools if they are sufficiently prepared to teach in these schools and if their working conditions include a supportive principal, opportunities for teacher leadership, influence in key decision making and the chance to work closely with fewer numbers of students and their families (Berry, 2004). As researchers continue to examine the role of working conditions in the

career decisions of teachers, it will be important to attend to the multiple features that contribute to their success in low and high-income schools (Johnson, 2006).

Teacher Pay

Research consistently identifies wages and salaries as one of the most significant factors impacting teachers' decisions related to turnover (Hale-Jinks, Knopf, & Kemple, 2006; Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). Since 1972 teachers have only gained \$2,000 in inflation-adjusted wages (approximately 7%), which averages out to less than \$100 per year (Nelson, Drown, & Gould, 2002). Research gathered by Allen (2005), while writing for the Education Commission of the States Teaching Quality Program, found that compensation has a key role in the retention of teachers. Allen (2005) further found in this research that increasing salaries tended to increase teacher retention. Low salaries in light of the requirement for a four-year degree and certification, is an important element to examine when discussing teacher retention. Tye and O'Brien (2002) conducted a survey in California and found that teachers who were contemplating leaving the profession indicated that their salary was the most important factor leading their decision.

Teacher salaries are not uniform across the United States and a survey was conducted by the American Federation of Teachers in 2007 and found that teacher salaries across the country range from just under \$25,000 to just under \$56,000. The question remains to be not how large teacher salaries should be, but how large compensation packages should be to have the desired impact on teacher retention (Allen, 2005). States that pay higher salaries to teachers and have policies that support education have fewer problems filling teacher vacancies. There is also evidence that links student achievement with increased teacher salaries (Ferguson, 1991; Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996).

Researchers at Edvantia (2007) suggested that in order to attract highly qualified teachers, district leaders should collaborate with teacher preparation programs, streamline the hiring process, and offer a locally competitive compensation package. Darling-Hammond (2007) argued that the problem of teacher shortage is an issue of unequal distribution, and that wealthy school districts are able to lure teaching candidates with higher salaries and other classroom perks. An analysis of teacher surveys was conducted in 2004 by Ingersoll and several factors were identified that schools could utilize in their effort to retain teachers. Among those factors, better compensation was the most often cited incentive.

According to Figlio (2002), there are recent papers that support that teachers are responsive to salaries in their entry and exit decisions. Despite persistent arguments that teachers are not motivated by money, research supports the conclusion that higher pay improves teacher retention (Guarino, Santibañez, Daley, & Brewer, 2004). According to Imazeki (2005) there is ample evidence that increasing teacher salaries will help to retain teachers, but the reality is that funding for these salary increases is limited. A study conducted by Clotfelter, Glennie, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) found that \$1,800 added to salaries was effective in encouraging mid-career and veteran math and science teachers to stay in high-needs districts in North Carolina.

In 2001, 60% of the nation's governors worked to make higher teacher pay a legislative priority, and legislators in twenty eight states introduced bills to raise teacher salaries (Blair, 2001). Despite the fact that the Education Department's 2002 report on teacher quality does not address the need to raise teachers' salaries, national polls consistently reveal that the public believes teacher salaries are low and they are willing to pay more in taxes to reward teachers (Public Education Network & Education Week, 2003). Ingersoll (2000) has shown the negative effects of poor salaries on teacher turnover that indicates that beginning teachers are 17% more

likely to exit the profession than middle-age teachers. According to Gordon Ambach of the Council of Chief State Officers, it is difficult to attract top talent into teaching when salaries are 50% to 75% lower than if those candidates go into law or medicine (Curran, Abrahams, & Manual, 2000).

Research strongly supports the conclusion that teacher pay plays a key role in the retention of teachers (Allen, 2005). Jacobson (1988) found that increasing salaries for more experienced teachers was correlated with higher overall retention rates in suburban districts. In rural districts overall retention was better when salaries for senior and mid-career teachers were comparable. Studies conducted by Brewer (1996) and Theobald (1990) concluded that the prospect of higher salaries in the future has an impact on the retention of teachers. Similarly, a study conducted by Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, and Weber (1997) found that the higher the salary was for teachers who left the profession in their first few years would make them more likely to return. Research makes it evident that policies regarding teacher retention should take teacher compensation into consideration (Allen, 2005).

While issues such as salary have an impact on a teacher's decision to stay or leave the profession, those who work in hard to staff schools have the desire to have a positive impact on the lives of their students and have no immediate intentions of leaving (Marker, Mitchall, & Lassiter, 2013). The work of Lankford and Wyckoff (1997) found that the majority of teacher salary increases have gone to experienced teachers and have very little impact on improving teacher quality and recruitment, as beginning teachers or those entering the profession are not provided the salary increases. Higher salaries for beginning teachers and veteran teachers have both been associated with lower teacher attrition while higher salaries in surrounding districts appears to increase the number of teachers leaving the profession (Imazeki, 2005). Given that

drastic salary increases are difficult to achieve regardless of the impact on teacher recruitment and retention, researchers and those who influence educational policy should work together to find cost effective methods to attract teachers. It is difficult to argue that increased salaries will not positively impact teacher recruitment and retention, although some researchers have (Podgursky, 2003).

Increased Accountability Measures

Kohn (2000) noted that many teachers are leaving the teaching profession because of the pressures of accountability placed on teachers. High attrition rates during the induction years cause some students, primarily those in poverty, to continually populate classrooms with teachers who are the least effective (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2004). Although some level of turnover is beneficial, ongoing teacher turnover limits schools by negating progress on school improvement and by diverting scarce resources to recruitment and hiring rather than other important needs the school may have (Johnson, 2006). Teachers who recently graduated from a large teacher education program who worked and then left teaching “ranked the pressures of increased accountability (high-stakes testing, test preparation, and standards) as their main reason for leaving.” In contrast, graduates from this program who were still teaching and considered leaving “ranked paperwork and accountability pressures high - second and third, respectively,” when discussing issues that would drive them out of education (Tye & O’Brien, 2002, p. 27).

The pressure of accountability systems combined with other demands on teachers make first year induction programs vital to the success of beginning teachers (Cherubini, 2007). Kopkowski (2008) cited several reasons for teachers leaving the profession and one of these reasons was testing and accountability as mandated by federal legislation such as No Child Left

Behind (2001). Administrative data in North Carolina were used to determine the extent to which the state's school-based accountability system intensified the challenges that schools serving low-performing students face in retaining and attracting high-quality teachers. The adverse effects on retention rates and turnover in such schools is profoundly clear (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Diaz, 2004). Teachers are experiencing increased difficulties and demands to improve student performance on state tests are contributing to more dissatisfaction in the profession (Moore, 2012).

Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, and Labat (2015) found when looking at teacher job satisfaction, most teachers agreed that the pressure of high-stakes testing lends itself to burnout in this profession. There is also increasing evidence that the pressure of test-based accountability carries a price on instruction as well as teacher retention (Johnson, 2006.) Efforts to counteract the negative effects of accountability and teaching positions in low-performing schools are costly (Clotfelter et al., 2004). Allen (2002) suggests that measures are needed so that accountability systems do not hold teachers responsible for what it is beyond their ability to influence.

With the emergence of education reform, teachers are held to higher standards and accountability, and student achievement remains at the forefront of educational priorities (Spradlin & Prendergast, 2006). Because of the focus on accountability, school administrators are taking measures to ensure that their schools are meeting growth and expectations in the eyes of stakeholders and policy makers (Farber, 2010). Farber (2010) believes that although a majority of schools are meeting or exceeding expectations in the area of accountability, these expectations come at the expense of teachers' time, health, and commitment to the profession.

Beginning Teacher Preparation

Preservice Preparation

According to Ingersoll and Merrill (2010), many teachers report a lack of preparedness for the realities of teaching. Dove (2004) attributes the quality of teacher preparation programs as a major contributor to teacher retention. Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2014) contend that the aspects of beginning teachers' preservice preparation and experiences are significantly associated with their retention. A study was conducted by Ingersoll et al. (2014) to evaluate the impact that teacher preparation has on retention. This study examined the relationship between beginning teachers' prior education and preparation and whether those teachers were more or less likely to leave teaching after their first year. Focus was placed on new teachers since attrition rates are the highest following the first years of teaching and beginning teachers are at a point in their careers where the effects of their pre-service education and preparation are most influential.

Ingersoll et al. (2014) found that one method of improving teacher retention is to ensure that new teachers receive basic pedagogical preparation. Supporting evidence tends to show higher retention rates for beginning teachers that received formal or comprehensive preservice preparation (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). In 2004, a study was conducted by doctoral students at East Carolina University and the study found that it is evident that teacher preparation has a significant impact on retention (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Haberman (2005) wrote that one of the causes for continuous teacher turnover is the failed system of traditional teacher preparation. According to Jorissen (2002), the level of preparation a teacher undergoes influences their satisfaction with teaching and predictably determines a teacher's decision to stay in or exit the profession. The level of satisfaction that beginning teachers' have with the preservice training they received also has the ability to predict early career attrition (DeAngelis et al., 2013).

Teachers who completed more methods-related coursework and practiced teaching, according to Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014), were better prepared and were more likely to stay in teaching. With the body of research linking students' perceptions of their educational experience with their level of engagement while in the program (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), teacher education programs would be well served to increase student engagement given the association found in this study between perceptions of preparation and retention intentions and decisions (DeAngelis et al., 2013). Ingersoll et al. (2014) noted that research on teacher preparation and retention is inadequate, despite the fact that teacher retention is a growing crisis.

School System Induction

One method of retaining highly qualified teachers is implementing a comprehensive system of beginning teacher induction (Gujarati, 2012). Feiman-Nemser (2001a) suggests that while teacher education programs seek to thoroughly prepare candidates during the preservice phase, it is not until induction that beginning teachers have both the opportunity and ability to take on the key tasks of learning to teach. This is the first occasion that beginning teachers have to turn the theoretical knowledge that they acquired during teacher preparation into practical experiences in the classroom.

Comprehensive induction programs have the ability to benefit beginning teachers as well as teachers with experience (Gujarati, 2012). Induction programs have proven to be valuable in reducing turnover among beginning teachers and being more cost effective than constantly recruiting new teachers to replace teachers who have left (Gujarati, 2012). Research shows that teachers who have not undergone induction programs are twice as likely to leave the profession within the first three years of teaching (Allen, 2005). Teachers who have experienced a thorough

induction program are also able to move beyond issues such as classroom management and maintain a focus on instruction (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

In their review of teacher induction, Wang, Odell, and Schville (2008) found that induction that maintains the collaborative relationships from preservice teacher preparation has positive effects on a teachers' professional career. Induction provides a crucial bridge for beginning teachers between being a student learning about teaching to becoming a professional teacher (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Well-designed induction programs should be viewed as a component of a life-long professional development design with the goal of better preparing teachers for their jobs and making them more confident in their professional skills, which will more than likely aid them in remaining in the profession (Gujarati, 2002). Johnson and Kardos conducted a study in 2002 of effective teacher induction programs, in which beginning teachers reported having inadequate access to solutions and best practices during their first year of teaching. Not having adequate access to resources compromised the quality of teacher's instruction, causing them to question their professional competence and doubt their choice of profession.

Creating a program that combines induction and mentoring with teacher preparation between school districts and universities is suggested by Allen (2002) to be an alternative method of teacher retention. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) explained:

The goal of these support [induction] programs is to improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers, that is, to both enhance and prevent the loss of teachers' human capital, with the ultimate aim of improving the growth and learning of students.

(p. 203)

Induction programs are costly, and research results gathered by DeAngelis et al. (2013) suggest a

targeted approach based on the needs of beginning teachers as opposed to the typical one-size-fits-all approach, which is more cost-effective and beneficial to beginning teachers at least in terms of retaining them in schools and the profession. Research shows that state mandates alone are not sufficient to ensure the development and implementation of high-quality induction support programs at the district and school levels (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010; Youngs, 2007). DeAngelis et al. (2013) found that taking a more targeted approach to mentoring and induction based on the beginning teachers' preparation level may be used to address new teacher attrition. Models suggest that it is more cost-effective to provide teacher induction programs that reduce teacher turnover rather than continue to fund recruitment and hiring initiatives to replace large numbers of departing teachers (Gujarati, 2012).

To be responsive to beginning teachers' development, induction programs should consider the evolving needs of the teacher both in their first years and beyond (Cherubini, 2012). Horn, Sterling, and Subhan (2002) suggest that effective induction programs provide thorough orientation, mentoring, professional development, and opportunities for collaboration. When taking a holistic view at comprehensive induction systems, the long-term benefits and value of these programs outweigh the initial costs. From the capacity-building perspective, these systems have demonstrated the ability to reduce attrition rates, leading to greater retention rates (Gujarati, 2012).

Barriers to Recruitment

Compensation

Eliminating barriers to quality teaching and teacher retention will require a strong commitment on the behalf of policymakers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The significant increase in the demand for classroom teachers over the next decade will further create

recruitment and retention challenges for schools (Hussar, 1999). Compensation is clearly a significant factor in recruiting people to the teaching profession (Allen, 2002). There is empirical research that confirms that compensation significantly affects the decision of teachers to work in a school district (Imazeki, 2005). Various studies have examined the correlation between the amount of time a teacher stays in the profession and compensation, and these studies have found that an increased salary reduces the probability of teachers leaving the profession (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 1999). Since teaching is still largely a regional market, it is important that compensation for beginning teachers in a given state be comparable to that in the other states in the region (Allen, 2002).

Lack of Advancement Opportunities

As a whole, teacher salaries have not increased significantly over time, causing teachers to obtain administrative degrees and leave the classroom in order to receive higher salaries (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). A report issued by the U.S. Department of Education (2002) suggests that a *career ladder* be created for teachers that provide higher salaries to teachers who are exemplary and take on additional responsibilities and leadership roles. Margolis (2008) suggests that additional opportunities for teachers to diversify and undergo professional development in areas that they find useful may aid in teacher retention by enhancing their personal fulfillment. There are few options for teachers to advance their careers aside from leaving the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). According to Streisand, Toch, and Lord (1998), the only career advancement that teachers can hope to attain is school administration, which is an entirely different career.

Teachers seeking career advancement have the opportunity to obtain additional certifications including advanced degrees, add-on licensure and National Board Certification.

However, the advanced degrees and add-on licensure do not allow teachers to receive additional compensation. Prior to 2013, teachers who received a master's degree would receive an additional 10% of their salary as a raise. This provision was eliminated by the North Carolina General Assembly whose contention was that teachers should be paid for performance rather than credentials. Obtaining National Board Certification still allows for classroom teachers to receive an additional 12% in compensation. Although master's degrees and National Board Certification are advancement in credentials, they do not directly lead to career advancement.

Lack of Partnerships

An aspect of teacher recruitment barriers that warrant further research is partnerships between school districts and universities (Hare & Heap, 2001). Balter and Duncombe (2008) suggest that an effective approach to teacher recruitment is to partner with the colleges who produce them. McCreight (2000) suggests that school systems create partnerships with universities as a tool for teacher recruitment and retention and to improve teacher preparation. School districts and universities can build strong partnerships through student teacher placements and having college faculty and school district personnel collaborate on curriculum and pedagogy issues (Balter & Duncombe, 2008). Partnerships between school districts and universities are often cited in professional commission reports as a method of improving the quality of teachers at both levels (McCray, Rosenberg, Brownell, deBettencourt, Leko, & Long, 2011).

Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2004) found that “most public school teachers take their first public school teaching job very close to their hometowns or where they attended college,” (p.117) which suggests that beginning teachers have a preference for remaining close to home and for teaching in familiar environments. According to Clewell, Darke, Davis-Googe, Forcier, and Manes (2000), state programs have a larger geographic authority than local districts

and have a more broad scope for dissemination of successful models. Local school systems would be well suited to collaborate with state programs and universities to forge partnerships to recruit qualified candidates to the profession.

Lack of Respect for the Profession

Henke, Chen, and Geis (2000) found that less than 12% of teachers were very satisfied with the level of esteem that society places on the teaching profession. Teachers often cite the lack of respect from students, parents, administrators and the community as a reason that they have considered leaving the profession. According to Marlow, Inman, and Betancourt-Smith (1996), the level of dissatisfaction with the lack of respect for teachers accounts for nearly two-thirds of teacher departures. Teachers feel that their rank in society is less than the value of their contributions to it (Elam, 1989). Selzer (2000) conducted a study that involved 553 beginning teachers and they identified the lack of respect and support for beginning teachers as the most difficult thing about their jobs.

Hiring Procedures

Darling-Hammond (2001) identified late budget decisions, late hiring decisions and hiring untrained teachers who cost less than qualified and experienced teachers as additional barriers to teacher recruitment. The U.S. Department of Education (2002) identified delayed vacancy postings, untimely responses to applicants, and unorganized interviewing and candidate selection as bureaucratic practices that are barriers to the recruitment of quality teachers. Many large school districts have hiring procedures that are dysfunctional and turn qualified teacher candidates away rather than recruit them (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1999). It is suggested that school districts streamline their hiring processes and evaluate budgets and staffing needs earlier in the academic year in order to recruit qualified teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Lack of Formal Recruitment Plans

Ingersoll (2001) found that schools that have problems with recruiting teachers are more than likely to have problems retaining teachers. Comprehensive recruitment plans should include a retention component that also addresses induction programs and teacher development and the predominant goal of the plan should be ensuring the retention and support of quality teachers (Clewell et al., 2000). A 2005 report from the Alliance of Excellent Education found that states are spending more money replacing teachers who have left the classroom rather than using these funds for retention, induction and support.

Support

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy on Teacher Induction

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy LICN-004 mandates that all local education agencies and charter schools implement an induction process that includes a Beginning Teacher Support Program (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2017). The purpose of beginning teacher support programs is to provide support for new teachers who enter the profession. Beginning teacher support programs are required of all teachers who are in the first three years of teaching and these programs must last for three years. At the end of three years, school districts must certify that beginning teachers have participated in a beginning teacher support program before converting their initial Standard Professional I teaching license to a continuing Standard Professional II license.

The five standards in the Beginning Teacher Support Program policy that assists districts in developing and implementing beginning teacher support programs are: (a) systematic support for high quality induction programs; (b) mentor selection, development, and support; (c) mentoring for instructional excellence; (d) beginning teacher professional development, and (e)

formative assessment of candidates and programs (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2017). The policy also includes five standards for beginning teacher mentors that focus on the knowledge and skills that beginning teachers need and articulates how beginning teacher mentors can help beginning teachers meet these standards. The five mentor standards are: (a) mentors support beginning teachers to demonstrate leadership; (b) mentors support beginning teachers to establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students; (c) mentors support beginning teachers to know the content they teach; (d) mentors support beginning teachers to facilitate learning for their students, and (e) mentors support beginning teachers to reflect on their practice (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2017). All beginning teacher support plans must be aligned to the five beginning teacher support program standards and must demonstrate proficiency when monitored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Craven County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program

Craven County is committed to placing qualified and effective teachers in every classroom across the district. Goals of the beginning teacher support program in Craven County include providing ongoing support so that beginning teachers acquire the skills necessary to promote a commitment to teaching, a commitment to student success and a commitment to remaining in the district. The ongoing support provided will enable beginning teachers to effectively facilitate learning, collaborate with colleagues and create learning environments in which all students are successful.

Every beginning teacher in Craven County is required to participate in the beginning teacher program. The three-year program begins with beginning teachers receiving a formal orientation that includes documentation that the beginning teacher attended an orientation,

documentation that the orientation was held within two weeks of the teacher's first day of work, an overview of district goals, policies, procedures, how to achieve a continuing license, and the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. As a part of the beginning teacher support program, beginning teachers also receive the support of a full-time mentor and undergo formative and summative evaluations by their school administrators and an observation by a selected peer colleague.

Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program assists beginning teachers in collecting and interpreting evidence of effective teaching performance and to reflect on their own teaching. In addition to a district level mentor, each beginning teacher has a school based *buddy teacher* that provides additional support services. A buddy teacher is a teacher who has achieved a Standard Professional II license, has completed a minimum of four years in Craven County and has a minimum rating of proficient in the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System. Proficient is defined as having three of the five standards at the proficient level with standard four, teachers facilitate learning for their students, being rated proficient or better. The Director of Human Resource Services serves as the Beginning Teacher Coordinator and is responsible for the development, implementation, and monitoring of program efforts during the three years of beginning teacher induction.

Beginning Teacher Support Programs

North Carolina defines a beginning teacher as an educator that holds an initial license with fewer than three years of appropriate teaching experience in their initial licensure area (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010). School districts must develop and maintain a board-approved plan to provide comprehensive support to all beginning teachers that provides high quality induction, mentoring, instructional support, professional development and formative

assessment (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2010). According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), teacher mentoring programs and beginning teacher support programs positively impact teacher retention. In the United States, thirty-three states have induction policies; yet, only twenty-two mandate and fund the various induction programs (National Education Association Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 2002). The rationale for providing quality support to teachers during their early years is to further develop the skills that they acquired during preparation and to help them overcome weaknesses that may cause them to abandon the profession (DeAngelis et al., 2013).

Kang and Berliner (2012) found that beginning teacher support programs that included supportive communication, regular collaboration between teachers and common planning time were most commonly practiced and had a positive impact on beginning teacher turnover. Research conducted by Wong, Britton, and Ganser (2005) found that high-quality beginning teacher support programs are highly-structured, have a focus on professional learning and development and allow for collaboration. These two bodies of research imply that education policy makers in districts should foster the development and implementation of support programs that address the needs of beginning teachers and support them with systematic structures. An example of a successful beginning teacher support program is California's Beginning Teachers Support and Assessment Program, which over a five year period successfully reduced teacher attrition rates among participants by two-thirds (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002). According to Ingersoll and Smith (2004), beginning teachers who had no induction and beginning teacher support yielded a 40% turnover at the end of their first year.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also found that teacher mentoring and beginning teacher support programs have a positive impact on teacher retention. The awareness of these programs

working to successfully decrease teacher turnover provides the critical evidence necessary to make sure these programs are maintained. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) were careful to point out what made certain beginning teacher programs work. They were able to identify the need to balance “between induction focused on acquiring pedagogical skill versus that focused on subject-matter content” (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 227). Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, and Fideler (1999) suggest that:

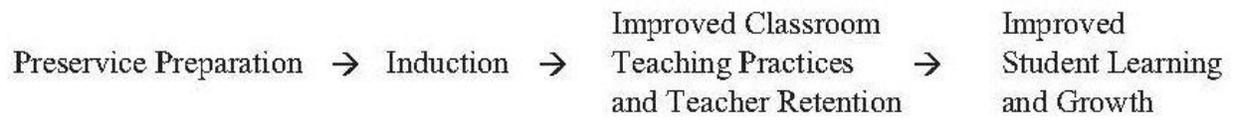
More intensive research regarding teacher recruitment, retention, selection and induction is needed to inform the policymaking process and the development of successful programs during this critical era of growing teacher hiring. (p. 224)

Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000) offer that beginning teacher support programs will improve practice by helping new teachers apply the theoretical knowledge gained in teacher preparation programs to the real-world complexities of teaching, while improving teacher retention rates by enhancing job satisfaction among beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are responsible for completing the same tasks as veteran teachers but their classroom experiences are limited which may cause frustration.

Huling-Austin (1990) believes that in order for beginning teacher support programs to successfully help beginning teachers transition to the classroom, the goals of the programs should be improving teacher performance, increasing beginning teacher retention, promoting the personal and professional well-being of the teacher, meeting mandates and requirements for licensure and imparting the culture of the school district in beginning teachers. Beginning teacher support should be approached as a continuum, starting with personal support, problem-related support and expanding to assist the beginning teacher in developing the capacity to self-reflect on their teaching practice (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Beginning teacher support programs and induction programs will eventually face challenges. Success requires that district administrators and school principals be committed to learning from whatever mistakes occur and identifying the resources and policies necessary to correct problems and improve the program. According to Yopp and Young (1999), the concept of a professionally supported beginning teacher support program creates recognition of the level of difficulty and complexity associated with becoming a teacher, causing a positive career entry for all. A key to addressing teacher shortages and turnover lies not only in attractive recruitment policies and programs, but in support and training for beginning teachers in schools (Curran & Goldrick, 2002).

Researchers have often cited the challenges that beginning or early career teacher's face and have pointed out that teaching traditionally has not had the level of support and orientation for new teachers as other occupations have (Lortie, 1975). Teaching is mainly done in isolation away from other colleagues and this can be difficult to teachers new to the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). This isolation has led to the creation of such phrases as *lost at sea* and *sink or swim* (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Combining isolation with the challenging situations that some beginning teachers are placed in leads to teacher turnover, especially in the first years of work (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), the *revolving door*, and the lack of administrative support are the types of issues that effective support programs seek to address. Beginning teacher support programs should be designed to improve teacher performance and beginning teacher retention or "prevent the loss of teachers' human capital, with the ultimate aim of improving the growth and learning of students" (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 203). Figure 5 illustrates this theory of teacher development.



Note. Adapted from Ingersoll & Strong, 2011.

Figure 5. Theory of teacher development.

According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), underlying this theory is Zey's (1984) mutual benefits model, which is based on the principle that individuals enter in and remain a part of a relationship in order to meet certain needs as long as the parties continue to benefit.

While the primary goal of beginning teacher support programs is to improve the performance and retention of beginning teachers, some programs include an emphasis on socialization, adjustment, development and assessment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) assert that with the growth of beginning teacher support programs, there has been an interest in conducting empirical research on the value of these programs to determine their scope and quality. Some of the existing research has focused on theory, rationale, conceptualization of induction programs and teachers' experiences in induction, while others have focused on the character of induction reforms and initiatives. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) sought to provide educators and policymakers with reliable data regarding the effectiveness of beginning teacher support programs by reviewing fifteen studies on beginning teacher support programs. Their review is organized in three sections including commitment and retention, the classroom practices of beginning teachers' and student achievement.

Impact of Beginning Teacher Support Programs on Retention

Across their review of beginning teacher support program studies, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found in the literature that beginning or early career teachers who participated in beginning teacher support programs experienced increased job satisfaction, commitment to the profession and higher rates of retention. Furthermore, they found that induction support activities and practices seldom occur in isolation and the majority of beginning teachers who received support received multiple types of support. As the number of components in the beginning teacher support programs evaluated increased, the probability of teacher turnover decreased and

the likelihood that beginning teachers would leave the profession after their first year was less than half that of teachers who did not participate in a beginning teacher support program (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In reviewing a study conducted by Henke, Chen, and Geis (2000), Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that the attrition rate of 15% was significantly lower for teachers who participated in a beginning teacher support program rather than the 26% attrition rate for beginning teachers who did not participate in a beginning teacher support program.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a critical aspect in a beginning teacher's development (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Regardless of beginning teacher support programs being a state or federal mandate or not, an experienced mentor can bridge the gap in helping beginning teachers refine their practice. Gold (1996) presents research that shows that structured mentor programs are highly effective in aiding in the transition from teacher preparation programs to the classroom environment. During this time a beginning teacher is in danger of becoming overwhelmed and frustrated and a mentor can be of great assistance. DeAngelis, Wall, and Che (2013) conducted a study and determined the quality and comprehensiveness of mentoring and induction to be related to teachers' intentions and decisions to remain in the profession. Research has concluded that mentoring increases retention rates among novice teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).

Feiman-Nemser (1998, 2001b) first used the term *educative mentoring* to distinguish the mentoring of novice teachers from the traditional supervisory approach. Educative mentoring is based on theories of learning that depict the learner as an active participant in the learning process. Beginning teachers need the support, advice, and guidance that experienced mentors can

provide (Gujarati, 2012). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found that providing teachers with mentors, especially those teachers who are new to the profession, as a solution to retaining teachers.

Having support and effective mentoring from veteran teachers is critical to beginning teachers' success and their intent to remain in the teaching profession (Scherer, 2012). According to the Alliance for Excellence in Education (2005), mentors are an important factor in providing support for beginning teachers as they enter the real world of the classroom. Experienced teachers who are not formally identified as mentors also have a vital role in mentoring and supporting new teachers. These teachers are able to assist new teachers in developing lessons, classroom management procedures, creating a climate of learning for all students and demonstrating how to create a positive rapport with stakeholders. Quinn (2005) contends that the more support that is provided to new teachers the more likely they are to remain in the profession. Mentoring beginning teachers is a system that has the potential to advance the teaching profession overall (Coronado, 2009).

A 2011 study conducted by Sandoval-Lucero, Shanklin, Sobel, Townsend, Davis, and Kalisher found that school administrators should create an environment within their buildings in which beginning teachers can receive quality mentoring. These environments ensure that beginning teachers receive the support they need, become more confident with their work and become more likely to remain in the profession. Given the high attrition rates of teachers during their first few years, there have been increased efforts by policy makers over the past two decades to provide mentoring and other induction support for beginning teachers (DeAngelis et al., 2013).

Trained and qualified mentors are essential to the success of beginning teacher support programs (Gujarati, 2012). Mentors must be supportive, attentive listeners, non-judgmental, and

open to the teaching style practiced by beginning teachers, even when it is different than their own (Johnson, 2002). According to Daresh (2001), mentoring programs that have an evaluative component and judgmental consequences are detrimental to building trust and confidentiality between the beginning teacher and their mentor. Beginning teachers should feel that their mentors' role is more about support and professional growth rather than evaluation or performance measurement.

Existing literature about the mentor and teacher retention relationship treats teachers that leave the profession as a homogeneous group that assumes that these teachers are products of the same social conditions (Kang, 2011). Taking into consideration the mentoring and induction activities received, teachers who were provided more comprehensive support were significantly less likely to intend to move or leave than teachers who had no support or received less comprehensive support (DeAngelis et al., 2013). States are increasingly recognizing the value of mentoring programs for giving new teachers the additional support they need as they begin their teaching careers (Allen, 2002).

Administrative Support

Principals have an important role in improving teacher retention by providing support to their staff in environmental, instructional, technical and emotional areas (Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly, 2014). In 2005, the Education Commission of the States reviewed 91 studies on teacher recruitment and a part of their research found that schools with strong administrative support and teacher autonomy have lower teacher turnover (Allen, 2005). The absence of administrative support has been cited as one of the primary reasons that teachers leave the profession, even over salary and job conditions (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002). Principals need to consider how their actions and practices set the tone and climate of the school; they are the

key developers of the culture in the school. According to Brown and Wynn (2007), lower levels of teacher attrition have consistently been found in schools with more administrative support for teachers. Hirsch, Emerick, Church, and Fuller (2005) found the greatest variations resided in leadership and empowerment when comparing schools with high turnover and low turnover.

Further, Donaldson and Johnson (2011) conducted a study of Teach for America Teachers and found that nearly one-tenth of the teachers cited poor administrative leadership at their school as the reason that they left teaching. Hope (1999) described the teacher-principal relationship as critical to teachers remaining in the profession. He further suggests that although principals may have open-door policies, this alone is not sufficient for a new teacher to feel comfortable walking in the principal's office to discuss challenges that they may have. Reinhartz and Beach (2004) contend that recruiting and keeping faculty is directly related to the principal's ability to manage faculty in order to maximize the school's ability to foster student achievement. Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, and Labat (2015) conducted a study and when asked what factors contributed most to teacher turnover, one reason reported by teachers was the lack of administrative support. This study further found that principal leadership had the strongest bearing on whether teachers would remain in the teaching profession.

When new teachers enter the teaching profession, they may walk into a classroom with little or no support from colleagues or administration, and the key to beginning teacher support begins with the principal (Flynt & Morton, 2009). Kopkowski (2008) found several reasons for teachers leaving the profession and little support from administration was among the reasons. Brock (1999) explains that administrators need to nurture and help their teachers develop and assist with the transition from teacher education programs into the culture of the school if they intend for quality teachers to remain in their buildings.

In a 2015 study, Thibodeaux et al. distributed 501 surveys to public school K-12 teachers with a return rate of 42.3%. This study found that principal leadership plays a critical role in the retention of teachers, and suggests that principals should be aware of how their leadership style and behaviors impact the teachers that they lead. Brock and Grady (1998) contend that the principal is a crucial component in the initial experience of new teachers. They further found that principals are fundamental to the successful socialization and induction of teachers. Darling-Hammond (2003) also stated that teachers' feelings about administrative support, resources for teaching, and teacher input into decision making are strongly related to their plans to stay in the profession and to their reasons for leaving.

Leadership and support from principals may increase retention if implemented consistently and may prove vital to teachers who are in leadership roles. Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) found that schools that provided teachers with more independence and administrative support had lower levels of teacher turnover and transfer of teachers between schools. Tillman (2005) argued persuasively that the principal is uniquely placed to be a catalyst for successful teacher retention in a hard-to-staff school. While principals have multiple things that they are responsible for in a given day, the initial investment and time spent on building relationships with beginning teachers will aid in the dreadful statistics of teacher turnover. Principals are key to influencing working conditions by improving the school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1999). By visiting teachers' classrooms frequently, providing constructive feedback and asking beginning teachers for input, the principal can diminish barriers that may exist and demonstrate their interest in assisting beginning teachers.

Application of the Research Literature to the Problem of Practice

As teacher turnover continues to climb, the Craven County School district is faced with a crisis that must be averted in order to maintain the viability and integrity of the district. Public education as a whole in the state of North Carolina is in a state of flux and any factors within the control of school districts that interfere with teacher retention must be mitigated. This study will investigate the areas of concern examined in the literature review and focus will also be placed on any other areas that may be identified by the Teacher Retention Committee.

According to Merrow (1999), the problem in schools is being misdiagnosed as recruitment when it is really retention. Ingersoll (2001) contends that recruitment will not solve school staffing problems without addressing the issue of teacher retention. The solution to staffing is not increasing the supply of teachers, but rather in decreasing an excessive demand for teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). The analysis offered by Ingersoll contends that recruiting more teachers will not solve staffing insufficiencies if these teachers enter a school system and then leave shortly thereafter.

This improvement study intends to isolate specific causes of teacher turnover in Craven County Schools and identify and implement strategies that will improve teacher retention. The strategies will be implemented on a small scale in one school and district-wide implementation will be based upon the success of the measures implemented in the selected school. This improvement study may reveal changes that can be made to Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program that will best meet the needs of teachers and cause district and school administration to make positive and critical policy changes that impact administrative support, collegial relationships, teacher working conditions and mentoring services, leading to increased teacher retention.

Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) contend that teachers learn by collaborating with other teachers. Collegial relationships between teachers are as essential to the retention of beginning teachers as other support measures. Beginning teachers gain a degree of increased pedagogy from strong professional associations, which increases a new teacher's sense of belonging in their school. Furthermore, research conducted by Johnson (2006), Quian, Youngs, and Frank (2013), Kardos and Johnson (2007), Fatima (2012) and Little (1982) all identify the strong correlation between collegiality, teacher performance and student achievement. The success of students will lessen burdensome pressures that may cause a new teacher to become dissatisfied with their work and consider leaving the profession. An atmosphere of support and collaborative relationships between teachers improves retention. This study will focus on improving methods and opportunities for beginning teachers to form meaningful relationships with their colleagues in order to positively impact early career teacher retention.

Working conditions include many factors present in school systems. Research by Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that working conditions are significant when teachers are deciding to leave or stay in the profession. School districts that have conditions that are less than ideal will continue to face the challenge of increased teacher attrition. While the problems associated with what students bring into the classroom may take more substantial work to overcome, principals can create cultures and working conditions in schools that allow teachers to thrive and develop innovative processes to meet their students' needs. Johnson (2006) concurs that working conditions have a large impact on retaining teachers. Methods put in place to attract teachers will not impact the retention rate unless the climate and working conditions in the school are appealing. As this study progresses, working conditions in the selected school will be evaluated for the impact that they have on retention of the teachers in the school. Improvements

that may better working conditions will be identified, implemented and processed through a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle until a degree of success is achieved.

Teacher pay is the factor most commonly considered when addressing teacher retention. Allen (2005) supports the conclusion that salaries are among the most significant issues relating to teacher turnover and that higher salaries will reduce the number of teachers that leave the classroom. While higher salaries may not motivate all teachers, teachers consider salary when they are contemplating whether to leave or stay in the profession. This study may not move decision makers to increase teacher salaries, but it is hoped that it will create a dialogue and lead to the development of effective measures to improve teacher retention.

As stakeholders continue to demand accountability, it is highly unlikely that its associated challenges will be removed from the school setting in the near future. Kohn (2000) found that levels of attrition are higher among beginning teachers because of the pressures of high-stakes testing and other accountability measures. These systems not only monitor student achievement, but now focus on the effectiveness of teachers and their teaching license and continued employment are contingent upon an acceptable level of performance from both. The effects of increased accountability measures may continue to negatively impact teacher retention. While the impact of increased accountability measures on teacher retention may be beyond the scope of this study, measures to assist beginning teachers with this aspect of employment may be built into the Beginning Teacher Support Program that will support beginning teachers as they strive to meet accountability requirements.

Existing literature on the effects of preservice preparation on teacher retention is somewhat limited. As research for this problem of practice was conducted, the work of Ingersoll, Merrill and May (2014) best summarized the connection between preservice

preparation and teacher retention by stating, “Differences in education and preparation were significantly related to the degree to which teachers leave teaching” (p. 29). The skills, experience and theoretical knowledge that teachers receive during their preservice preparation correlates to their ability to cope with the challenges of being a beginning or early career teacher. Allen (2002) found that aspiring teachers should have the maximum amount of practical experience in order to be fully prepared for what they will encounter in classrooms. The lack of preparedness and the challenges that beginning teachers face in schools combine to cause them to leave the profession shortly after beginning their careers. An early career teacher that has received a comprehensive preservice preparation is more likely to remain in the profession than a teacher who has not. Literature on preservice preparation identifies the vital role of identifying and eliminating the factors that contribute to beginning teacher attrition, yet it provides no guidance on isolating these factors. While this study will not impact preservice preparation at the collegiate level, it may lead to the development and implementation of strategies at the district level that coincide with Craven County Schools’ three-day new teacher orientation, which launches the beginning of its teacher induction program.

School system induction is another component of teacher preparation that positively impacts beginning teacher retention. Gujarati (2012) found that school systems need to implement comprehensive induction in order to retain teachers. The induction provided by the school district fills the gap between preservice preparation and the classroom, and exposes the new teacher to the realities of the classroom environment. School systems should approach beginning teacher induction as a system of professional development that supports new teachers, reduces their uncertainty and increases the opportunities for teachers to achieve success and satisfaction. The induction in Craven County Schools typically lasts for three years and all

beginning teachers have district-based mentors that work closely with them throughout the induction and the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Imazeki (2005) best summarizes the position of compensation impacting retention by stating, “Higher salary levels, both for beginning and experienced teachers, are associated with lower attrition” (p. 438). The increased risk of exit attrition occurs because there are few opportunities for higher wages within the profession of teaching. Thus, teachers who would normally migrate to another district or another school leave the classroom for non-teaching positions. It may prove beneficial to compensate teachers who obtain additional certifications and master’s degrees to better serve their students. Obtaining an administrative degree and leaving the classroom should not be the only way for teachers to earn higher wages. While the state of North Carolina has sought to increase teacher wages in recent years, they are still below national averages and these salary increases have only been targeted toward certain groups on the teacher pay scale. Higher salaries will most certainly assist in attracting teachers to the profession, but it will take adequate support services and programs directed at meeting the needs to teachers to retain them.

Establishing partnerships with universities and community colleges may prove to be a useful tool in recruiting prospective candidates to the profession. In conjunction with recruitment, these partnerships can create comprehensive avenues for the support of prospective and beginning teachers. School systems are limited in the funding that they have for beginning teacher support, but combining their resources with those of another institution may dramatically improve the reach of support programs. Partnerships may be able to offer loan forgiveness, signing bonuses and early placement of teachers who are near completion of teacher preparation programs. Allen (2002) contends that offering loan forgiveness to teachers in exchange for their

service is an effective recruitment tool. Established partnerships may also be a source of continuing professional development and growth opportunities for teachers in a school system. Craven County has an educational foundation that may prove vital in securing additional funding to offer loan forgiveness and signing bonuses to teachers that will commit to staying in the district for a certain amount of time, and this study will further examine this as a retention tool.

The lack of respect for the profession of education, complicated hiring procedures and the lack of formal recruitment plans are additional barriers to retaining teachers. Until the perception of education and teachers in classrooms improve in the public eye, teachers will continue to struggle with maltreatment from stakeholders, leading to dissatisfaction and turnover. School administration has a vital role in building the esteem of teachers in schools and in the community and this negative aspect of education may be easily mitigated. As school systems seek to employ qualified teachers to fill vacancies, processes in place to on-board these individuals should not be cumbersome and filled with limited communication. It is a common occurrence to lose teachers to other districts or schools because hiring officials have failed to notify prospective teachers of the status of their hiring. Failing to plan for imminent vacancies and not advertising these vacancies in a timely manner will leave districts to hire prospective teachers that are left after the most sought after candidates have already secured employment elsewhere. Teachers hired under these conditions may either leave the district with pressure from administration or because they are not committed to remaining in the profession. Without formal recruitment plans, districts will have no strategy or direction to take in filling vacancies. Instead, candidates will be hired haphazardly and may not be a best fit for the school system. Randomly hiring candidates to fill classrooms may be a reason that the teachers being hired do not remain in the profession. When teachers are being recruited from other states, they may only stay long enough to gain experience

in order to obtain master's degrees or to enter the teaching profession in their home states. Teachers that are being recruited and hired without the consideration of a formal recruitment plan may also have an impact on who is actually staying in the profession. This study will examine the recruitment program that is in place in Craven County and suggest improvements in hopes of recruiting candidates that are committed to remaining in the district.

The literature identifies mentoring as a vital aspect in supporting beginning teacher retention. While mentorship is only a part of school system induction, Gujurati (2012) found that mentoring is a *crucial component* of induction programs (p. 219). Mentoring is a significant factor in increasing feelings of job satisfaction among beginning teachers which in turn causes increased retention rates. Mentoring also increases beginning teacher retention by offering guidance, advice and support to beginning or early career teachers. Aside from formally identified mentors, other veteran teachers have a prominent role in assisting beginning teachers with becoming more confident in their work and reducing frustrations that may cause them to leave teaching. It was found that teachers who were provided widespread support from mentors were more likely to remain in the profession than those who received no support. States across the country are beginning to recognize the value of mentors in supporting beginning teachers. Mentor programs and beginning teacher support programs, such as the one in Craven County Schools, have positive impacts on teacher retention. It appears that the reason behind the development and implementation of these programs is to further develop the skills of beginning teachers that may cause them to remain in the profession. In order to be most effective these programs should be highly-structured and focus on helping beginning teachers transition to the classroom and apply the theoretical knowledge gained in preservice preparation to the classroom environment. Successful teacher support programs include components that offer personal

support to new teachers and cause the development of their capacity to reflect on their teaching practice leading to professional growth and satisfaction with their career, thereby reducing turnover among these teachers. This study will examine the current role of the beginning teacher mentors in Craven County Schools and seeks to improve the work that they do based upon data that will be gathered as the study progresses.

The support of school administration is one of the primary reasons identified in the literature that causes beginning teachers satisfaction and reduces beginning teacher attrition. The principal of a school is pivotal in supporting beginning teachers and support begins with the principal. Principals have the capability of nurturing beginning teachers and getting them acclimated to school culture. School administrators must carefully consider their leadership style and how they form relationships with beginning teachers so that administrative feedback is received in a positive manner, while increasing the development of beginning teachers if they intend for these teachers to stay in their schools. As this study progresses, the Teacher Retention Committee will work closely with the principal of the selected school to identify and improve the administrative support being provided to beginning teachers in the building.

CHAPTER 3: APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Improvement Science

Based upon operational research in the 1930s, improvement science grew in the healthcare industry in the 1990s and has since spread in many other fields including education (Lewis, 2015). The term *science of improvement* emerged after the 1996 publication of *The Improvement Guide* by Gerald Langley and his colleagues (Perla, Provost, & Parry, 2013). Because improvement science provides a structure for learning how systems produce results, it allows those seeking improvement to understand the function of their system by implementing and testing changes in their current processes (Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, & Provost, 2009). Improvement science can be utilized in an organization on various levels. The process can be used to address problems and make changes in one department or across an entire organization. Improvement science provides a framework for data-driven inquiry while incorporating change in complex systems, it is hopeful that this method of facilitating meaningful feedback routines will help beginning or early career teachers develop, improve and remain in the profession (Hannan, Russell, Takahashi, & Park, 2015). According to Archbald (2014), addressing *ill-structured* problems that are complex with many unknown causes may not lead to a solution. According to Cochran-Smith (2004), teacher retention is a complex subject. Problems such as teacher retention have “uncertain causes and lacks ready solutions” (Archbald, 2014). Langley et al. (2009) notes that, “Not all changes lead to improvement, but all improvement requires change” (p. 357).

Foundation of Improvement Science

In his *System of Profound Knowledge*, W. Edwards Deming provided a theoretical foundation for the practice of Improvement Science (Langley et al., 2009). There are approaches

to quality improvement built on components of knowledge in Deming’s framework that have been developed in industries throughout the world (Langley et al., 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). Having an understanding of how these four areas correlate with one another may assist leaders in organizations to identify, approach, act and improve problems. Knowledge of systems denotes having an understanding of systems as “an interdependent group of items, people, or processes working together toward a common purpose” (Langley et al., 2009, p. 77). Langley et al. (2009), notes “Considering interdependence will also increase the accuracy of our predictions about the impact of changes throughout the system,” which is the goal of improvement science (p. 78). The model has three fundamental questions that drive improvement and the Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycle, which starts with a plan and ends with action based on what was learned during the PDSA cycle (Langley et al., 2009). The fundamental principles of improvement are knowing why the improvement is needed, having methods to obtain feedback to tell you if improvement is occurring, developing a change that may result in improvement, testing the change before any implementation attempts are made, and finally implementing the change (Langley et al., 2009).

Appreciation of Systems

There are numerous systems in place in the Craven County School District. In fact, there is a board policy in the district that identifies a *Systems Perspective* as a core value that addresses the Continuous Improvement Approach as the process for managing the district and its processes in order to achieve results (Craven County Schools Board Policy #1100 – Governing Principles, 2016). Systems within the Craven County School District meet the definition of a system as provided by Langley et al. (2009) at the district and school levels. The various systems are all

working toward specifically identified goals, which are aligned to the objectives of the school district. While schools function as individual systems, they are still interdependent and improving one system in the district will prove to have beneficial effects across the entire school district. Improving beginning or early career teacher retention in Craven County Schools may cause improvement to other systems in the district.

Improvement Science as a Model for Improvement

In this study, I will seek input from stakeholders through meetings with beginning teachers, surveys, and the formation of a committee that focuses on the continuous improvement of specific systems in the district. For the purposes of this study and in my role as the Director of Human Resources and Beginning Teacher Coordinator, I will lead the Teacher Retention Committee that will be formed to focus on beginning or early career teacher retention using Improvement Science. The composition of this group will allow representation from all grade levels, which will account for the various teaching environments within the district. The committee will work to answer 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 from the perspective 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 Teacher Retention Committee will use a *targeted approach* as referenced by DeAngelis et al. (2013), to identify and meet the needs of beginning teachers and improve the current teacher induction program in Craven County. The targeted approach addresses mentoring, induction and support for beginning or early career teachers based on their level of

preparation rather than using the more common one-size-fits-all approach (DeAngelis et al., 2013). A targeted approach may prove to be more cost-effective for the district, as components of the induction are designed to match specific needs of the beginning teachers. Identifying these needs will require the Teacher Retention Committee to spend time with the beginning teachers in the selected school to determine their needs and if the existing beginning teacher support program is fully capable of meeting these needs. An unfocused mentoring approach is not the most effective design to use in supporting beginning teachers and decreasing teacher retention. One-size-fits-all programs place beginning teachers in survival mode rather than allowing them to develop. Once goals and strategies are identified by the targeted approach, an implementation plan will be developed by the Teacher Retention Committee.

The Teacher Retention Committee will collect, analyze and interpret the district exit survey data and the data from the Beginning Teacher Support Program exit data to inform the creation of the improvement strategy. In working to identify teacher turnover reasons that may be mitigated, the committee may utilize measures to group data by association including affinity diagrams and fish bone diagrams to identify cause and effect. The use of these methods of organization will allow the committee to organize the information gathered on teacher turnover while developing the improvement strategies. The literature review from this document will be reviewed with the committee so that they are informed on the various aspects of teacher retention. Dialogue will be held to discuss the literature and how it relates to Craven County Schools so that any parallels may be identified in the existing practices of the district. After data collection, information will be organized utilizing one of the methods shared above and the PDSA cycle will then be initiated. The strategies that have been developed will be implemented

in the selected school in attempt to evaluate the effectiveness prior to determining if the improvement strategies will be utilized district-wide.

Expert Panel

The Teacher Retention Committee will be composed of a fifth grade elementary school lateral entry teacher with a non-traditional background, who is a former Teacher of the Year. This teacher has a bachelor's degree in a non-related area from the University of Mount Olive and is currently completing alternative certification with East Carolina University. The second teacher on the committee is a first grade elementary school teacher with a master's degree from East Carolina University and has National Board Certification. The third teacher on the committee is an elementary Exceptional Children's teacher who graduated from East Carolina University and has obtained add-on licensure from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. The fourth teacher on the committee is a Title I Math Intervention Specialist for grades three to five who graduated from East Carolina University and has National Board Certification. The fifth teacher on the committee is a fifth grade elementary school teacher who is a former school administrator with a master's degree and has taught in multiple school levels. The sixth teacher on the committee is a first grade elementary school teacher with a master's degree from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University.

The Teacher Retention Committee will also include the principal of the selected school to account for the multiple teaching environments within the school. The principal has a master's degree from Salem University, has taught in four states, held licensure in three states and been in school administration since 2013. Two beginning teacher mentors will also serve on the Teacher Retention Committee. One beginning teacher mentor taught both middle and high school and serves as a mentor at both levels. This mentor has a master's degree from East Carolina

University and has National Board Certification. The second beginning teacher mentor taught middle school, serves as a mentor for middle school beginning teachers. This mentor has a bachelor's degree from East Carolina University and is a North Carolina Teaching Fellow. As the Director of Human Resources, Beginning Teacher Coordinator and the researcher for this problem of practice dissertation, I will also serve on the Teacher Retention Committee. The Teacher Retention Committee is composed of individuals with a variety of backgrounds. Multiple degree types, levels of education and university alumni are represented on the committee. Individuals on the committee represent a broad spectrum of grade levels and certifications and an individual from an underrepresented population is also included. This will constitute an expert panel. The function of the expert panel will be to provide feedback on strategies provided in the review of the literature. The panel will provide feedback on the effectiveness of these strategies.

Plan-Do-Study-Act

The implementation of a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle combined with specific strategies in order to improve early career or beginning teacher retention is the foundation upon which this study is built. The PDSA cycle will be utilized in four Plan-Do-Study-Act phases. During the *Plan* phase, the committee will develop the objectives, questions and attempt to predict outcomes and committee members will be given their specific roles in this process. Plans for the cycle will be developed and the data collection instrumentation will also be designed. The *Do* phase of the study is where the committee will begin to take action and implement the improvement strategies. Problems and challenges will be documented and the analysis of data will begin. If changes are necessary, they will be documented for analysis at the end of the study. The *Study* phase of this project will include the analysis of data, the comparison of the data to earlier

predictions and the evaluation of effectiveness. It is hopeful that the implemented strategies will begin to reveal positive changes in this phase of the cycle. The *Act* phase of the study will allow the team to determine what modifications need to be made to the improvement strategies and allow the committee to determine how the next full PDSA cycle will be implemented.

Measure of Improvement

The goal of this study is to improve teacher retention by reducing the teacher turnover rate to 10% by 2018. The measure of improvement that is attained will be measured by the Director of Human Resources prior to the completion of the 2018 Teacher Turnover Report for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. With teacher retention data being collected from March of the previous year to March of the current year, this study will focus efforts in an isolated setting during the 2017-2018 academic year. The committee will focus on teacher retention in one school for this small-scale proof of concept and the retention data that is used for this study will be based on the number of teachers who leave the profession from this chosen school prior to March 2018. Data will include teachers who transfer to other schools within the district, as well as those who leave the district for any reason. Turnover data will be separated into categories and reported in a manner that accounts for teachers who leave the district due to military transfers or other unavoidable reasons and to account for teachers who leave the district for the lack of adequate performance or in lieu of termination. The committee will then evaluate the measures that were implemented to determine their effectiveness and develop any modifications needed to progress the study forward. All relevant information will be shared and discussed with the school principal and the Superintendent for consideration in implementation across the district.

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction to the Problem

The teacher turnover rate for Craven County Schools has continued to increase over the past five years. Since 2011, the teacher turnover rate has risen from 12% to 16%, and was as high as 18% in 2015. As evidenced by the Beginning Teacher Turnover Report (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2015), many of the beginning teachers remained in the district their first three years of teaching and left shortly thereafter for various reasons. The beginning teacher induction program in Craven County Schools has recently been modified and made more comprehensive with the addition of two full-time beginning teacher mentors. The intent of this modification was to provide more hands-on support for beginning teachers and have additional personnel to direct them toward beneficial resources. Due to the large numbers of beginning teachers served by the Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program, services have been tiered so that first-year beginning teachers receive more services and support than second-year and third-year teachers. This modification has not been as successful as was initially thought and will be addressed in this study. The object of the improvements to the Craven County Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program and overarching purpose of this problem of practice dissertation will be to reduce the growing teacher turnover rate in Craven County.

The focus of the Teacher Retention Committee was to work to improve teacher retention and enhance the Beginning Teacher Support Program in the district through a small-scale proof of concept study in a rural elementary school in the district. The work of the committee centered on the principles of Improvement Science and 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 from the perspective 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). Through face-to-face meetings with the Teacher Retention Committee, face-to-face meetings with beginning teachers, and surveys, specific reasons for teacher turnover were identified and the committee began to identify specific strategies to implement in the school to cause improvement in the teacher retention.

The strategies that were developed by the Teacher Retention Committee were processed through the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle. During the *plan* phase, the committee discussed the background of teacher retention and turnover in the district, discussed items in the district that impact teacher retention, outlined the timeline for gathering data and working with beginning teachers during the study and developed possible strategies to implement that may increase teacher retention. During the *do* phase, which is the phase of action, the strategies that were developed were discussed in depth and a plan for implementation was developed and put into action in a small-scale proof of concept. Problems that surfaced were documented and solutions to these problems were sought. During the *study* phase, data was gathered by the Teacher Retention Committee and the beginning teachers involved in the study. The team implemented the strategies for improvement, observed and documented problems, and worked to develop solutions to problems. During the *act* phase, the implementation of the revised strategies continued. Finally, during the *act* phase, the committee determined if final changes needed to be made to the retention strategies and also determined the next cycle of implementation (Langley et al., 2009). The overall goal of implementing these five strategies is to improve teacher retention in the small-scale proof of concept.

The measure of improvement that was identified earlier in the study is to reduce the teacher turnover in the school to 10% by 2018, which will equate to no more than five teachers leaving the school. The Teacher Retention Committee came to a consensus that reducing the school turnover to 10% was attainable. It was also decided that if the newly developed strategies that are implemented in the school prove to be successful, they would be implemented district-wide and changes would be made to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and the Beginning Teacher Support Program that include the new strategies (see Appendix B).

While discussing the teacher turnover in the district, historical turnover data for the district was discussed. The data was presented so that the committee had a better understanding of the increase in teacher turnover in recent years and to ensure that the strategies that were being developed would be aimed at mitigating and reducing turnover, thereby increasing teacher retention. The data that was reviewed included 2011 through 2016 (see Appendix C). Committee members discussed potential causes of turnover for the years presented and had serious concerns about the large increase in turnover between the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 academic years, where turnover increased from 12% to 16% and 16% to 17%, respectively. It was also shared with the committee that the turnover in Craven County was among the highest in the region and it also ranked above the state average during this time period.

Plan – Do – Study – Act Strategies

The committee used the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to implement the improvement strategies in the small-scale proof of concept. Strategies were identified and were implemented, necessary changes were made to the strategies and then implemented again. After analyzing data that was provided by the teachers in the study including areas that impact beginning teacher retention, solutions that may improve beginning teacher retention (see

Appendix D), and teacher retention research in the literature, the committee decided to implement five strategies that focused on (a) extending support of beginning teachers, (b) adding support for specialized beginning teachers, (c) enhancing in-school support for beginning teachers, (d) increasing beginning teacher mentors district-wide, and (e) scheduled support meetings for beginning teachers (see Appendix E).

Strategy 1: Mentor Beginning Teachers through Years Four to Six

The beginning teachers in the study (see Appendix I) and the Teacher Retention Committee talked extensively about beginning teachers being served by beginning teacher mentors beyond their first three years of teaching, which is mandated by the state of North Carolina. The beginning teachers in the study felt as if they were just beginning to establish themselves in the classroom and in their career when they exit the Beginning Teacher Support Program and no longer receive mentor services. These beginning teachers also felt that they do not receive a lot of additional support past this point.

Establishing an extension of the existing Beginning Teacher Support Program to support teachers in years four to six will require a major revision to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and the hiring of additional beginning teacher mentors. The Beginning Teacher Support Plan will have to be structured so that teachers in years one to three and years four to six receive services based upon where they are in their career and based on their specific needs. District data will be used to identify the number of teachers in years one to three and four to six in order to determine an appropriate caseload and the number of additional mentors that will be needed. Currently, the mentors in the district are paid using Title I and Title II funds, and the Title I and Title II plans that are submitted to the state for approval will need to be modified for the 2018 academic year to account for the additional beginning teacher mentors.

Strategy 2: Employ an Experienced Exceptional Children’s Teacher as a Beginning Teacher Mentor

During the course of this study, the beginning teachers that the committee worked with expressed a strong need to have a district beginning teacher mentor with extensive experience as an Exceptional Children’s teacher. Beginning teachers often struggle with Individualized Education Plans, Individualized Education Plan meetings, and the paperwork and modifications needed to teach students with exceptional needs. The beginning teacher mentor that is being proposed to serve the needs of beginning Exceptional Children teachers will have a caseload of mainstream or non-Exceptional Children teachers, but the majority of their work will be dedicated to beginning teachers who work in this area and to mainstream teachers who may be facing difficulties in handling paperwork or meetings associated with these students. This mentor would have regular communication and contact with the Exceptional Children’s Department in order to stay abreast of specialized trainings for teachers and to be informed about any beginning teachers that may be having difficulties in their classrooms. It is believed that this beginning teacher mentor will spend the majority of their time assisting beginning Exceptional Children teachers with non-instructional responsibilities and the professionalism isolation that these teachers face.

Strategy 3: Assign Buddy Teachers in the Same Subject Area as the Beginning Teacher

Buddy teachers are assigned to all beginning teachers by their school administrator and serve by assisting beginning teachers with the day to day roles and functions that the district beginning teacher mentors are not on campus to fill. Historically, the buddy teachers have assisted beginning teachers with school specific processes and procedures, grade level specific information, help with parent conferences, strategies for struggling students and daily support

and encouragement. These services parallel what the district beginning teacher mentors provide, but due to the limited number of beginning teacher mentors, each mentor has a caseload of approximately sixty beginning teachers, causing the buddy teacher in the school to have to fill in gaps in services as necessary. It has also been the case that any veteran teacher, regardless of the subject or grade level taught, would serve in the role as a buddy teacher. Having a buddy teacher in another grade level or subject area creates a disconnect because the buddy teacher may not understand the specifics of the beginning teacher's classroom and the beginning teacher or the buddy teacher may teach a resource subject such as art, music or physical education. By assigning buddy teachers in the same subject area or the same grade level, beginning teachers will have another avenue of support and someone within their building that is available to assist them that understands the specific requirements of their classroom and what is needed.

Strategy 4: Employ Additional Beginning Teacher Mentors

As mentioned in the previous strategy, the district beginning teacher mentors each have an extensive caseload of teachers. In attempt to reduce the number of beginning teachers that each mentor serves and increase the amount of time and support services that they are able to provide to each beginning teacher, additional district beginning teacher mentors need to be hired by the district. Because of the belief that quality mentors contribute to the success of beginning teachers by providing instructional, emotional and organizational support, every beginning teacher must be assigned a qualified and trained mentor as soon as they are employed. Although the Title II budget that funds three of the four beginning teacher mentors in the district has been reduced this year, there are still funds available to add additional mentors by making slight adjustments to the budget. Currently, the district mentors visit their assigned schools and beginning teachers once a week and have limited time to provide follow up visits, participate in

other mentor activities such as professional development, one on one meetings and to operate the Beginning Teachers' Store. The district maintains its focus on ensuring that mentors have sufficient time to adequately meet with and support beginning teachers and this focus must include employing additional beginning teacher mentors going forward.

Strategy 5: Implement Mentor and Beginning Teacher Support Meetings

While meeting with beginning teachers to gather data for this study, the desire to meet quarterly or every other month was expressed. The district currently does not hold meetings for all beginning teachers to come together as a group for any purpose. The teachers in the study felt that beginning teachers meeting as a group would allow them to share strategies that work in their classrooms with other beginning teachers across the district and to form informal networks for additional support. Regular meetings would also allow the district and the district beginning teacher mentors to provide professional development activities that are designed specifically for beginning teachers and to share other information from the district level that is pertinent to beginning teachers. These meetings would be designed around the needs of beginning teachers, focus on district initiatives and be used for team building and social activities.

Improvement Project Implementation

The Teacher Retention Committee discussed this study at length and the group reached consensus that the goal of the study was to improve teacher retention in the school first, and if the strategies were successful, they would be implemented district-wide (see Appendix B). The committee identified increased teacher retention as the answer to the first fundamental question of Improvement Science, "What are we trying to accomplish?" They sought to identify causes of teacher turnover, developed strategies to mitigate the causes that were identified, and then used PDSA cycles to improve the implemented strategies (see Appendix F). A small-scale proof of

concept approach would be taken to implement the strategies in a rural elementary school with the support of school administration.

The second fundamental question of Improvement Science, “How will we know that a change is an improvement?” evoked a lengthy discussion from the committee. Ideally, retaining all beginning or early career teachers would be a true measure of success, but the committee agreed that reducing teacher turnover to 10% in the school would be an achievable step in the process. Further discussion was held during committee meetings regarding the district’s commitment to improving teacher retention.

The third fundamental question of Improvement Science, “What changes can we make that will result in an improvement?” was addressed at each committee meeting and was a dominant factor in the creation of the improvement strategies. The committee discussed areas of concern that may cause teacher turnover including money, lack of resources that work, the need for additional support, teacher workload, lack of clarity in communication, and lack of support for veteran teachers (see Appendix F). During the discussion of these items, the committee shared experiences on the beginning teacher and veteran teacher level and how these issues impact the work that they do on a daily basis. In my work as the Director of Human Resources and Beginning Teacher Coordinator, I have examined the Teacher Turnover Report extensively, and it is alarming that 30% of the teachers who left the district after last school year left to teach in another North Carolina school district. Retaining teachers of all experience levels is vital in ensuring student success in the district and the committee believes that making changes to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and the Beginning Teacher Support Program that cause beginning teachers to remain in the district will be a lasting change that results in improvement.

The first step in implementation of the five improvement strategies was to meet with a group of teachers from the school who are in years one to six, which is the group targeted by the first improvement strategy (see Appendix G). The group first discussed the problem and the problem statement so that they would have a clear understanding of the scope of the study. Discussion was then held regarding the goal of the study. While the overall goal of the study is to improve teacher retention in the district, the primary goal of the small-scale proof of concept study is to improve teacher retention in the school. If strategies are found to be successful, they will be implemented district-wide. Discussion was then held regarding the five improvement strategies and the group of teachers gave input and shared suggestions on how to implement the strategies. From this discussion, an implementation plan was devised and was used as the guide throughout the implementation. Prior to this meeting, an additional meeting was held with the teachers in years one to six and they were given a survey to be used as a baseline for comparison of pre-implementation and post-implementation perceptions of the five improvement strategies (see Appendix H). The survey contained questions regarding teachers' intentions of leaving the school before the start of the 2018-2019 academic year. At the end of the implementation period, teachers were given another survey with the same questions to determine the effectiveness of the strategies and if their intentions of leaving or staying in the school changed.

To move the implementation forward, I met with the district beginning teacher mentor that serves this elementary school and created a schedule and plan for mentoring the additional four teachers who are beyond year three in their career. It is important to note that the state only requires a mentor for teachers who are in years one to three. The schedule that was developed included the mentor making two scheduled visits to the school each week to serve the fourteen beginning teachers in years one to three and the four teachers in years four to six. Since the needs

of the teachers in years four to six are different from those in years one to three, the mentor provided basic mentoring services for the four additional teachers, but the majority of their interaction focused on professional development and providing additional instructional resources.

Since this study took place well after the academic year began and positions were already allocated, no additional personnel were hired to fill the role of the district beginning teacher mentor who would specifically serve Exceptional Children teachers involved in the study. I was able to work with an Exceptional Children's teacher in the school, who is also a part of the Teacher Retention Committee, to provide additional support and mentoring for the eighteen teachers in the study. While this teacher has her own classroom and caseload, she agreed to provide support services, resources, strategies and paperwork assistance for her colleagues who are in the study. The service that this teacher and acting mentor provided to each of the teachers was based upon their specific needs and the needs of their students. Teachers in the study met with the acting mentor teacher before school, during school and after school as needed. The acting mentor worked as a liaison between the teachers in the study and the Exceptional Children's Department in the district. As resources, services and support were needed, the acting mentor either provided it herself or contacted the Exceptional Children's Department to have them to provide what was needed.

During the meeting prior to implementation, the eighteen teachers in the study discussed their buddy teachers and the role that they serve in the school. While these teachers are appreciative of the work performed by their district beginning teacher mentor, the buddy teacher serves a vital role in the school by assisting them with daily needs and things that arise in their classrooms. A new buddy teacher list was drafted for the teachers in the study and reviewed by

the principal. With his approval, changes were made in buddy teacher assignments and these changes would stay in place until changed by the principal for the 2018-2019 academic year. The goal was to utilize teachers in the same grade level or subject area as the beginning teacher and this was possible for the majority of the eighteen teachers. Those who did not have a buddy teacher in the same grade level agreed that the teacher assigned to them should be no higher or lower than two grade levels from them.

As with the strategy of employing an Exceptional Children's teacher mentor, the academic year was in progress and position allocations had already been made. Discussion was held with the mentor that serves this school in order to take a closer look at the mentoring services at the elementary school. In order to serve the additional four teachers in years four to six, the mentor visited the school one additional day each week throughout the implementation period. During this time, she also served her regular caseload of beginning teachers in years one to three. The mentor is highly dedicated to the teachers that she serves in this school and a specific schedule was created so that teachers ranging from years one to three received additional mentoring services as well.

The implementation of the study also included monthly meetings for the teachers in the study. During these meetings, professional development activities were provided and networking opportunities with other beginning or early career teachers in the district were created. These meetings also focused on district initiatives and resources including classroom management, differentiated instruction, maintaining parent contact, digital literacy, and aiding students in transitions from one grade level to the next. The monthly meetings that were held were formal sessions facilitated by the mentor that serves the school. Agendas and minutes for each of these meetings may be viewed in Appendices J - L. An informal networking meeting for all beginning

teachers in the district was planned and will take place in June prior to the end of the current academic year. This meeting will be held off campus in the evening with the intent of allowing teachers to share strategies that worked for them, success stories from their classrooms and pitfalls to avoid in the future in a relaxed atmosphere.

Improvement Project Results

The measure of improvement that was identified earlier in the study is to reduce the teacher turnover in the school to 10% by 2018. The Teacher Retention Committee felt that this was an achievable target, but would require a commitment from school and district stakeholders. In the elementary school where this small-scale proof of concept study was conducted, seven of the 46 teachers in the school left during the 2016-2017 academic year, causing a turnover rate of 15%.

Upon completion of the study in March 2018, the following teacher turnover had already occurred at the elementary school participating in the study:

- one beginning teacher involved in the study left the district to work in another district due to family issues prior to the completion of the study
- one experienced teacher resigned due to a military transfer
- three veteran teachers retired

With the projected turnover of nine of the 45 teachers in the 2017-2018 academic year, including the five who already left the school, the turnover rate in the school is projected to be 20%.

Although the turnover of these five teachers occurred, their reasons for departure falls into the unavoidable turnover category. There is nothing within the control of the school that could have prevented these teachers from leaving. After reviewing the turnover numbers for the first half of the 2017-2018 academic year, the causes of teacher turnover in the district, the Teacher

Retention Committee predicted that the teacher turnover rate for the district will be 16.8% at the end of the measurement period for the 2017-2018 state Teacher Turnover Report. Data from this study was used to help the Teacher Retention Committee determine the effectiveness of the specific strategies, revise the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and will help to determine the next steps of implementation. The agenda and minutes from this meeting may be viewed in Appendix M.

Strategies 1 through 5: Survey Results

The teachers who participated in the dissertation study were given a survey prior to the implementation phase regarding the five improvement strategies. The feedback provided by the teachers was used to make improvements to the strategies before implementation and before the strategies are written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and made a permanent part of the Beginning Teacher Support Program. The Beginning Teacher Support Plan will be revised and presented to the Board of Education for approval and will be effective July 1, 2018, should the strategies prove successful.

All eighteen teachers responded to the survey on the five improvement strategies, yielding a return rate of 100% on the survey. The Teacher Retention Committee reviewed the survey prior to the teachers receiving it, as they are experienced teachers who are familiar with current processes in the district and they have previously undergone a Beginning Teacher Support Program either in this district or another. The members of this expert panel are knowledgeable of the subject, have been in the district for several years and have firsthand knowledge of the issues that the district and the school have with teacher retention.

In asking if Strategy 1, mentor beginning teachers through years four to six, would make teachers more likely to stay in their current school, 100% of the teachers who took the pre-

implementation survey responded with a yes (see Figure 6). When asked if Strategy 1 would make teachers more likely to stay in the district, 100% of the teachers who participated responded with a yes. When asked if Strategy 1 would make teachers more likely to remain in the profession, 100% of the teachers who participated responded with a yes.

Comments from teachers on the implementation of this strategy were positive and they felt that beginning teachers would benefit from having additional years of support. Discussion was held that included teachers in years four to six not receiving all the services that beginning teachers in years one to three receive other than mentor services. Scheduling mentor visits was a contentious issue due to the limited number of beginning teacher mentors currently available in the district. Some of the teachers felt that the mentor could be available by appointment or by visiting once a month or every other month to serve teachers in years four to six. Employing additional beginning teacher mentors, which is addressed in Strategy 4, would ease some of the concerns regarding the mentor visit scheduling.

The Teacher Retention Committee discussed Strategy 1 and had concerns regarding who would be responsible for mentoring beginning teachers for the additional one or three years. The main concern was if the additional support was going to be provided by the district mentors or if veteran teachers in the school would be providing the additional support. Another concern raised by a member of the committee was support being provided to any new teacher in the district regardless of the number of years that they had taught and this individual also felt that teachers in years four to six may be reluctant to receive services from a district mentor. The suggestion was made by a committee member that teachers who are in years one to two be placed in a group and receive services together and extend services only to teachers in year four by grouping them with teachers in year three.

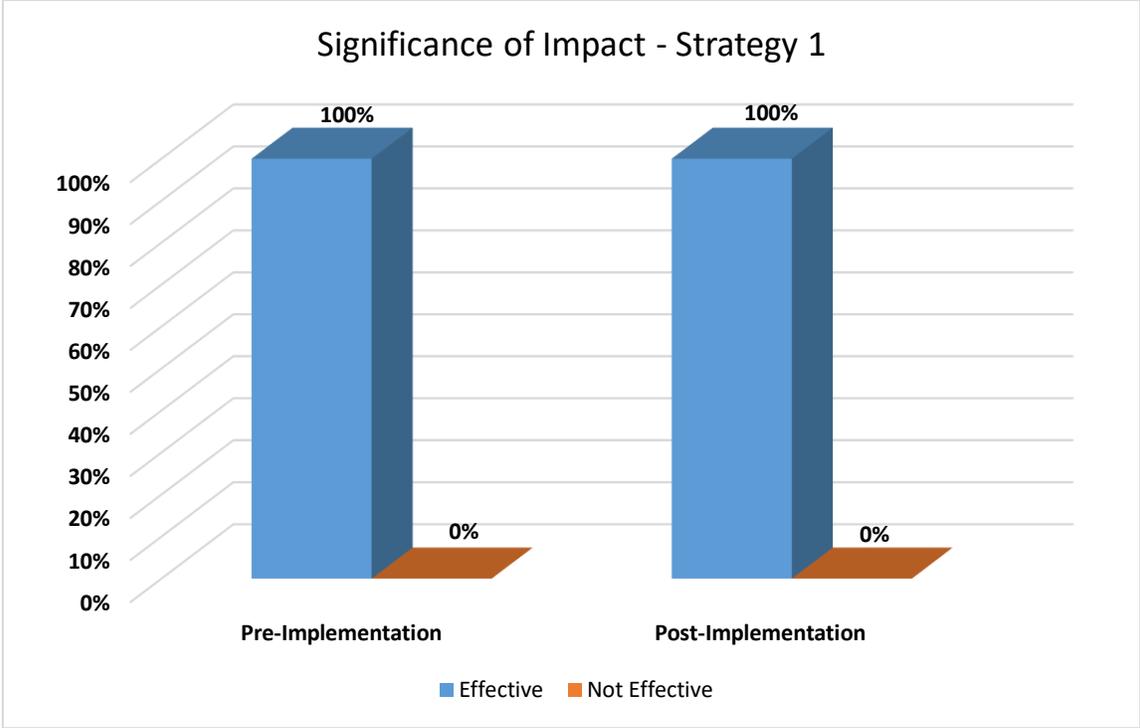


Figure 6. Significance of impact data about the mentoring beginning teachers through years four to six improvement strategy.

At the conclusion of the study after the improvement strategies were implemented in the school, teachers who participated in the study were given a survey regarding the effectiveness of the five improvement strategies. Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 100% felt that Strategy 1 was significant in this study and should be continued in the school (see Figure 6). Additionally, the Teacher Retention Committee agreed that mentoring teachers through years four to six is an effective strategy and recommends that the strategy be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan.

When asked if Strategy 2, employing an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher as a beginning teacher mentor, would make teachers more likely to stay in their current school, 100% of the teachers who participated in the pre-implementation survey responded with a yes (see Figure 7). When asked if Strategy 2 would make teachers more likely to stay in the district, 80% responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no. When asked if Strategy 2 would make teachers more likely to remain in the profession, 100% responded with a yes.

The teachers in the study felt that having an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher as a beginning teacher mentor would be an excellent resource for beginning Exceptional Children teachers. The concern was shared that Exceptional Children teachers frequently leave the district or their school because of the added pressures associated with their classroom. The fact that laws and district procedures are frequently changing continues to complicate matters that Exceptional Children teachers face and the beginning teachers believe that employing a mentor specific to this area would help tremendously. Overall, the teachers felt that an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher as a mentor would be helpful in providing assistance and resources that beginning teachers may not be aware of. This mentor could also support the

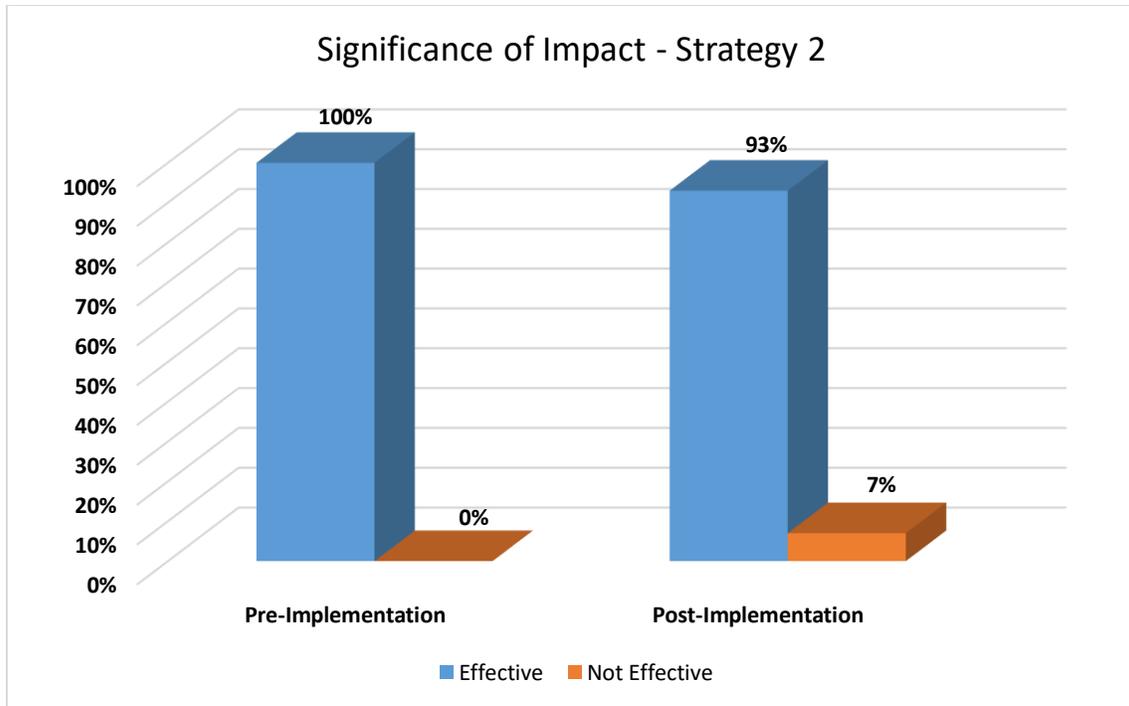


Figure 7. Significance of impact data about the employing an experienced Exceptional Children’s Teacher as a beginning teacher mentor improvement strategy.

young Exceptional Children teachers in their instruction and with Individualized Education Program paperwork.

Members of the committee had mixed results regarding Strategy 2. One member felt that there may not be enough beginning teachers in Exceptional Children classrooms to merit having a mentor solely dedicated to serving them and the mentor proposed for this position would also have to serve mainstream teachers. The majority of the committee members felt that having an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher serve as a mentor for beginning Exceptional Children teachers was a great idea and is something that beginning teachers have asked for many times in numerous Beginning Teacher Support Program exit surveys.

Of the teachers who responded to the survey at the end of the implementation of the improvement strategies, 93% felt that Strategy 2 would be effective in retaining beginning teachers in the district (see Figure 7). Seven percent of the teachers who responded to the survey felt that Strategy 2 would not be effective in retaining beginning teachers. Discussion was held regarding this strategy and the teachers who were hesitant to agree with the effectiveness of the strategy felt that the strategy would be more effective if a district mentor who had been specifically hired for this position were responsible for performing these mentoring services, although the teacher serving in this role will continue assisting other Exceptional Children teachers in the school as needed. With the majority of the teachers in the study agreeing that this improvement strategy is effective, the Teacher Retention Committee recommends that the strategy be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan.

When asked if Strategy 3, assign buddy teachers in the same subject area as the beginning teacher, would make teachers more likely to stay in their current school, 40% of the teachers who participated in the pre-implementation survey responded with a yes and 60% of the teachers who

participated in the survey responded with a no (see Figure 8). When asked if Strategy 3 would make teachers more likely to remain in the district, 60% the teachers who participated in the survey responded with a yes and 40% responded with a no. When asked if Strategy 3 would make teachers more likely to remain in the profession, 40% of the teachers who participated in the survey responded with a yes and 60% responded with a no.

The opinions and reactions of the teachers were mixed on this strategy. While buddy teacher assignments are a school level decision, some felt that this happens naturally regardless of the official buddy teacher assignment that is made. In this particular elementary school, grade level teachers tend to focus on assisting beginning teachers aside from their other duties. While some of the beginning teachers felt that having a buddy teacher in the same grade level or subject area would give them someone to seek guidance from that understood what was going on in their classroom and could provide them with resources and someone to share ideas with, others felt that having a buddy teacher in a different subject area or grade level would help them learn more about integrating other subjects into their core instruction and ensure that their students were prepared for the next grade.

The Teacher Retention Committee felt that having buddy teachers in the same subject area as the beginning teachers would be a beneficial practice. The feasibility of having this take place consistently across all subjects and grade levels throughout the district did raise some concerns, especially in the schools where beginning teachers outnumber veteran teachers. One committee member did agree that this would be a good practice to implement, but did not want the buddy teachers to be overwhelmed by having too many teachers to support. It was also suggested that buddy teachers have a set of criteria to meet before being selected to serve in the role and that they receive a stipend for the work.

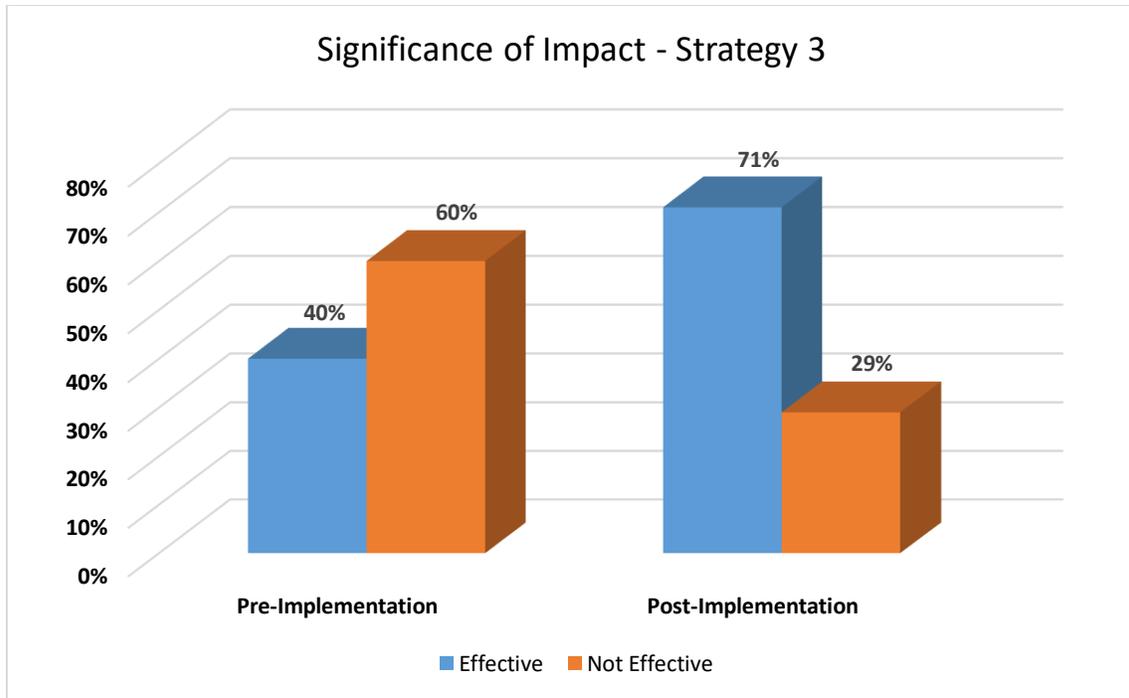


Figure 8. Significance of impact data about the assigning buddy teachers in the same subject area as the beginning teacher improvement strategy.

At the end of the study, 71% of the teachers who responded to the survey felt that assigning buddy teachers in the same subject area or grade level as the beginning teacher was an effective strategy to retain teachers and 29% felt that the strategy was not effective (see Figure 8). Discussion was held with the Teacher Retention Committee regarding the survey results on this strategy and it was decided that since the majority of the teachers in the study felt the strategy was effective and the committee, as the expert panel, felt that this strategy provides a valuable resource for beginning teachers, it is recommended that the strategy be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan. The committee further discussed the value of buddy teachers in the building being able to provide support and resources in the absence of the district beginning teacher mentor.

When asked if Strategy 4, employ additional beginning teacher mentors, would make teachers more likely to remain in their current school, 80% of the teachers who participated in the pre-implementation survey responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no (see Figure 9). When asked if Strategy 4 would make teachers more likely to remain in the district, 80% of the teachers who participated responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no. When asked if Strategy 4 would make teachers more likely to remain in the profession, 80% of the teachers who participated responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no.

Employing additional beginning teacher mentors has been a highly discussed topic in the district. While employing additional beginning teacher mentors would ease the caseload and allow each beginning teacher mentor to spend more time with each of their beginning teachers, the teachers in the study felt that having additional mentors would also alleviate the stress in scheduling and ensuring that all beginning teachers are adequately served. It was discussed

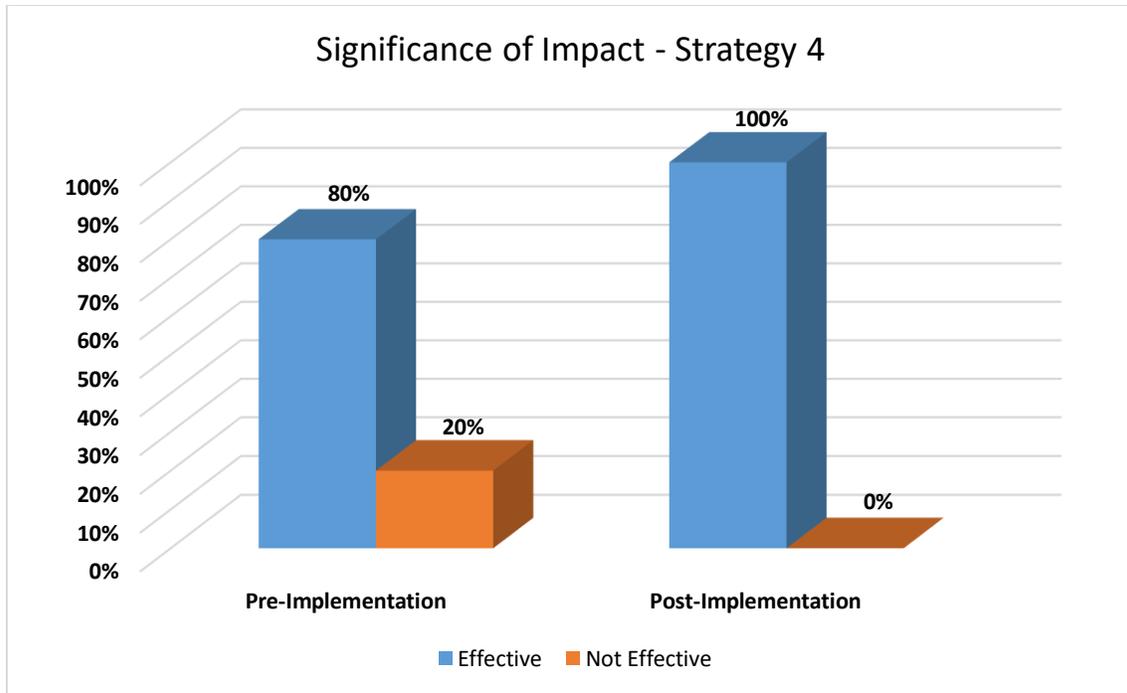


Figure 9. Significance of impact data about the employing additional beginning teacher mentors improvement strategy.

during the study that the current beginning teacher mentors serve their caseload exceptionally well and that they always assist and visit their beginning teachers when needed.

In discussing Strategy 4, the committee overwhelmingly thought that employing additional beginning teacher mentors was an excellent strategy. Two committee members felt that having additional mentors would allow the mentors to spend more meaningful time with teachers that have an increased need for support. However, a concern for the lack of resources and logistics hindering additional mentors being employed was expressed. Although this committee member felt that additional beginning teacher mentors would be helpful, they were not certain if this strategy would come to fruition.

At the conclusion of the study, 100% of the teachers who responded to the survey regarding the improvement strategies felt that this strategy was highly effective in retaining beginning or early career teachers (see Figure 9). The only concerns that were expressed about the current Beginning Teacher Support Program and beginning teacher mentors was that they have a large caseload that limits the amount of time they can serve each beginning teacher. The Teacher Retention Committee was in agreement with the teachers involved in the study and recommends that this strategy be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan. They further agreed that increasing the number of beginning teacher mentors would allow each mentor to spend more time with the teachers that they serve, which will positively impact teacher retention.

When asked if Strategy 5, implement monthly or quarterly mentor/beginning teacher support meetings, would make teachers more likely to remain in their current school, 100% of the teachers who participated in the pre-implementation survey responded with a yes (see Figure 10). When asked if Strategy 5 would make teachers more likely to stay in the district, 80% of the

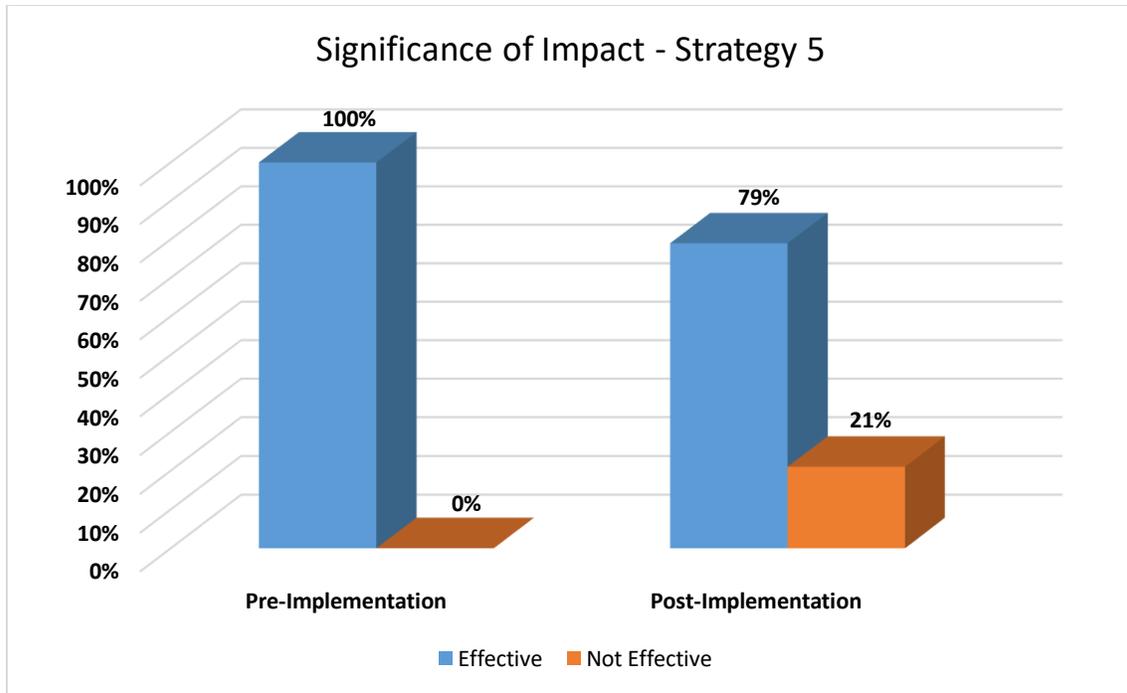


Figure 10. Significance of impact data about the implementing monthly or quarterly mentor/beginning teacher support meetings improvement strategy.

teachers who participated in the survey responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no. When asked if Strategy 5 would make teachers more likely to remain in the profession, 80% responded with a yes and 20% responded with a no.

The teachers had strong reactions in the discussion of Strategy 5. Responses to having monthly or quarterly meetings produced a strong argument for not having too many additional meetings. Some of the teachers felt that monthly meetings would be too much on top of the other meetings and trainings that they already had to attend, but these meetings would allow them to discuss their needs, common issues and to express their issues and feelings in a judgment free zone. One teacher also felt that it would be helpful to include administrators and other district representatives in these meetings to discuss different topics. Another teacher felt that these meetings would not be helpful, as teachers do not want another meeting to attend regardless of its focus or content. This teacher suggested that these meetings be held via a web-based platform so that teachers on each end of the county would not have to travel to the central office.

The Teacher Retention Committee and the teachers involved in the study shared similar sentiments regarding additional teacher meetings. Committee members felt that we needed to provide an avenue for beginning teachers to come together at a frequent interval for professional development and to share ideas, but we need to be cautious in adding additional meetings to an already busy meeting schedule. Holding monthly meetings did not appear to be very popular among the committee and they felt that quarterly meetings would accomplish the goal of these meetings without overwhelming teachers.

Once the study was completed, 79% of the teachers involved in the study responded that this strategy is effective in retaining teachers and 21% of the teachers surveyed felt that this strategy was not effective (see Figure 10). Discussion that was held with the teachers in the study

yielded that they did not look forward to having another meeting to attend on a monthly basis and would prefer that the beginning teachers meet quarterly. The Teacher Retention Committee felt that this strategy would be useful in retaining teachers and agreed that meeting quarterly as a group would prove to be more beneficial for the beginning teachers and those responsible for planning and facilitating the sessions. The committee felt that this strategy would be effective in retaining teachers and recommended that the strategy be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan.

It is further recommended that the five improvement strategies be implemented in a school for one full academic year prior to implementation district-wide. The school that is selected for this implementation should be experiencing teacher turnover that is higher than other schools in the district. This implementation will allow the PDSA cycle sufficient time for results that can be generalized to the entire district. In addition, it will also allow short-cycle improvements throughout the school year to respond to the feedback from beginning teachers.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE

Summary

This dissertation focused on the enhancement of the Beginning Teacher Support Program in the district in attempt to improve teacher retention. I utilized a small-scale proof of concept study in a rural elementary school in the district, an expert panel referred to as the Teacher Retention Committee, and a panel of beginning and veteran teachers to gather data. Data was gathered on the causes of teacher turnover in the district, what could be done to mitigate the loss of teachers and the Teacher Retention Committee then worked with beginning and veteran teachers to develop five improvement strategies to implement in the elementary school. Through the PDSA cycle and input from the committee and the teachers, the five strategies were revised as necessary. The five improvement strategies led to revisions of the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and the Beginning Teacher Support Program in the district. These improvements were added to the documented Beginning Teacher Support Plan and will be approved by the Board of Education and will be implemented beginning July 2018.

The beginning teachers involved in the study were in their first three years of teaching and the veteran teachers were in years four to six. The Teacher Retention Committee had varying years of experience ranging from six years up to 26 years and their backgrounds include traditional teacher preparation programs, lateral entry, some with middle school backgrounds, high school backgrounds, elementary school backgrounds and experience teaching various grade levels and subject areas. The administrator of the elementary school where the study took place was a member of the committee, as well as two district beginning teacher mentors.

The problem of practice study was based upon Improvement Science (Langley et al., 2009) and sought to answer 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? In accordance with the thinking of Langley et al. (2009), we had to determine why improvements to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and the Beginning Teacher Support Program were needed, and then seek feedback to determine if improvement was occurring. Surveys and face-to-face meetings with the Teacher Retention Committee and teachers in the elementary school were utilized in order to obtain feedback and develop the improvement strategies that would result in improved teacher retention in the school and ultimately in the district. The strategies that were developed were implemented in the school, changes were made again after discussion with the Teacher Retention Committee and the teachers, changes were made as they were identified using the PDSA cycle during implementation and the final changes will be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this problem of practice study was to identify causes of beginning or early career teacher turnover that could be mitigated and lead to improved teacher retention in the district. It is important to note that not all teacher turnover is negative. Ingersoll (2003) stated, that from an organizational perspective, the key question is not whether teaching has higher or lower turnover than other occupations, but rather is teacher turnover a problem for schools themselves. From one viewpoint, this is true considering the costs and factors associated with hiring replacement teachers and the detrimental impact that teacher turnover has on the academic achievement of students. While it is common knowledge that there are substantial costs associated with hiring replacement teachers, teacher turnover may be viewed in a positive manner if the teachers leaving are not a best fit for the school, the students, and not capable of producing an acceptable level of student achievement. While Harris and Adams (2007) and

Ingersoll (2003) may disagree on many points related to teacher turnover, they are in agreement that turnover of early career teachers has an adverse effect on the ability to develop “positive and productive interactions” among stakeholders (p. 328).

Multiple data sources were utilized and the analysis of the data yielded significant findings from this study. Based on these findings, the following are conclusions relative to the five improvement strategies that were implemented in the small-scale proof of concept:

Conclusion 1: Mentoring beginning or early career teachers has a positive impact on their success in the classroom, which also positively affects the level of academic achievement that their students can attain. While mentoring provides these young teachers with useful guides on how they should function effectively in their classrooms, it also serves as professional development for beginning and veteran teachers. The state of North Carolina requires that school districts systematically support beginning teachers who are in their first three years of teaching, but extending this support to teachers who are beyond the first three years allows experienced teachers in years four to six to develop collegiality, improve as professionals and gain from the fresh ideas and energy of new teachers.

Conclusion 2: Additional support for Exceptional Children teachers, especially beginning teachers, is vital in retaining these highly-skilled and specialized teachers in the district. Providing Exceptional Children teachers with support in the areas of program updates related to special education, emotional support, curriculum and classroom management are the areas in which these teachers want to receive additional support. Formal and informal meetings with a mentor, opportunities to observe other teachers and be observed by other teachers are also support services that should be provided to beginning Exceptional Children teachers. The hardest

positions to fill in the school district are those of Exceptional Children teachers and the district must provide resources and additional support in order to retain these teachers.

Conclusion 3: School-based buddy teachers are a valuable resource for beginning teachers, but they should not bear the full responsibility of mentoring and coaching these young teachers. While there is value on someone who supports beginning teachers while actively teaching, full-time mentors have the flexibility and ability to devote as much time needed with the teachers that they mentor. Supporting beginning teachers is the priority of full-time mentors and without having a classroom of their own, the mentor can provide real-time observation and feedback to beginning teachers. School-based buddy teachers do not have this flexibility and they should only be relied upon for simple school-specific issues or on an occasion when the district mentor is not available. Whether these school-based buddy teachers are on the same grade level or not has an insignificant impact on their effectiveness.

Conclusion 4: Beginning teacher mentors are vital to the success and retention of beginning or early career teachers. Well-designed mentor programs have a positive effect on teacher retention and allow new teachers to improve their teaching practices. Adequately trained mentors provide beginning teachers with useful feedback and they play a significant role in the professional growth of new teachers. Research overwhelmingly supports the use of mentors for additional support for beginning or early career teachers and the potential that effective mentoring has on a teacher will benefit undoubtedly their students. It is important to allocate adequate resources and personnel to the operation of a mentoring program so that each mentor will not be inundated by their individual caseload and ample time can be devoted to each beginning teacher.

Conclusion 5: Teachers in the district have expressed the concern for the number of meetings or events that draw them out of their classrooms. At the onset of this study, it was believed that monthly meetings for beginning teachers and their mentors would be beneficial. As the teachers involved in the study worked to provide data and information, it was quickly determined that quarterly meetings would best fit in their schedules. As long as the quarterly meetings provide useful and meaningful information on district initiatives, professional growth and development, and resources related to their classrooms, teachers will commit themselves to attending these meetings and using the information gained in their classrooms.

Epilogue: Reflection and Implications

The Teacher Retention Committee reached consensus and the small-scale improvement study was implemented with the goal of improving teacher retention in the school. At the conclusion of the study, the improvement strategies were deemed effective and comprehensive enough for a large-scale implementation across the district. While the five improvement strategies themselves will be written into the Beginning Teacher Support Plan in the district, individual schools will be able to make slight modifications to the strategies to meet the needs and the culture and climate of their school. Any modifications that are going to be made to the strategies in an individual school will have to be approved by the Beginning Teacher Coordinator. Allowing modifications to be made to the improvement strategies does not negate the work and the results achieved by the Teacher Retention Committee; instead, it recognizes the need for flexibility while working to improve teacher retention in the district. It is suggested that school administrators who are having difficulties with retaining teachers establish a team in their school that focuses on improving teacher retention, analyzes historical and current teacher retention data for their school, identifies causes of teacher turnover and develops solutions that

may mitigate the causes of turnover in conjunction with implementation of the five improvement strategies.

When addressing teacher turnover, I suggest that school and district administrators routinely gauge the overall working conditions and the satisfaction of teachers. This should include taking a broad look at the organization as a whole down to the school and individual teacher levels. What is discovered during this process may surprise school leaders, but it would be beneficial to address any concerns and dissatisfaction found. While programs and initiatives implemented by the district may be intended to benefit the district and the student population as a whole, it is rare that consideration is given to the toll, impact and drain that these programs and initiatives may be having on teachers. In some instances, school administrators are finding themselves having to console and counsel teachers and their individual behaviors and school operations may be the only reason that some teachers choose to stay at their school or in the district. In reflecting on stories that were shared during this study, several teachers mentioned that they were too far in their careers to leave the profession now. Others mentioned that they were able to endure things in the system because of the leadership and support provided by their principal.

I suggest that district and school administrators take a close look at the factors within their control including working conditions, support and barriers to recruitment that can aid in teacher retention. The preparations that teachers undergo before joining a system are largely out of the hands of the district, but a comprehensive and systematic induction program can correct any deficiencies that beginning teachers may have, creating an effective teacher that may be committed to remaining in the district. Research indicates that high teacher turnover has a detrimental impact on the cohesiveness and effectiveness of schools and causes disruption to

educational programs and relationships that are designed to improve the academic achievement of students (Ingersoll, 2001), and in schools with high teacher turnover, students are likely to be taught by inexperienced teachers who we know are less effective on average (Rockoff, 2004).

Retaining effective teachers is one of the most important things that a school system does. Research suggests that teachers who are adequately prepared have the largest impact on student learning and achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Effective teachers are a valuable resource for schools and districts should make it a priority to support these teachers and provide them with the necessary resources. While the teachers in this study were satisfied with their current school administration, they did express a degree of frustration with initiatives that cause them to spend more time on activities other than planning their lessons and instruction. Over time, the teachers shared that this frustration, if not mitigated, could cause them to leave the district. If a goal of the district is to reduce teacher turnover, I suggest that this frustration be addressed, determine if it is consistently found throughout the district and implement measures to correct these concerns.

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APPENDIX A: INSTUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284**
www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral
IRB To: [Ervin Patrick](#)
CC: [Jim McDowelle](#)
Date: 11/13/2017
Re: [UMCIRB 17-002222](#)
The Improvement of a Beginning Teachers Support Program to Enhance Teacher Retention

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 11/10/2017. 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 Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

APPENDIX B: TEACHER RETENTION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 11-15-17

V F L Elementary School

November 15, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An understanding of the Study Completion Matrix
- An overview of the Problem and the Problem Statement
- An overview of the Review of Literature
- An understanding of the Approach to the Problem of Practice
- An overview of the Initial BT Survey Results
- An overview and understanding of the initial meeting with BTs

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Context • Desired Outcomes • Agenda 	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Review the Study Completion Matrix	Present Discuss Clarify	All	5 min.
Discuss the Problem and Problem Statement	Present Discuss	All	5 min.
Discuss the Review of Literature	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	10 min.
Discuss the Approach to the Problem of Practice	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss the Initial BT Survey Results and Identify Areas of Concern	Present Discuss	All	5 min.
Discuss and Plan the First BT Meeting	Present Discuss Clarify	All	10 min.
Develop Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Teacher Retention Committee Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

November 15, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Mr. Patrick opened the meeting by thanking everyone for agreeing to participate in the study as the expert panel that makes up the composition of the Teacher Retention Committee. It was then explained to the group that their participation is entirely voluntary and that they can leave the committee at any time without any penalty. Mr. Patrick shared with the group that while this work is for the completion of his dissertation, it is also the work of the school district.

The committee was then provided with information on the Problem of Practice and how the study developed. Earlier in the doctoral degree program, students were asked to identify problems in their respective school districts and work to solve these problems through the Problem of Practice dissertation. Mr. Patrick explained that teacher retention, beginning teacher support and teacher turnover are areas that he is passionate about and he decided to focus his study on beginning teacher retention.

Discussion moved to the agenda and the first item discussed was the Study Completion Matrix. Mr. Patrick explained to the committee that the dates on the matrix are flexible and can be modified to accommodate everyone's schedule. It was initially thought that the study would begin at the end of August, but the dissertation proposal presentation did not occur until then.

In order to provide background for the study and to frame the problem, the district's teacher turnover data was presented to the committee and it was noted that the current teacher turnover rate of 17.62% is approaching the highest turnover rate that the district has had in recent years. Turnover was at its highest in 2015 when the rate was 18%. Mr. Patrick shared with the committee that the goal of dissertation study will be decreasing the turnover rate in the district to 10% by 2018. While this is a lofty goal, it is believed that significant progress can be made toward reducing teacher turnover. The committee was asked what they thought some of the issues were in the district that impact teacher turnover. Another product of this problem of practice dissertation will be revisions to the beginning teacher support plan and the beginning teacher support program in Craven County.

Mr. Patrick then moved the discussion into the literature review. The literature review was discussed with the committee so that they are aware of current research on the topic and so that any parallels in the work that the district is currently doing can be identified. In reviewing literature for this dissertation, Mr. Patrick identified four major areas of concern and related secondary issues that impact teacher retention. Each of the four major areas of concern and related secondary issues were discussed and the committee agreed to read the literature review before the next meeting.

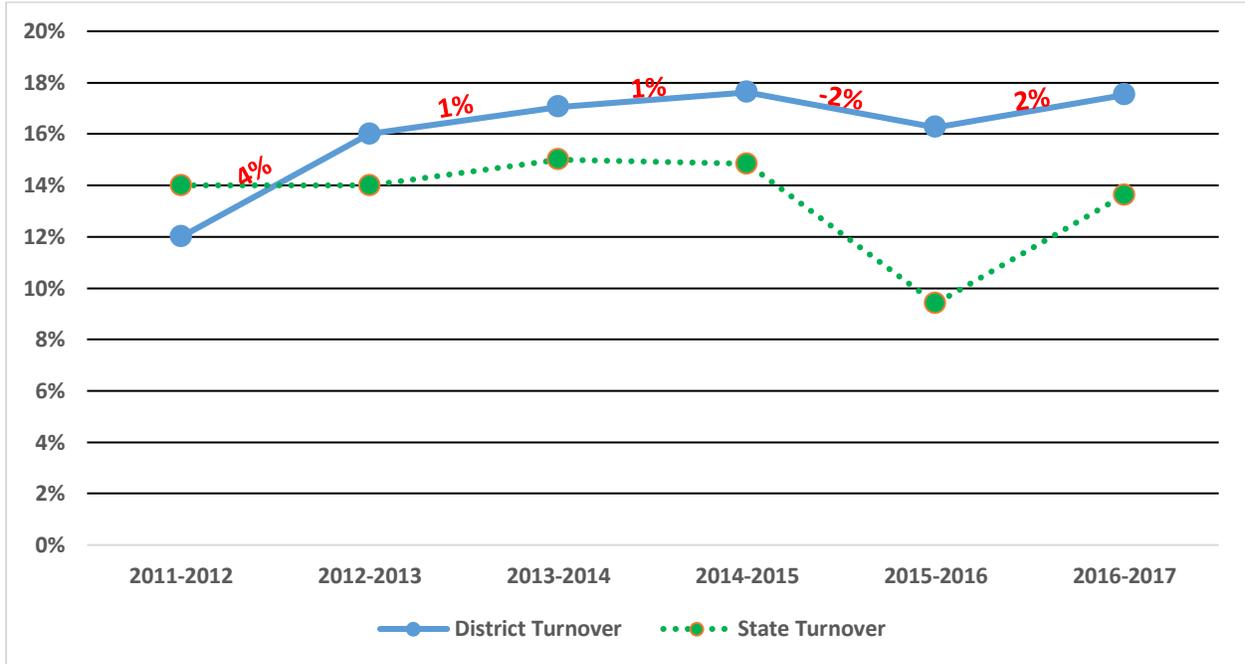
In addressing the approach to the problem of practice, Mr. Patrick briefly discussed Improvement Science, the three fundamental questions of Improvement Science and the three conditions that should be met as outlined by Langley et. al (2009) regarding fundamental changes improving systems. There were a couple questions from the committee and further

clarification was provided. The targeted approach was also discussed and it was explained that the targeted approach will provide support to beginning teachers based on their specific needs.

The meeting progressed to discussion and planning for the first meeting with the beginning teachers involved in the study. Ideally, Mr. Patrick would like to meet with the beginning teachers on Thursday, November 17, either in person or through some digital platform. It was decided that the first meeting with the beginning teachers should be in person and that the committee would not attend this meeting. Subsequent meetings may be held via a digital platform. This meeting will be to gather baseline data from the beginning teachers and to discuss the initial survey that was sent to them on November 13.

The floor was opened for questions from the committee and there were none. The meeting concluded at 4:45pm.

APPENDIX C: VARIATION IN TEACHER TURNOVER 2011/2012 – 2016/2017



Created by E. Patrick to present to the Teacher Retention Committee.

APPENDIX D: BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENA AND MINUTES, 11-17-17

V F L Elementary School

November 17, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the Problem and the Problem Statement
- An overview of the Initial BT Survey Results
- An overview of the Areas that Impact Beginning Teacher Retention
- An overview of Possible Solutions to Improve Beginning Teacher Retention

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss the Problem and Problem Statement	Present Discuss	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss the Initial BT Survey Results and Identify Areas of Concern	Present Discuss	All	10 min.
Discuss Areas that Impact Beginning Teacher Retention	Present Discuss Q and A	Ervin Patrick	15 min.
Discuss Possible Solutions to Improve Beginning Teacher Retention	Present Discuss Q and A	All	15 min.
Develop Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

November 17, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Mr. Patrick opened the meeting by thanking the beginning teachers for agreeing to participate in the study and for their attendance at the meeting. The group was informed that their participation is voluntary and they can decline to participate in the study at any time without penalty. Mr. Patrick shared with the group of beginning teachers that this study is for the completion of his dissertation, but this is also the work of the school district since there is a focus on retaining beginning and early career teachers.

The agenda was reviewed and the group of teachers was asked if they thought any additions or edits needed to be made to the agenda to make the meeting more productive. With there being no additions, the meeting proceeded as documented on the agenda. The context of the meeting was explained and the desired outcomes were shared with the group and no questions were raised at this point.

In discussing the problem and the problem statement, Mr. Patrick asked the group if they thought there was a beginning teacher retention issue in the district. They expressed that they were not totally aware of what was happening in other schools, but they could understand how the issues that beginning teachers face could cause them to leave the profession. The district's turnover information was shared with the group and they were somewhat surprised to find out about the number of teachers that leave the district overall. The problem statement was discussed and Mr. Patrick shared that this is the problem that he hopes to solve through this problem of practice dissertation.

The meeting then progressed into the discussion of the initial beginning teacher survey that was taken by the group prior to the meeting. Trends were discussed and follow up questions were asked based on the information that was provided in the survey. The group then identified additional areas of concern that are noted below. Following this discussion, the group of beginning teachers discussed areas that impact beginning teacher retention. The areas discussed by the group are noted below in this document. Possible solutions to improve beginning teacher retention were discussed with the group. As a follow up to this meeting, all of the information that was discussed will be shared with the Teacher Retention Committee for further action.

The group finally discussed next steps and agreed to meet again in a few weeks to act on information discussed by the teacher retention committee. The meeting ended promptly at 4:30 PM.

Areas that Impact Beginning Teacher Retention:

- Money
- Resources, give us resources that work and make sure they aren't a hassle
- Not having things in classrooms
- Being told no when asking for things
- Support
- Teacher workload
- Autonomy, don't need to be "cookie cutter"
- Rigor overkill, teacher may not understand the essential question
- Frustration with clarity or lack of clarity in communication
- District initiatives creating self-doubt
- Being more strategic with professional development (Learning-Focused in February)
- Training for beginning teachers and veterans say they're doing it wrong
- Veteran teachers are losing support, not considered valuable
- Balance between beginning teachers and veterans (value one more than the other)
- Veterans are learning, too

Solutions that may improve beginning teacher retention:

- New Teacher Orientation the week before school starts
- New Teacher Orientation at the school-level
- Less meetings during the week
- Less analyzing data
- Extending beginning teacher support through years 4-6
- Twice a year seminar with beginning teachers
- Too much new stuff too fast
- Higher pay
- Employing a beginning teacher mentor with Exceptional Children's experience

APPENDIX E: TEACHER RETENTION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 1-24-18

V F L Elementary School

January 24, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the five Improvement Strategies
- An understanding of how the five Improvement Strategies will be implemented
- An overview of the next steps in the study

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Review the five Improvement Strategies	Present Discuss Clarify	Ervin Patrick All	20 min.
Discuss Implementation of the five Improvement Strategies	Present Discuss Q and A	All	30 min.
Develop Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Teacher Retention Committee Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

January 24, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Mr. Patrick opened the meeting with a welcome, startups and a review of the agenda. The committee was asked if there were additions that needed to be made to the agenda and none were suggested.

The meeting then progressed to a review and discussion of the five Improvement Strategies. The Teacher Retention Committee has previously seen and discussed the five strategies and has been able to provide feedback on the strategies. Questions came from the group regarding feedback from the teachers who would be involved in the study and how they viewed the five strategies. The committee all agreed that the strategies were well planned and should have a positive impact on teacher retention in the school.

The meeting then shifted focus to implementation of the five Improvement Strategies. A plan has been developed by Mr. Patrick after working with the group of teachers who are involved in the study. Implementation will begin on January 26, 2018, and monthly beginning teacher meetings will begin on January 31, 2018. Actions have already been taken with the Beginning Teacher Mentor that serves the school and an Exceptional Children's teacher who works in the school to provide additional mentoring for teachers in years 1-6 and for the Exceptional Children's teachers in years 1-6.

Next steps will include the committee coming back together at the end of the study to discuss the effectiveness of the strategies and if they will be added to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan. As soon as the study approaches the end of implementation, Mr. Patrick will contact the committee to establish a meeting date and time.

APPENDIX F: TEACHER RETENTION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 11-20-17

V F L Elementary School
November 20, 2017
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of areas that impact teacher retention
- An overview of solutions that may improve teacher retention
- An overview of what will improve job satisfaction for teachers

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss Areas that Impact Retention	Present Discuss Q and A	All	5 min.
Discuss Possible Solutions to Improving Teacher Retention	Present Discuss Q and A	All	5 min.
Discuss what may Improve Job Satisfaction for Teachers	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	10 min.
Develop Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Teacher Retention Committee Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

November 20, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting was opened by Mr. Patrick, who thanked everyone for attending. The agenda and desired outcomes were shared and the group did not wish to alter the agenda or add any items.

Mr. Patrick shared that he had met with a group of beginning teachers and when discussing teacher retention, they provided a lengthy list of items that they felt impacted teacher retention. Those items include:

- Money
- Resources that work, make sure they aren't a hassle
- Not having things in classrooms
- Teachers being told no when asking for things
- Support
- Teacher workload
- Autonomy, don't make things "cookie cutter"
- Rigor overkill, even the teacher may not understand the essential question
- Frustration with clarity or lack of in communication
- District initiatives creating self-doubt
- Being more strategic with professional development
- Training for beginning teachers and then veteran teachers say they're doing it wrong
- Veteran teachers are losing support, not considered valuable
- Balance between beginning teachers and veterans (value one more than the other)
- Veterans are learning too

The committee felt like this was an exhaustive list, yet it did not include very many facets of what teachers face. However, the committee did feel that this was a great list to utilize when developing strategies and measures to improve teacher retention.

The Teacher Retention Committee then discussed possible solutions to improving teacher retention that were identified by beginning teachers including:

- Having a comprehensive new teacher orientation the week before school starts
- Less meetings for teachers during the week
- Less time spent on analyzing data
- Extending support for teachers through years 4-6, have a twice a year seminar
- Too much new stuff too fast
- Higher pay
- Exceptional Children's teacher mentor

It was discussed that this list is limited and may only be temporary solutions in addressing teacher retention. While these solutions may provide a quick fix, they do not address deeper issues of retention.

Discussion then moved to improving job satisfaction for teachers. The committee discussed working conditions, planning time and administrative support as some of the items that could be addressed to improve job satisfaction for teachers. While some may believe that increasing pay for teachers would improve satisfaction, the committee did not feel that this would motivate teachers to stay in schools where they were not happy or they did not feel that they were making a valuable contribution.

As for next steps, Mr. Patrick will meet with the teachers in the study and continue to develop strategies for the improvement of teacher retention.

APPENDIX G: BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES, 1-26-18

V F L Elementary School
January 26, 2018
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the problem and the problem statement
- An understanding of the goal of the study
- An understanding of the five improvement strategies
- An understanding of the implementation of the strategies
- An overview of the beginning teacher and veteran teacher survey results

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Context • Desired Outcomes • Agenda 	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss the Problem and Problem Statement	Present Discuss Clarify	All	5 min.
Discuss the Goal of the Study	Present Discuss Q and A	All	5 min.
Discuss the Five Improvement Strategies	Present Discuss Clarify	All	10 min.
Discuss Implementation of the Strategies	Present Discuss Q and A	All	15 min.
Discuss the Beginning Teacher and Veteran Teacher Initial Survey Results	Present Discuss	All	10 min.
Develop Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

January 26, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting was opened by Mr. Patrick at 3:30pm by thanking teachers for their attendance. Mr. Patrick stated that he realizes that teachers are busy and that they are tired at the end of the day, but their participation in this meeting and study is appreciated. The focus of the meeting then moved to the agenda and the desired outcomes.

Mr. Patrick spoke to the group about the problem statement and why his dissertation study is focusing on Teacher Retention. He shared the statistics of the district over the past few years and then focused on the teacher turnover of the school. The problem statement is the basis of the study and informs those reading the dissertation what problem the study is seeking to correct.

The meeting then progressed to the goal of the study. Mr. Patrick stated that the goal of the study is to reduce the teacher turnover in the school to 10%. Although a couple teachers have retired and one teacher has resigned to work in a county close to home, this is still an attainable goal for the school. There were several questions from the teachers present regarding turnover and how it is counted for the school and for the district.

The five improvement strategies were then discussed at length with the group. Mr. Patrick gave the teachers a few minutes to read over the strategies and then each strategy was discussed. Mr. Patrick then asked the group to share their ideas regarding each of the strategies.

Strategy 1: Mentor beginning teachers through years 4-6

- Veteran teachers will not feel bad having a mentor as if they were a beginning teacher depending on the approach that the mentor takes
- Effectiveness depends on who serves as the mentor
- Services will taper off from years 4-6
- It will mean a lot knowing that the mentor is there; will provide comfort and stability

Strategy 2: Employ an experienced Exceptional Children's teacher as a beginning teacher mentor

- This will be a great resource for inclusion teachers
- Maybe have three EC mentors to serve the three regions in the county
- Scheduling will have to be creative; have one for elementary, middle and high school

Strategy 3: Assign buddy teachers in the same subject as the beginning teacher

- Buddy teachers in the school really helps; teachers can send students to them for additional help or help them understand difficulties that students may be having
- Buddy teachers a grade level lower than the beginning teacher will know where the students have been and may be able to help catch students up
- It is hard for the district mentor to always be in the school, so the buddy teacher will be a great help

- Teachers need to know who their buddy teachers are
- Connect a master teacher in the district with specialty teachers (art, music, PE); Lead Art/Music/PE teachers
- Pair teachers no more than two grades up or two grades down
- EC teachers have to rely on one another to survive
- Buddy teachers need to be available as needed

Strategy 4: Employ additional beginning teacher mentors

- With additional mentors, they can spend all day in one school
- Make sure the beginning teachers know the schedule and when the mentor will be coming
- Make sure the schedule is consistent from week to week

Strategy 5: Implement mentor and beginning teacher support meetings

- Quarterly meetings will be better than monthly
- Meetings need to be meaningful
- Have food
- First part of the meeting can be professional development and the second part of the meeting can be for reflections and sharing between beginning teachers
- Formal and informal meetings will be great to break up the monotony

Implementation of the five strategies was then discussed amongst the group. Many of the strategies will be easier to implement than the others, and some of them will require minimal changes to processes that are already in place. The existing beginning teacher mentor for the school will continue to serve beginning teachers and will begin to serve the veteran teachers in years 4-6 as needed. It was also discussed that we cannot employ an Exceptional Children's teacher as a mentor at this stage of the study, but one of the district liaisons may be able to come to the school and work with the Exceptional Children's teachers just as the mentor would. It was also discussed that an EC teacher in the school may serve in this role during the study. The buddy teacher list will be examined and changes will be made, if necessary, and new buddy teacher assignments will be shared after the principal approves the list. Just as with the Exceptional Children's mentor, additional mentors cannot be hired at this time, but another district mentor may come to the school to work with the beginning teachers or the existing mentor may modify her schedule so that she can devote more time to her caseload. The group agreed to meet again in February and March just to see how the study progresses with monthly meetings, but it is believed that quarterly meetings will work best.

The beginning teacher and veteran teacher survey results were discussed with the group at this point in the meeting. Overall, teachers are happy in the school and do not intend to leave. There are some pressures that have caused a few teachers to consider leaving, but the issues may solve themselves before the school year is over. Teachers, for the most part, are happy in the school and enjoy the work that they do. They are also grateful for the beginning teacher mentor that serves the school.

The meeting ended a few minutes before 4:30pm and the group agreed to meet again in February and early March.

APPENDIX H: BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES, 12-18-17

V F L Elementary School
 December 18, 2017
 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An understanding of the five Improvement Strategies
- An overview of how the strategies impact teachers staying in schools
- An overview of how the strategies impact teachers staying in the district
- An overview of how the strategies impact teachers staying in the profession

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Context • Desired Outcomes • Agenda 	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss the five Improvement Strategies	Present Discuss Q and A	Ervin Patrick	20 min.
Discuss each Strategy and its Impact on Teachers Staying in their School	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss each Strategy and its Impact on Teachers Staying in the District	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss each Strategy and its Impact on Teachers Staying in the Profession	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

December 18, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Mr. Patrick opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He then reviewed the desired outcomes and the agenda and asked if any additions needed to be made, which none were suggested.

The meeting then progressed to discussion of the five Improvement Strategies. The teachers have been exposed to the strategies previously and have noticed the slight modifications that have been made to the strategies since they were initially introduced. The group was asked to think about the five strategies and consider them as we cover the next items on the agenda.

The teachers were asked to discuss the five strategies and the impact that they would have on multiple levels of their employment. Discussion ensued and then the group was asked how likely the strategies were to make them stay in their school, the district and the profession. It was decided that the teachers in the group would receive link to a survey to provide this information closer to the implementation of the five Improvement Strategies.

Mr. Patrick shared with the group that the strategies would be implemented soon and that the teachers in the study would have several opportunities to get together and discuss the implementation.

APPENDIX I: BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES, 11-28-17

V F L Elementary School

November 28, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of proposed changes to the Mentor Program
- An overview of Mentor Support in the district
- An overview of district support for beginning teachers
- An overview of extending Mentor Support

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Discuss possible changes to the Mentor Program	Present Discuss Q and A	Ervin Patrick	15 min.
Discuss Mentor Support and Additional Mentoring Services	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss District Support for Beginning Teachers	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss Extending Mentor Support to Teachers Beyond Years 1-3	Present Discuss Q and A	All	15 min.
Discuss Next Steps	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

November 28, 2017

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Mr. Patrick opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda and the desired outcomes.

With no additions or alterations being made to the agenda, discussion ensued on possible changes to the mentor program in the district. The group was asked what changes they would like to see implemented and how they thought the district beginning teacher mentors could better serve them. Several teachers expressed that they like the program as it currently is and that no major changes should be made. Others mentioned having a mentor with experience as an Exceptional Children's teacher and closer communication with their mentor. The teachers mentioned that they enjoy working with the mentor that is assigned to their school and they would like to see her complete evaluative observations in their classrooms for additional feedback.

When asked if they would like to receive additional support opportunities from their mentor, all of the teachers in the group responded with a yes. The floor was opened for the teachers in attendance to identify additional areas in which their mentor can serve them. Among the items discussed were assistance with EC and IEP paperwork, research and evidence-based strategies for classroom management, ELA and math. The teachers were also asked if they would like to see these services replace the existing services or be added to the existing services, and they responded with add these things to the existing services.

The meeting progressed to discussion of support at the district level for beginning teachers. Mr. Patrick shared with the group that the district directly supports the beginning teacher mentors, who in turn support them in their schools. It was shared during the meeting that teachers wish the district would implement less initiatives at one time and provide them with clear pacing guides. Teachers also shared that they would like for the district to ensure that they have buddy teachers in their school to rely on when their district mentor is not available. The teachers ended this portion of the meeting by requesting more planning time and less interruptions on their existing planning time with meetings.

Mr. Patrick moved the meeting to discussion of extending beginning teacher support to teachers in years 4 – 6 instead of ending support once teachers complete year 3. The teachers in the group were very supportive of this idea and thought that their colleagues would also support this idea. It was shared that additional mentors would have to be hired to effectively implement this change.

Next steps towards revising the improvement strategies were discussed and Mr. Patrick shared that he will arrange another meeting with the Teacher Retention Committee and this group of teachers within the very near future.

APPENDIX J: MONTHLY BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 1-31-18

V F L Elementary School

January 31, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of reflective practices and celebrations from your colleagues
- An understanding of the intent of the monthly Beginning Teacher Meetings
- An understanding of relevant Professional Development Activities
- An overview of the February 2018 meeting

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ms. N. S.	5 min.
Reflection and Celebrations	Present Discuss	All	5 min.
Discuss Intent of Meeting and Future Meetings	Present Discuss Clarify	Ms. N. S.	5 min.
Professional Development Activities	Present Discuss Q and A	Ms. N. S. All	40 min.
Discuss February's Meeting	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Monthly Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

January 31, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting opened with welcome and startup activities by Ms. S., who serves as the mentor for the elementary school. Ms. S. briefly went over the agenda and asked if any additions needed to be made or if there were specific items the group wanted to add to the agenda before proceeding.

Ms. S. moved into the Reflection and Celebrations portion of the meeting by encouraging the teachers present to always reflect on their classroom practices in order to become better educators. She pointed out that not only do teachers need to look back at the things that did not go as planned or that did not work well, but they need to reflect on what worked and what went well. Ms. S. stated that it is important to know why something you did as a teacher worked, what preparations the teacher did to make it work and how they can ensure that it works in the future. A question was asked about reflective practice and Ms. S. gave several examples and how they could be applied.

Two of the teachers present shared celebrations from their lives and classrooms and how they felt that they had reached difficult students and now believed that they were making adequate progress with these students. Ms. S. recognized that personal celebrations are important and that teachers need to have a healthy work-life balance in order to remain focused and prepared to serve their students.

The meeting then progressed to the intent of the beginning teacher meetings and how future meetings will proceed. Ms. S. discussed the Beginning Teacher Support Plan and how these meetings are something that we are considering adding to the plan in the future. She mentioned the debate between monthly and quarterly meetings and that it would be decided at the end of the study and at the end of the implementation phase of the study how these meetings would be structured and when they would occur.

Ms. S. moved the meeting to the professional development activities and shared a lot of information with the group. Topics shared by Ms. S. included catching back up with instruction after holiday breaks and days loss to inclement weather, maintaining parent contact, having conversations with parents of students who may not be on grade level, and how to start thinking about the transition for students who will be going on to the next grade level.

The meeting concluded with discussion of the February meeting and the date for the next meeting was set for February 12, 2018.

APPENDIX K: MONTHLY BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 2-12-18

V F L Elementary School
February 12, 2018
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the January 2018 meeting and celebrations from your colleagues
- An understanding of school and district initiatives and priorities
- An understanding of relevant Professional Development Activities
- An overview of the March 2018 meeting

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ms. N. S.	5 min.
Follow Up from January Meeting and Celebrations	Present Discuss	All	5 min.
Discuss School and District Initiatives and Priorities	Present Discuss Clarify	Ms. N. S.	15 min.
Professional Development Activities	Present Discuss Q and A	Ms. N. S. All	30 min.
Discuss March's Meeting	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Monthly Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

February 12, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting opened with welcome and startup activities by Ms. N. S., who serves as the mentor for the elementary school. Ms. S. briefly went over the agenda and asked if any additions needed to be made or if there were specific items the group wanted to add to the agenda before proceeding.

Ms. S. began the meeting by following up on the January 2018 meeting and asked the teachers if they had any questions or feedback that they wanted to share from this meeting. Several of the teachers discussed how they reflected on some things that had taken place in their classroom, how they would handle them differently in the future and what they learned from them.

The teachers felt that the January 2018 meeting was very helpful and they looked forward to the things that they would discuss today. Celebrations were shared and two of the teachers were excited to share that they were on the fence about remaining in the profession, but these meetings and the excitement around increased beginning teacher support has changed their minds. Other teachers in the meeting expressed their excitement about these meetings and hoped that they would continue in the future.

The meeting moved to discussion of school and district initiatives and priorities and the teachers shared their concerns for the number of things going on in the district. Ms. S. reminded the group to remain focused on doing what is best for their students and taking things one step at a time. They were encouraged to seek assistance and advice from their administration and from other teachers in the school. As the Beginning Teacher Mentor for the school, Ms. S. asked for specific difficulties they were having and offered to contact the appropriate individuals for additional resources for the teachers.

The meeting concluded with discussion of the March meeting and the date for the next meeting was set for March 1, 2018.

APPENDIX L: MONTHLY BEGINNING TEACHER MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 3-1-18

V F L Elementary School

March 1, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the February 2018 meeting and celebrations from your colleagues
- An understanding of school and district initiatives and priorities
- An understanding of relevant Professional Development Activities
- An overview of next steps in implementing beginning teacher meetings

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Context• Desired Outcomes• Agenda	Present Clarify	Ms. N. S.	5 min.
Follow up from February Meeting and Celebrations	Present Discuss	All	5 min.
Discuss School and District Initiatives and Priorities	Present Discuss Clarify	Ms. N. S.	10 min.
Professional Development Activities	Present Discuss Q and A	Ms. N. S. All	40 min.
Discuss Future Implementation of Beginning Teacher Meetings	Present Discuss	All	5 min.

Beginning Teacher Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

March 1, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting opened with welcome and startup activities by Ms. N. S., who serves as the mentor for the elementary school. Ms. S. briefly went over the agenda and asked if any additions needed to be made or if there were specific items the group wanted to add to the agenda before proceeding.

The meeting began with Ms. S. following up on the February 2018 meeting. Teachers were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide any feedback on the things that took place in the meeting. It was shared that some of the additional resources and contacts that Ms. S. provided were helpful and they would continue to contact those resources directly if needed in the future.

The teachers celebrated that some of their colleagues had recently attended a leadership training and would be sharing the things that they learned with the rest of the staff. This training focused on a school-wide model of motivating students to reach their potential and includes professional development and coaching for teachers.

Ms. S. moved the discussion to school and district initiatives and priorities. Several teachers voiced concerns about district training and how all teachers were not receiving the same information. Some teachers had attended trainings earlier in the year and teachers who attended the same training later in the year did not receive the same information. Ms. S. shared with the teachers that they need to contact school administration and clarify how they would like the initiative deployed in the school and reminded the teachers to continually communicate with administration if discrepancies arise.

For professional development, Ms. S. shared with the group that they need to continue working with their students on standards, begin thinking about test preparations and taking a look at possible retentions. At this point, teachers should already be looking ahead to next year, the improvements and changes that they will be making in their instruction and how they will assist their students with the transition to the next grade level. Teachers were reminded to make sure they are communicating concerns they have with students to parents/guardians and work to establish conferences if needed. Digital Literacy was also discussed during the meeting. With iPads being deployed school-wide across the district, teachers need to consider how these tools will impact their instruction and how they will be utilized. With students being one-to-one with devices in the near future, teachers will need to have and understand many new resources to be used in their classrooms.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Ms. S. shared with the group that the Teacher Retention Committee, along with Mr. Patrick, were in discussion regarding the monthly beginning teacher meetings and that it looks like these meetings would be held quarterly in the future. She also shared that the success of these meetings are being gauged and it appeared that everyone participating enjoyed the meetings and found value in the information that was being shared.

APPENDIX M: TEACHER RETENTION COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

AND MINUTES, 2-16-18

V F L Elementary School
February 16, 2018
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Desired Outcomes:

By the end of this meeting, you will have:

- An overview of the school’s teacher turnover
- An understanding of teacher turnover in the school compared to district teacher turnover
- An understanding of the district turnover for 2017-2018
- An overview of the effectiveness of the Improvement Strategies Implementation
- An understanding of the Beginning Teacher Support Plan revisions
- An overview of the next implementation steps

AGENDA

What	How	Who	Time
Start ups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Context • Desired Outcomes • Agenda 	Present Clarify	Ervin Patrick	5 min.
Review School’s Teacher Turnover	Present Discuss Clarify	All	10 min.
Discuss Turnover in the School Compared to Overall District Turnover	Present Discuss Clarify	All	10min.
Discuss 2017-2018 Teacher Turnover for the District	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.
Discuss Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Improvement Strategies	Present Discuss Clarify	All	10 min.
Discuss Revision to Beginning Teacher Support Plan	Present Discuss Clarify	All	5 min.
Discuss Next Implementation Steps	Present Discuss Q and A	All	10 min.

Teacher Retention Committee Meeting Minutes

V F L Elementary School

February 16, 2018

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

The meeting opened with a review of the agenda and desired outcomes. No alterations or additions were made to the meeting by the group.

The meeting moved forward by discussing turnover in the school. There have been multiple retirements of veteran staff members that will affect the overall turnover in the school. Also, one teacher is leaving the school to work in the county in which she lives due to a family situation. Other than these isolated instances, there are no other teachers that intend to leave the school.

An overall look was taken at the turnover in the school compared to other schools in the district. The school has historically had low turnover and the staff tends to stay for a large portion of their career. Compared to other schools in the district, the school is in relatively good shape and has less turnover than others. Although there is typically a large percentage of turnover after an administrative change, this shift has not occurred following the new administration at the school.

The committee discussed the turnover in the district as compared to years past. Historical data was presented and no trends were identified, but it was obvious that teacher turnover has increased in the district over the past few years. Reviewing this data helped to solidify the thought that the five improvement strategies are directed toward improving teacher retention. Several of the committee members voiced concerns about the increases during certain academic years, and the discussion about the district having some of the highest turnover in the region also raised concerns.

The meeting then moved to discussion of the implementation of the five improvement strategies. The five strategies have been in place over the span of two months and things have been going well. The teachers who are involved in the study are still excited about the work that is going on. There have been a few minor changes to the strategies after implementation, but the major changes were made before the strategies were finalized and implemented.

Mr. Patrick stated that depending on the success of the five strategies and the end result of the implementation, the strategies will be added to the Beginning Teacher Support Plan. Based on the information that was shared with the committee, they have recommended that the strategies be written into the plan and implemented district wide for the 2018-2019 academic year. The survey that was given to teachers prior to implementation of the five strategies yields that they believe these strategies will have a positive impact on teacher retention.

Next steps include comparing the pre-implementation survey to the post-implementation survey in order to gauge the complete effectiveness of the strategies and implementation. It is likely that the Teacher Retention Committee may not meet again, but they expressed their support of the five improvement strategies and their implementation of the strategies district wide.

