

## **ABSTRACT**

Michael White, **TEACHING IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA: THE IMPACT OF BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT ON TEACHER RETENTION** (Under the direction of Dr. Travis Lewis). Department of Educational Leadership, May, 2024.

With research supporting that teachers have the greatest effect on student achievement, it is imperative that highly qualified teachers are retained while new teachers are recruited to the profession. The purpose of this mixed-methods inquiry was to focus on a year-long onboarding process to see the effect on the retention of first-year beginning teachers in a rural school system in Northeastern North Carolina. Three questions guided this research: (1) How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year? (2) How effective were the strategies delivered during the beginning teacher preparation program in having an impact on their first year? and (3) What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing the Educator Preparation Program coursework? This inquiry included an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design through Action Research Cycles comprising of the Plan-Do-Study-Act model. This inquiry used included multiple quantitative instruments (Ohio State Self-Efficacy Survey, Likert-type Surveys, as well as data collected by the school system) to gather and analyze data about retaining first year beginning teachers. This inquiry triangulated the quantitative data with qualitative data from focus groups. The results indicated that the year-long onboarding process did help retain beginning teachers over the course of their first year, but additional work needed to be completed in regard to building-level supports. Self-efficacy improved over the course of the year and some of the supports offered helped beginning teachers with EPP coursework. Hopeful County Schools has improved practices in regards to educating personnel on licensure requirements as well as hiring additional staff to help beginning teachers in the classroom due to this study.



TEACHING IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA: THE IMPACT OF BEGINNING TEACHER  
SUPPORT ON 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  
Michael White  
May, 2024

Director of Dissertation: Travis Lewis, EdD  
Dissertation Committee Members:  
Marjorie Ringler, EdD  
Karen Jones, PhD  
Otis Smallwood, EdD

©Copyright 2024  
Michael White

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people that I need to thank for helping me through this journey and I am sure I am going to miss someone so please forgive me if you do not see your name.

My wonderful family – mom, dad, Cheryl, Nick, Olivia, Mason and Madison - who had to hear that I could not do things on occasion because I was writing, I love you and appreciate all you continue to do for me. You have always believed in me and supported my dreams; it doesn't go unnoticed.

My life-long friends – Mike, Jennifer, Tina – who had to listen to me complain when I wanted to quit, thank you for listening and arguing back for me to keep going.

My boss, my friend, and a true believer that I could do this, Otis Smallwood, there are no words to express the gratitude. Thank you!

My partners in crime at work – Latisha Freeman and Kim Lassiter – who kept me on track and made sure I always did my homework and turn everything in on time; you mean more than you know.

To the students who watched me on this journey – Quanazeon, Deontre, Austin, Tyron and Janari – thank you for pushing me. You have no clue how you all continue to set the bar high for the man I need to be. I always want to be a role model for you and someone you can rely on.

Thank you to the first-year teachers who participated in this study, we will forever be connected regardless of where our paths take us. Without you, this study would not have been possible!

Thank you to the staff of East Carolina University – Drs. Travis Lewis, Marjorie Ringler, Karen Jones, and Heidi Puckett – you have provided such valuable feedback not only for this dissertation but in my life.

And finally, I want to thank God because there is no way this would have been possible without Him.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE.....	i
COPYRIGHT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Context of Study.....	2
Problem Statement.....	13
Focus of Practice Guiding Questions.....	14
Inquiry Overview.....	15
Inquiry Partners.....	17
Self-Efficacy.....	17
Definition of Key Terms.....	18
Assumptions.....	20
Scope and Delimitations.....	21
Limitations.....	21
Significance of Inquiry.....	22
Advancing Equity and Social Justice.....	22
Advances in Practice.....	23
Summary.....	23
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	24

Teacher Preparation.....	24
Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs.....	24
Alternative Teacher Routes.....	25
Induction of New Teachers.....	27
North Carolina State Board of Education Policy on Teacher Induction...	30
Teacher Recruitment.....	33
Compensation.....	33
Rurality.....	35
High-Needs Schools.....	37
Teacher Retention/Job Satisfaction.....	37
Teacher Compensation.....	38
Relationships in the School.....	39
Working Conditions.....	40
Bandura’s Theory of Self-Efficacy.....	41
Summary.....	45
CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY.....	46
Guiding Questions.....	47
Inquiry Design and Rationale.....	47
Inquiry Partners.....	48
Ethical Considerations.....	50
Inquiry Procedures.....	53
Continuous Onboarding.....	53
Participants.....	55



Instrumentation.....	55
Action Research Cycle 1.....	60
Plan.....	60
Do.....	61
Study.....	61
Act.....	61
Summary of Action Research Cycle 1.....	61
Action Research Cycle 2.....	61
Plan.....	62
Do.....	62
Study.....	63
Act.....	63
Summary of Action Research Cycle 2.....	63
Action Research Cycle 3.....	64
Plan.....	64
Do.....	64
Study.....	65
Act.....	65
Summary of Action Research Cycle 3.....	65
Inquiry Design Rigor.....	65
Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions.....	66
Role of the Scholarly Practitioner.....	68
Summary.....	68

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	70
Implementation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program.....	71
Data Collection.....	74
Data Analysis.....	77
Demographics.....	78
Results.....	79
Inquiry Question 1.....	79
Inquiry Question 2.....	97
Inadequate Building-Level Support.....	101
Encouraging District-Level Support.....	103
Informative Licensure Support.....	104
Inquiry Question 3.....	105
Summary.....	112
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	119
Summary of Findings.....	119
Teacher Efficacy Over the Course of the First Year.....	119
Greatest Impact on Beginning Teachers' First Year.....	120
Supports in Completing Educator Preparation Program Coursework.....	121
Interpretation of the Findings.....	122
Limitations of the Inquiry.....	126
Implications of the Findings for Practice.....	127
Implications for the Findings for Equity.....	130
Recommendations for Practice.....	130

Recommendations for Future Study.....	131
Conclusions.....	132
Scholarly Practitioner Reflections on Leadership.....	134
REFERENCES.....	136
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	158
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS.....	160
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.....	161
APPENDIX D: INSTRUMENTATION TEACHER SELF EFFICACY SURVEY...	164
APPENDIX E: PROTOCOL FOR TEACHER FOCUS GROUP.....	165
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS.....	167
APPENDIX G: INSTRUMENTATION LIKERT-LIKE SCALE SURVEY.....	169

**LIST OF TABLES**

1. Licensure Routes Fast Facts in NC .....	7
2. Bandura’s Sources of Efficacy .....	44
3. Inquiry Partners and Roles .....	51
4. Connection between the Study Questions and Instrumentation .....	58
5. Percentage of Beginning Teachers in Hopeful County Schools.....	75
6. Percentage of Beginning Teachers Hopeful County Schools Lost.....	76
7. Hopeful School District Licensure by Grade Level for 2022-2023 Academic Year	80
8. Participant Demographics.....	81
9. Number and Percentage of Beginning Teacher by Licensure Type.....	106

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Teacher ethnicity in Hopeful County Schools.....	3
2. Hopeful County’s demographics.....	4
3. Teacher’s years of experience as a licensed teacher.....	5
4. Student ethnicity in Hopeful County Schools.....	12
5. UNC system interactive dashboard retention rates by entry method.....	28
6. UNC system interactive dashboard retention rates by year.....	29
7. Framework of the teacher self-efficacy.....	43
8. PDSA Cycle for the three cycles of inquiry.....	49
9. PDSA Cycles for study.....	54
10. TSES average pre- and post- BT program.....	82
11. Survey questions for efficacy in classroom management.....	84
12. Survey questions for efficacy in student engagement.....	85
13. Survey questions for efficacy in instructional practices.....	86
14. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control disruptive behavior (Question 1)...	87
15. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control student motivation (Question 2)....	88
16. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control students to believe in themselves (Question 3).....	90
17. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to help students value learning (Question 4)	91
18. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to craft good questions for students (Question 5).....	92
19. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to get children to follow classroom rules (Question 6).....	93
20. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy (Question 7).....	94

21. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to establish a classroom management system with each group of students (Question 8).....	95
22. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to use a variety of assessment strategies (Question 9).....	96
23. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused (Question 10).....	98
24. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to assist families in helping their children do well in school (Question 11).....	99
25. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to implement alternative strategies in your classroom (Question 12).....	100
26. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the five-day orientation in completing EPP coursework.....	107
27. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the monthly teacher talks in completing the EPP coursework.....	108
28. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the 20% tuition reimbursement in completing EPP coursework.....	109
29. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the beginning teacher coordinator in completing EPP coursework.....	110
30. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the principal in completing EPP coursework.....	111
31. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the mentor in completing EPP coursework.....	113
32. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the after-hour childcare session in completing EPP coursework.....	114
33. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the professional development in completing EPP coursework.....	115
34. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the five-day reading foundations course in completing EPP coursework.....	116
35. Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the end-of-semester check-ins in completing EPP coursework.....	117
36. Hopeful County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program Model.....	129

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Every student deserves a quality education, and for that to happen, highly qualified teachers are needed in every subject at every grade level. With research supporting that teachers have the greatest effect on student academic success (Chetty et al., 2014; Sheninger & Murray, 2017), it is vital that highly qualified teachers be retained while new teachers are recruited to the profession. As the teacher pipeline is in dire straits, the media in America today is covering teacher walkouts, teacher shortages, school budgets, and lack of pay for teachers more than ever before. On April 3, 2018, *The New York Times* reported that teachers across Arizona planned to walk off their job to protest low salaries and school budget cuts while teachers would rally in Denver, Colorado, for the same reason (Goldstein, 2018). CNN reported on May 8, 2019, that tens of thousands of teachers were protesting across the state of Oregon because of overcrowding in classrooms and higher wages (Yan, 2019). In April 2019, *The Washington Post* included the strikes from West Virginia to Los Angeles, Denver to Oakland and even spoke of the North Carolina walkout from May 2018 (Strauss, 2019). With all of the negative attention regarding the field of teaching and public education in general and a shortage of students in the pipeline to become teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b), students and society at large will suffer should the issue of teacher recruitment and retention not be addressed.

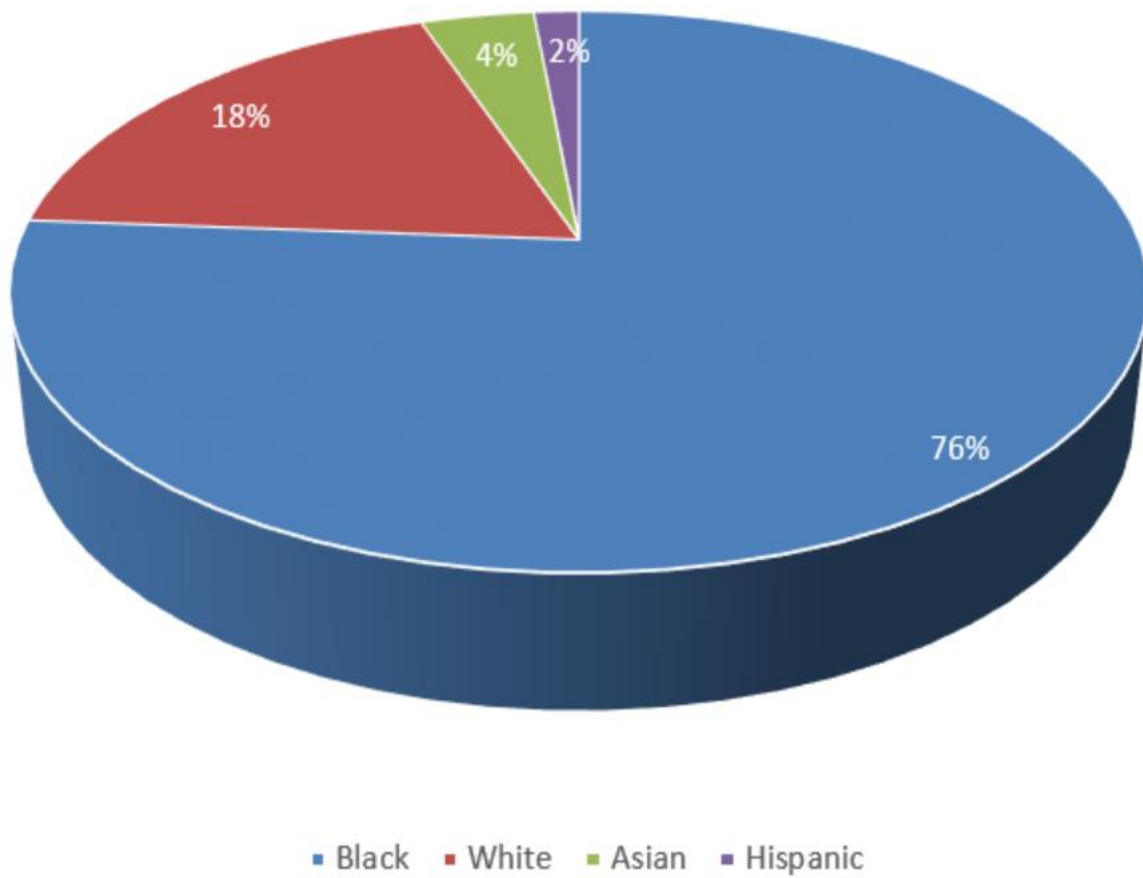
In order to encourage teachers to remain in the profession and become effective, accomplished leaders in their schools, teachers need (a) to feel happy and safe, (b) be fully supported by school and district office administration, and (c) receive quality professional development that helps them grow (Exstrom, 2010). This study focused on these priorities with beginning teachers in hopes of retaining highly motivated teachers in Hopeful County Schools.

## Context of Study

Hopeful County Schools (a pseudonym) is located in rural eastern North Carolina and employs approximately 133 certified teachers. Of these teachers, 100% are licensed in their content area and qualified to teach. Further, 29.3% hold advanced degrees, and 3% are National Board certified. While research shows that many schools lack diversity in their classrooms (Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, 2020), Hopeful County Schools does not have this issue as the teacher populations are closely aligned with the county's demographics. The ethnicity of the certified teachers can be found in Figure 1 while Hopeful County's can be found in Figure 2.

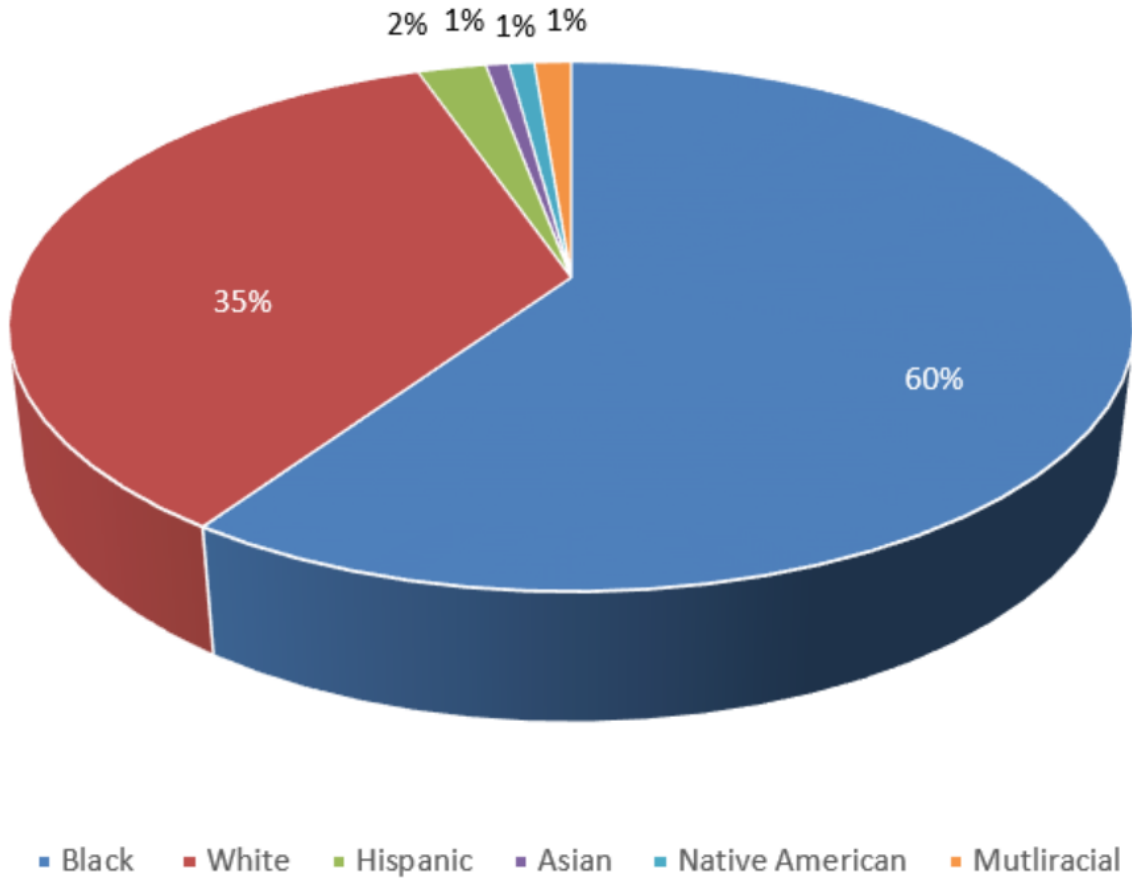
Concerning the levels of teacher experience in Hopeful County Schools, over 37% of staff members have taught for more than 10 years as seen in Figure 3. However, teachers who hold a continuing license (CPL), which means they have completed Educator Preparation (EPP) Program coursework, passed all required testing and completed the beginning teacher support program, do not make up a healthy percent of certified staff in Hopeful County. While that seems like a discrepancy, to fill vacancies, Hopeful County Schools uses Visiting International Faculty (VIF). With a shortage on quality teachers, VIF is a cultural exchange program in which certified teachers from foreign countries come to the United States to teach for up to five years, teaching subject content but also allowing students to learn about different cultures around the world. This benefits the visiting teachers as they grow and learn about the American education system and are able to take back what they have learned to their students. While this has benefits of putting experienced teachers in classrooms, for most of the visiting teachers this is their first time in an American classroom. A VIF teacher does not meet the same requirements that teachers in America must meet as this is a cultural exchange program. Using VIF creates a constant turnover





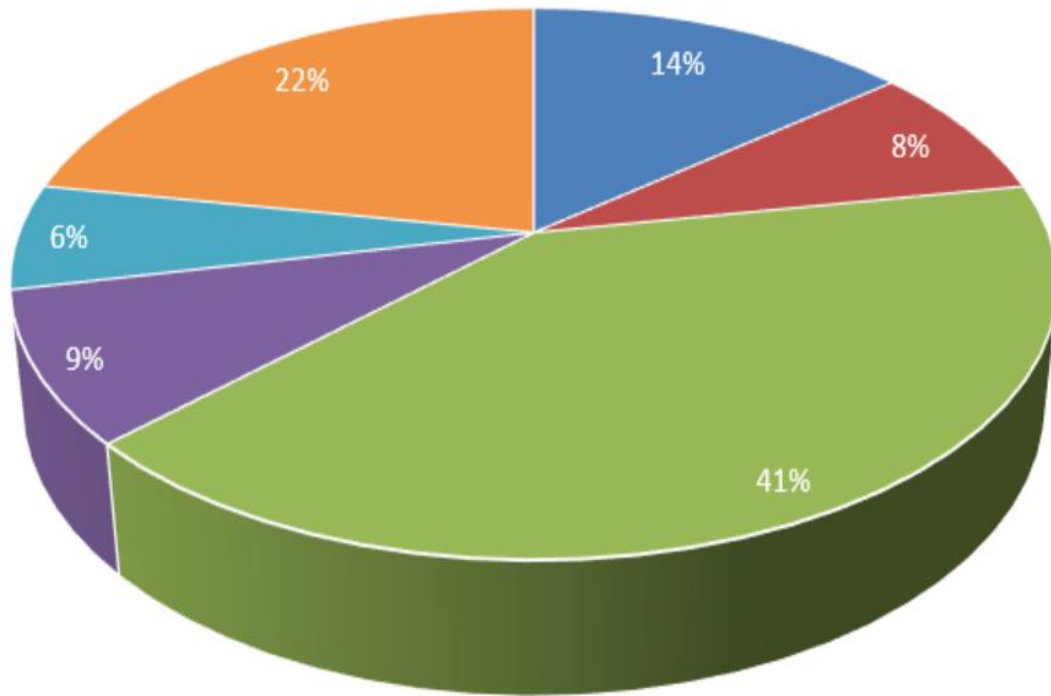
*Figure 1.* Teacher ethnicity in Hopeful County Schools.

---



*Figure 2.* Hopeful County's demographics.

---



■ 0-3 Years ■ 4-5 Years ■ 6-10 Years ■ 11-15 Years ■ 16-20 Years ■ Over 20 Years

*Figure 3.* Teacher's years of experience as a licensed teacher.

---

because the teachers' VISAs are only valid for five years, at which time they must return to their home country.

North Carolina has several paths to become a certified teacher including Permit to Teach, Emergency License, Residency License, Limited License, Initial Professional License and the Continuing Professional License (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], n.d.b.) as seen in Table 1. The candidate must hold a four-year degree to hold any of the licenses. A Permit to Teach (PtT) is a one-year license that allows the candidate to teach in a classroom regardless of subject area or training in that area. An Emergency License (EL) is a one-year license that requires the candidate to have 18 semester hours of coursework in the content area they are teaching. Both the Permit to Teach and Emergency License are only valid for one year and cannot be renewed. Residency License (RL) began in NC in 2018 replacing Lateral Entry Licensure. For a candidate to hold a residency license he/she must have 24 semester hours of coursework in the content area they will be teaching. Additionally, the candidate must be enrolled in an Educator Preparation Program (EPP). This license is renewable two times giving the candidate three years to complete all coursework and testing requirements prescribed by the EPP. A Limited License (LL) is a three-year license that can be given to a candidate if they have completed all of the EPP coursework but did not pass the state testing requirements. This must be approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) at a regular meeting and allows the candidate three additional years to pass state testing requirements. An Initial Professional License (IPL) is given to candidates who have completed a four-year degree teacher preparation program and is valid for three years.

Table 1

*Licensure Routes Fast Facts in NC*

Definition	Qualifications	Specifications	Permit to Teach (PtT)	Emergency License (EL)	Residency License (RL)	Limited License (LL)	Initial License (IPL)	Continuing License (CPL)
As detailed in LICN-001			One -year nonrenewable license. Previously known as Emergency Permit to Practice. Not eligible under any other route.	One-year nonrenewable license. Not an option for those who completed an Educator Preparation Program.	Replaces Lateral Entry as the NC alternative license One-year, with option to renew twice, within no more than a 3-year period	Three-year license for an educator who has passed all coursework from EPP but has not passed required testing		
	Bachelor's Degree		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Coursework or Testing			18 SH	24 SH or NC SBE Licensure Area Exams	Completed EPP coursework but has not passed state testing	Completed an EPP coursework as an undergrad	



Table 1 (continued)

Definition	Qualifications	Specifications	Permit to Teach (PtT)	Emergency License (EL)	Residency License (RL)	Limited License (LL)	Initial License (IPL)	Continuing License (CPL)
		One-Year License	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes No – 3 year	No – 3 year	No – 5 year
		Renewable	No	No	Twice within 3-year Period  Must have: -taught 6 calendar months -continued enrollment in EPP -continued employment -completion of pre-service requirements	Yes	No, once you have completed the IPL you move to the CPL	Yes

Table 1 (continued)

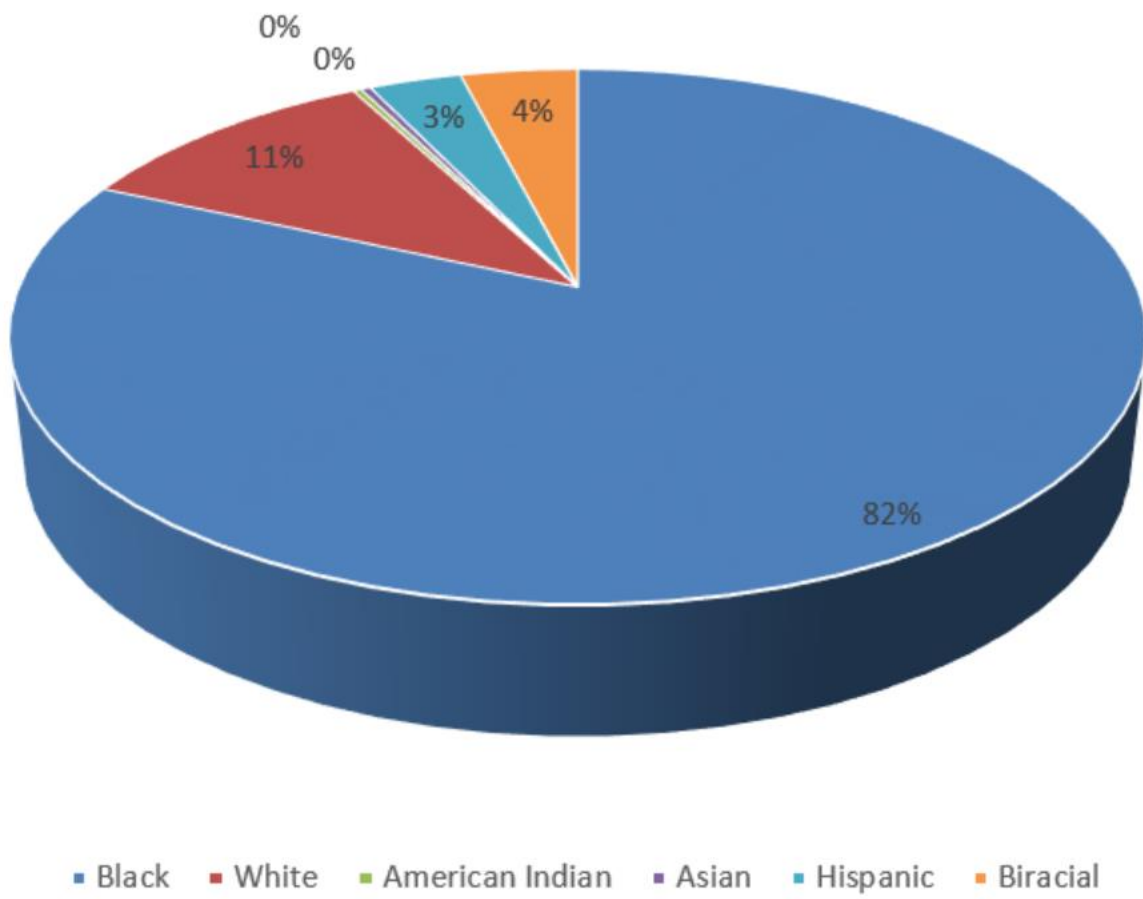
Definition	Qualifications	Specifications	Permit to Teach (PtT)	Emergency License (EL)	Residency License (RL)	Limited License (LL)	Initial License (IPL)	Continuing License (CPL)
		Conversion	Convert to RL or EL upon qualifying	Convert to RL upon qualifying	Convert to IPL or CPL upon completion of EPP requirement	Convert to IPL or CPL upon completion of required state testing	Convert to CPL upon completion of three years of teaching	



In order for a teacher to receive the Continuing Professional License (CPL), an IPL candidate would complete three years as a beginning teacher with a minimum of proficient on all of the teaching standards during the third year to be moved to a CPL. An alternative candidate, RL or LL would have to complete all coursework and testing requirements from their EPP as well as complete the three-year Beginning Teacher Program and receive a minimum of proficient on all standards in the NC teacher evaluation rubric. The CPL license is valid for five years and is renewable upon the completion of completing continuing education units (CEUs). Teachers would continue to hold this license until they retire.

The Hopeful County School District consists of seven schools and one Pre-K building, all of which are located in rural areas: four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one early college high school. The student population in these schools is low socio-economic status. Three schools (West Hopeful Elementary, Hopeful Middle, and Hopeful High) are low-performing on NC state testing standards, two of which (West Hopeful Elementary and Hopeful Middle) have been low-performing for at least three of the school years from 2015-2019. Hopeful High School has continued to be low-performing since the 2014-15 school year.

Hopeful County covers 741 square miles of farmland and large swamps. While the county itself is geographically large, the school district's population continues to shrink. Over the past six years, the student population of Hopeful County Schools has dwindled from 2,416 to 1,739 students. The 2021-22 racial and ethnic makeup of Hopeful County Schools students is less than 1% American Indian and Asian, 3.6% Hispanic, 4.0% biracial, 10.6% Caucasian, and 81.7% African American (see Figure 4). Other demographic information pertaining to Hopeful County schools: 2.7% of students are identified as academically gifted, 13.7% are receiving services through the exceptional children's program, and 0.5% are identified as English as a



*Figure 4. Student ethnicity in Hopeful County Schools.*

---

second language students. The 2020 graduation rate for Hopeful County Schools is 83.6%, slightly lower than the state average of 87.6%.

The school district has seven principals and four assistant principals. Of these school administrators, six have less than three years of experience, and all ten have been in their current school for less than three years. The principal turnover rate in 2019 was 57.1% and goes hand-in-hand with the turnover rate for the superintendent and directors at the central office level which was 54.5%. The teacher turnover rate for Hopeful County Schools was 21.7% in 2019 and 22.3% in 2020. The turnover data remained stagnant from 2016 when it was 21.76%. The 2020 data show that 31 teachers left the district in 2020, of which 48.4% went to teach in another district. Comparing Hopeful County Schools to the other districts in its region, it was in the top five of the highest attrition rates.

Hopeful County's location in Northeastern North Carolina along with its rural setting provides many challenges in recruiting and retaining highly effective principals and teachers. In rural North Carolina, teachers are hard to come by for various reasons – geographic isolation, lower pay, as well as cultural differences, often leading school systems to select candidates that are changing careers or have graduated from college in a non-education field but are interested in pursuing a job in teaching. In the two school years preceding this study, Hopeful County Schools has non-renewed 11 beginning teachers out of 12 for not meeting licensure requirements, and the teacher who was renewed ultimately left to join a different school system because of low job satisfaction.

### **Problem Statement**

The focus of this inquiry was to decrease teacher turnover by effectively supporting beginning teachers in their formative years. Beginning teachers enter the educational field in

many ways including, the traditional route of getting a bachelor's degree in education, Residency (formerly known as Lateral Entry), Permit to Teach, or a limited license offered through the Career and Technical department of North Carolina's Department of Instruction (NCDPI). Regardless of how beginning teachers enter the world of education, many do not make it through the first five years (Jacobson et al., 2020).

In 2017, North Carolina passed into law 115C-300.1. for new teacher induction programs designed to provide ongoing support for beginning teachers. The Beginning Teacher Support Program was created to support first-year teachers who entered teaching through the traditional route, such as an educator preparation program or EPP, but this does not always help to prepare new teachers who have been hired through one of the alternative licensure pathways with no previous experience or training. The purpose of this study is to create a continuous onboarding process that allows beginning teachers to feel supported and capable of teaching students regardless of their pathway into the field of education. Many of the changes being implemented through this study are intended to provide support for beginning teachers who are not traditionally trained, both inside and outside of their classroom. The process includes the following: implementing a five-day onboarding orientation, hiring a beginning teacher support coordinator, placing invested instructional coaches in the school building as mentors, offering after-hours and onsite test prep training with babysitting for younger children, and securing substitute teachers once a month so that beginning teachers can catch up on the numerous responsibilities that may lead to burnout and a lack of professional vitality.

### **Focus of Practice Guiding Questions**

In an effort to retain beginning teacher in rural Hopeful County, North Carolina, I examined the following questions through this study:

1. How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?
2. How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful's beginning teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
3. What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing Educator Preparation Program coursework?

By addressing these questions, this study aimed to identify how the district can better serve beginning teachers who face multiple barriers to persisting within the profession of teaching. I used the data collected and the study's findings to refocus how Hopeful County serves its beginning teachers in an effort to retain them.

### **Inquiry Overview**

The guiding questions of the focus of practice will be answered using a mixed methods action research method. Action research is the collaborative process to improve education by incorporating change (Mertler, 2022). Using a cyclic process of planning, acting, developing and reflecting allows us to create a better atmosphere for beginning teachers for years to come. We surveyed all beginning teachers (years 1-3) within Hopeful County Schools to get a better understanding of what they felt went well and what support they continue to need. All beginning teachers participated of their own accord. The study population was all of the 1<sup>st</sup> year beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools. The purpose behind using only first year beginning teachers in our study was we can track the changes made from the year of implementation against the prior years and compare outcomes.

The aim of the study was to retain beginning teachers in a rural location in North Carolina. An explanatory sequential mixed method design also known as the QUAN-Qual model (Gay & Airasian, 2003) was used, involving collecting quantitative data around beginning teacher retention in Hopeful County Schools, followed by qualitative data in the form of focus groups with the teachers to help explain the quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This method was chosen as it allowed us to view the issue at hand, implement changes around beginning teacher retention, and use the voice of the beginning teachers to understand how the changes affected the most valuable resource a school district has. This study had three cycles of inquiry using the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) model for continuous improvement (Langley et al., 2009) for each cycle. Using this approach allowed me, in conjunction with my collaborative partners, to triangulate the data across multiple data sources establishing reliability in this study (Mertler, 2022).

In the first cycle (quantitative) of the study, data was analyzed from various sources to examine issues in Hopeful County Schools which led to the lack of beginning teacher retention. In the second and implementation cycle (quantitative) of the study, data was collected around beginning teacher retention data, to assess whether the beginning teacher program relates to teacher retention and beginning teacher coursework. The third and final cycle (qualitative) was conducted as a follow-up to the quantitative cycles in order to help explain issues around beginning teacher retention in Hopeful County.

The quantitative data found in cycle 1 determined what interventions were needed such as higher wages, longer planning times, teacher mentors, etc. Teacher feedback throughout the study led to iterative changes to the nature of the support being provided to beginning teachers,

including modifications to professional development and meetings with the beginning teacher support coordinator.

### **Inquiry Partners**

This study engaged with beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools, their classrooms, schools, the district central office, and higher institutions of education that they choose to attend. Because of the multiple areas involved in this study, it was imperative to include inquiry partners that assisted me in the application and reflection of this study. The first inquiry partner I worked closely with is the beginning teacher support coordinator. Her role is to support beginning teachers in and out of the classroom. She plans monthly professional development meetings, makes sure all of the beginning teacher licenses are updated, pairs beginning teachers with mentors, and provides feedback from classroom visits to all beginning teachers. Her role was integral in helping me review data and revise what our next steps would be. Principals were also an important inquiry partner as they are who observe beginning teachers at work every day and evaluate them accordingly. Principals have to approve their leave for workshops and see the benefit of what this study strives to provide beginning teachers and their schools. Finally, I worked closely with East Carolina University's College of Education, as they are one of the EPPs our teachers use frequently. They assisted us with coursework needs and collaborated with us to help beginning teachers meet all of their requirements.

### **Self-Efficacy**

Acknowledging that many factors contribute to why teachers change roles or leave schools and systems completely, it is important to also recognize that teachers play a key role in the academic success of students (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) stated “the teacher’s belief of his or her own capability to organize and execute

courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (p. 223). Teachers’ sense of self-efficacy is a powerful construct related to a number of positive student outcomes.

Students who have a teacher with a high sense of self-efficacy, compared to their peers taught by a teacher with low self-efficacy, have improved achievement, higher self-efficacy, positive attitudes toward schools, greater interest in school, and higher motivation (Tschannen et al., 1998). Teachers with a sense of high self-efficacy are also more likely to work longer with struggling students (Graham et al., 2001; Soodak & Podell, 1996). Because of this, we will be using Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy to help frame this study for myself and for the inquiry partners.

Bandura (1977, 1986, 1997) defines self-efficacy as a person’s belief in his or her ability to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Using Bandura’s theory, if beginning teachers with no formal training in education believe that they can go into a classroom and impact student learning, with supports in place while confronted with the daily challenges of teaching and taking EPP coursework, we should see teachers who are more resilient and remain in the profession longer. It is important to remember that self-efficacy focuses on perceptions, not actual skills and abilities. More about self-efficacy is addressed in Chapter 2.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following key terms are used throughout this study and are defined as follows:

*Alternative Certification Programs* - An approved educator preparation program, described in N.C.G.S. 115C Article 17D (relating to Governance of Educator Preparation Programs), is designed as an alternative to a traditional undergraduate teacher certification



program, for individuals already holding at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education and is employed by a local school administrative unit.

*Beginning Teacher* - A beginning teacher refers to an individual who entered the field of public education and who has been teaching less than a total of three complete school years (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020). For this study, I will include teachers who hold the provisional license, Permit-to-Teach and Emergency license, as beginning teachers.

*Educator Preparation Program, or EPP* - An entity that must be approved by the State Board for Educator Certification to recommend candidates for a teacher license (N.C.G.S. 115C Article 17D). Boe et al. (2007) found that teachers from extensive educator programs feel better prepared than teachers from less extensive programs.

*Experiential Learning* - Kolb (2014) explains that experiential learning is a holistic continuous process grounded in experience.

*Induction* - Program (formal or informal) aimed at supporting beginning teachers in their first years of teaching (Harmsen et al., 2019).

*Mentor* - A mentor is an experienced teacher who works with a beginning teacher to improve techniques and pedagogical approaches in the classroom while helping manage emotions and work with coping skills through shared experiences (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

*Preservice Teacher Education* - A program in which preservice teachers receive field-based training while transitioning from the college classroom to practice required through an educator preparation program in order to pass their certification exams and complete the program requirements (Hamilton & Margot, 2019).

*Principal* - Establishes and maintains supportive methods for learning and growth of the teachers which effectively promotes student achievement (Drago-Severson, 2012). The leader of the school building.

*Professional Competence* - The knowledge, skills, attitudes an individual possesses that are needed to be an effective classroom teacher (Fauth et al., 2019).

*Social Constructivism* - How knowledge is formed through interactions with others (Doolittle & Camp, 1999).

*Student Teaching* - Classroom-based experience usually occurring near the end of a student's preparation program which gives the opportunity to practice and apply what the individual has learned in a classroom setting but under the supervision of an experienced classroom teacher (Chang et al., 2005).

*Teacher attrition* - Defined as teachers who leave the profession before retirement (Booth et al., 2021).

*Teacher efficacy* - Self-efficacy is defined by Bandura as beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute a plan of action required to produce results (Stites et al., 2018). Teacher efficacy is considered where teachers form their attitudes and confidence in their ability in affect student learning (Yoo, 2016).

### **Assumptions**

Two of the main assumptions of this study were that the school culture in each beginning teacher's building is sound and that every principal wants to retain each of their beginning teachers. These two assumptions allow beginning teachers to feel a sense of belonging within their respective school and ease some of the pressure or stress a beginning teacher typically experiences. A secondary assumption was that principals are providing the beginning teachers in

their school with timely, honest, meaningful feedback to support beginning teacher growth. A third assumption was that each beginning teacher will be fully engaged in the professional development activities provided throughout the year to help them grow within the profession and in their practice. Finally, it was assumed that beginning teachers will answer all of the surveys, field questions, and interviews in an honest and professional manner.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this study was limited to first year beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools. This allowed the research to focus directly on the onboarding process and needs of a first-year teacher regardless of grade level or location within the county. The results of this study are not necessarily transferrable to other districts as Hopeful County Schools is a rural district that hires predominately teachers who have no formal education training and serves approximately 1,700 students of which 60% are economically disadvantaged.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the COVID-19 pandemic and future potential response to an outbreak in our district or community. The beginning teacher sessions were prepared to be interactive and face-to-face. Also, our beginning teachers are not trained for virtual learning which puts them at a higher disadvantage should an outbreak happened and necessitated a shift from in person to virtual teaching and learning.

Another limitation is there were few workdays for beginning teachers to gather for training and support; as such, we utilized time after school, which was not ideal given that teachers have been working all day and may not therefore be as engaged. Finally, as the scholarly practitioner leading this study, my role is Executive Director of Human Resources for Hopeful County Schools. Given this, beginning teachers could have struggled with a power

dynamic that could impact their responses. However, I do not complete any principal or beginning teacher observations or evaluations which should have helped address this potential limitation.

### **Significance of Inquiry**

Teachers make the greatest impact on student success (İnci & Kaya, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative that we have high quality teachers in every classroom, whether the school be predominately black or white, low-income or affluent, suburban or rural. High attrition rates, especially among beginning teachers (Farrell, 2016) are concerning. There are discrepancies as to the exact number in the literature, but there is agreement that beginning teachers are leaving at an alarmingly high rate (Harfitt, 2015; Kelly et al., 2019).

### **Advancing Equity and Social Justice**

Educational inequities are particularly prominent in poor and rural schools, broadening existing achievement and opportunity gaps, but solutions are not hidden in higher standards (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). In order to help mitigate the inequities, it is imperative to identify ways to attract and retain teachers, as high attrition rates weaken and disrupt the learning environment while affecting student academic performance negatively (Sutcher et al., 2016). Beginning teachers are often assigned to schools with the highest poverty rate (Imig & Imig, 2006) and receive the most difficult classroom assignments (Glover & Harris, 2016; Imig & Imig, 2006; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Many of the students assigned to beginning teachers are already years behind, and this comes at the cost of missed experiences and opportunities (Warren, 2018).

## **Advances in Practice**

This study will advance the teaching practice in Hopeful County Schools by retaining beginning teachers which strengthens its teaching force. Callahan (2016) suggests it takes three to seven years for a teacher to become experienced enough to become highly qualified. The current hiring practice of placing beginning teachers in schools that serve a high percentage of economically disadvantaged and minority students is detrimental to our students (Imig & Imig, 2006). In order to positively improve teaching in Hopeful County Schools, this study helped beginning teachers balance the many tasks they have on their plates, from inside the classroom to completing coursework for their EPPs. Additionally, this research can be replicated regardless of leadership and shared with similar districts.

## **Summary**

In order to improve student achievement in a high poverty, rural school district, we should retain quality teachers. With over a half a million teachers changing schools or leaving the profession every year (Redding & Henry, 2018), teacher turnover continues to plague schools nationwide, especially in rural and high poverty areas. The purpose of this study was to create and implement a continuous onboarding process for beginning teachers in the school system that allows them to grow while being supported in and outside of their classroom. Chapter 2 includes a review of literature around beginning teacher retention in rural areas focusing on teacher preparation, recruitment, and job satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

New teachers bring positivity, enthusiasm and refreshing ideas to the teaching profession, but a staggering 20-50% leave the profession within the first five years due to the lack of job dissatisfaction, perceived support and low pay (Jacobson et al., 2020). Teacher retention has been a challenge for the United States since 1957 (Norton, 1999). With the price tag of over \$8,500,000,000 (Podolsky et al., 2017) to continue to recruit, hire, and train teachers every year, it is no wonder so much work is done around teacher retention. This chapter provides a thorough examination of the existent literature relative to the recruitment and retention of beginning teachers. The first section provides research on teacher preparation and sometimes the lack thereof. The second section focuses on research related to issues in teacher recruitment and barriers schools face. The third section focuses on job satisfaction and teacher retention and what could be the reasons teachers are leaving the profession. Moreover, the final section provides perspective on how the Bandura's Theory of Self Efficacy underpins this study and is directly aligned with issues of beginning teacher retention.

### **Teacher Preparation**

With the multiple pathways to becoming a teacher in North Carolina and its many policies that govern what teachers must do to become one, this section looks at what may affect the likelihood of beginning teachers remaining the profession.

#### **Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs**

Traditional teacher preparation programs are educator preparation programs (EPPs) that provide bachelor's degrees in elementary, middle, or secondary education. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) expect graduates from colleges of education to demonstrate

knowledge, and skills and provide opportunities that support student growth (Elizabeth City State University, n.d.). Traditional teacher preparation programs typically involve classroom coursework, allowing teacher candidates to plan and prepare lessons, and then student--teach towards the end of the program (Jenset et al., 2018). In North Carolina, graduates of a traditional teacher preparation program receive an initial professional license (IPL) that is valid for three years, then transition to a continuing professional license (CPL) which is valid for five years (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2021). The LICN-001 policy makes the continuing professional license valid for five years and allows the teacher to serve on an ongoing basis; however, it must be renewed every five years (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2021).

Many teachers report a lack of preparedness for the realities of teaching (Ingersoll & Merrell, 2010). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 1999) views teacher preparedness as the feelings of preparedness teachers have when they are able to meet the challenges and expectations that characterize their profession. Ingersoll et al. (2014) conducted a study on the effects of teacher education and preparation on beginning teacher attrition. The study found that regardless of the degree, subject matter, or area of licensure, “those with more training on methods and pedagogy – especially practice teaching, observation of other classroom teaching and feedback on their own teaching – were far less likely to leave teaching after their first year on the job” (Ingersoll et al., 2014, p. 1). A study was conducted by 20 East Carolina University doctoral students; the study says that its evident that teacher preparation has a significant effect on teacher retention (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

### **Alternative Teacher Routes**

Alternative licensure is used by public schools to employ teachers who do not hold an undergraduate degree in education from an educator preparation program (EPP) (Ruhland &

Bremer, 2002). In 1982, only eight states offered alternative routes to teaching certifications, but by 2008 that number grew to include all 50 states (NCES, 2003, 2010). Critical shortages of teachers have led states to approve alternative routes to certification. Since 2015, media coverage has reported of teacher shortages for all content areas in nearly all of the 50 states in America (Behrstock-Sherratt, 2016). Darling-Hammond (2000) indicated that teacher shortages are most acute in schools that enroll a high number of students from low-socioeconomic and multicultural backgrounds. Licensing agencies across the United States typically refer to any pathway that does not follow the traditional teacher educator program as an alternative. In 2007 there were 105 alternative pathways to becoming a teacher across the 50 states (Devier, 2019), in 2017 there were 122 alternative pathways (Devier, 2019; Zirkle et al., 2007). Most alternatively licensed teachers are hired as full-time teachers and build capacity on the job. The alternative licensure requirements vary from state to state (Constantine et al., 2009).

In the North Carolina State Board of Education Policy LICN-001, there are multiple types of licenses a person can hold before they ever hold a continuing teacher license: Permit to Teach, Emergency License, Residency License and Limited License. A permit to teach license may be issued to anyone with a baccalaureate degree but does not qualify the holder for a license under any other approach. This license is valid for one year and may not be renewed. An emergency license is a one-year, nonrenewable license to an individual that holds a baccalaureate degree and 18 hours of coursework in the content area. A residency license is issued to an individual that has a baccalaureate degree, of which 24 hours of coursework must be relevant to the content that they will teach. This license is valid for one year and is renewable twice at the recommendation of the employing local school system. Once a teacher has cleared the residency requirements, they are able to hold a continuing professional license (CPL) which must be



renewed every five years. The final alternative license in North Carolina is a limited license which can be issued to an individual that has completed all coursework as assigned by the EPP but did not pass the appropriate state test by the end of the three-year period. The limited license allows the individual an additional three years to teach in the classroom while working to pass the state exam for licensure (North Carolina Board of Education, 2021).

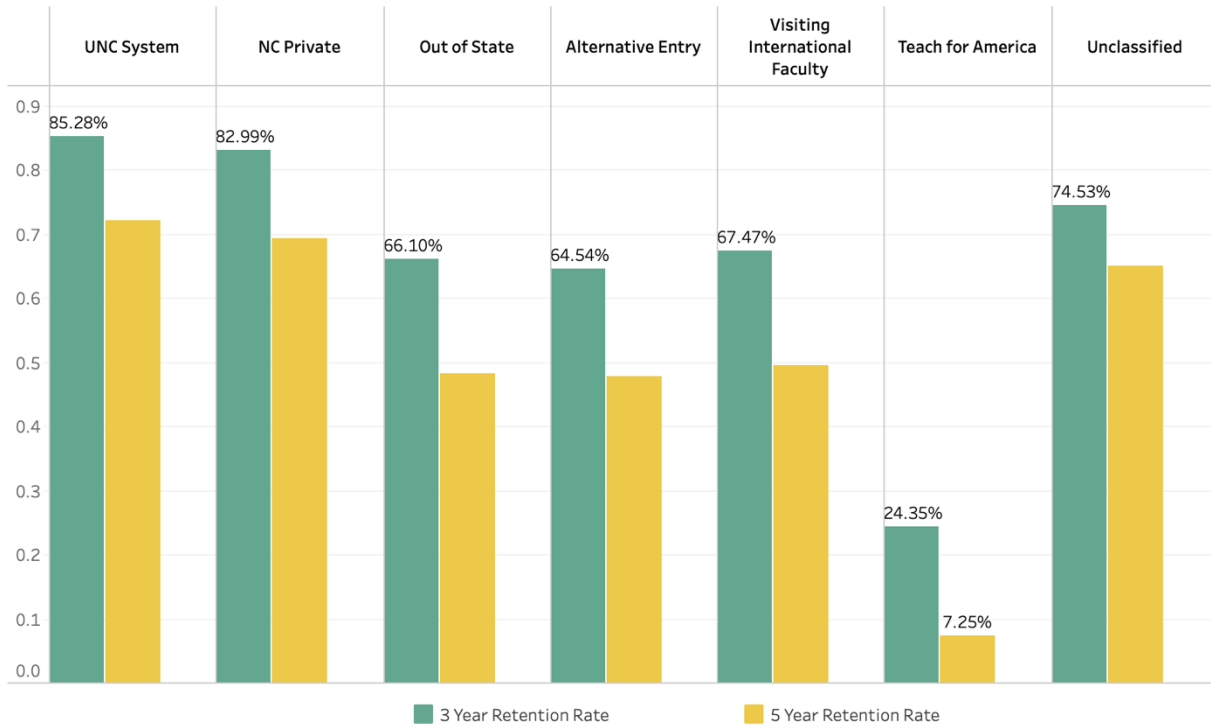
In 2015-16, there were approximately 3.8 million teachers working in public schools, with approximately 18% (or 676,000) having entered teaching through an alternative route (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Teacher shortages have never existed across the board for all schools, students or subjects. Instead, teacher shortages trouble certain schools that typically serve underrepresented minority students in low-achieving, high-poverty, rural, and urban settings (Cowan et al., 2015; Ingersoll & Perda, 2009).

When considering teacher retention, studies have shown that traditionally prepared teachers are retained at higher rates than alternative pathways (Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Redding & Smith, 2016). But looking at student performance, research studies have mixed results on which teacher pathway provides the highest student achievement (Clark et al., 2013; Clotfletler et al., 2010; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). With the forementioned research studies, it is worthy of our time to support the alternative licensed teachers, so they not only remain in Hopeful County but provide the best education to our students. Additionally in Figure 5 and Figure 6, you can see that how teachers are trained affect the retention rates.

### **Induction of New Teachers**

While the number of new teachers has continued to increase, the formal practice of induction has become a standard practice in most K-12 schools across America (Kang & Berliner, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Effective induction practices have shown to have a

Retention Rates in the Teaching Field at Three and Five Years of Experience: 2010-2011



*Note.* (The University of North Carolina System, 2022).

*Figure 5.* UNC system interactive dashboard retention rates by entry method.

## Retention Rates & Counts in the Teaching Field: 2010-2011

Category	3 Year Retention Rate	5 Year Retention Rate	1 Year Count	2 Year Count	3 Year Count	4 Year Count	5 Year Count
UNC System	85.28%	72.19%	2,208	1,987	1,883	1,743	1,594
NC Private	82.99%	69.29%	547	494	454	416	379
Out of State	66.10%	48.19%	938	742	620	518	452
Alternative Entry	64.54%	47.81%	502	403	324	265	240
Visiting International Faculty	67.47%	49.40%	83	68	56	45	41
Teach for America	24.35%	7.25%	193	159	47	24	14
Unclassified	74.53%	65.09%	106	85	79	74	69

**Technical Note**

*These data reflect the percentage of teachers, by route of preparation, who persist for three and five years of teaching in North Carolina's public schools. These data are for four cohorts of first-time teachers from the 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 academic years. Data to track teacher retention comes from certified salary files supplied by the NC Department of Public Instruction.*

*Note.* (The University of North Carolina System, 2022).

*Figure 6.* UNC system interactive dashboard retention rates by year.

---

positive effect on beginning teachers' professional development as well as teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2012; Villar & Strong, 2007). Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that while traditional preservice programs' goal is to thoroughly prepare new teachers for their classrooms, it is not until the induction phase that they are able to transform their knowledge "into a flexible, evolving set of commitments, understandings, and skills" (p. 1048). This is the first opportunity for beginning teachers to transform the theoretical knowledge from their preservice program preparation into practical tasks of teaching and the context of teachers' work.

Comprehensive teacher induction programs have the ability to improve teacher retention (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) and the quality of teaching practices (Stanulis & Floden, 2009). Comprehensive induction programs benefit new teachers as well as veteran teachers because they foster professional learning communities and focus on professional growth (Gujarti, 2012). Jacobson et al. (2020) define a comprehensive induction program as one that includes peer mentoring, mentor observations, network groups, face-to-face professional learning, book studies as well as requiring video recording and reflection.

While induction programs are costly, Podolsky et al. (2017) estimated that the United States loses approximately \$8.5 billion to teacher attrition annually. Gujarati (2012) states that it is more cost-effective to provide induction for new teachers that reduces attrition than to continually put money into recruiting and hiring practices. Making retention of highly effective teachers a focus would allow districts and states to put more money into teacher salaries, schools, and classrooms instead of allowing it to continuously walk out the door.

### **North Carolina State Board of Education Policy on Teacher Induction**

North Carolina State Board of Education Policy TCED-016 mandates that all public schools implement a Beginning Teacher Support Program, a required three-year induction

program for beginning teachers (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020). The goal of policy TCED-016 is to help new teachers improve skills and build confidence to become successful teachers provided by systems of support from the state, school district, employing school, and mentors. This process should support beginning teachers with an initial professional license (IPL) to convert to a continuing professional license (CPL).

The five standards in the Beginning Teacher Support Program policy are designed to assist public schools in creating and implementing successful beginning teacher support programs are: (1) systematic support for high-quality induction programs; (2) mentor selection, development, and support; (3) mentoring for instructional excellence; (4) beginning teacher professional development; (5) formative assessments of candidates and programs (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020). The policy also includes five mentor standards that were designed to address the knowledge, skills, and dispositions beginning teachers need and clearly articulates how mentors can help teachers attain them. The mentor standards are as follows: (1) mentors support beginning teachers to demonstrate leadership; (2) mentors support beginning teachers to establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students; (3) mentors support beginning teachers to know the content they teach; (4) mentors support beginning teachers to facilitate learning for their students; (5) mentors support beginning teachers to reflect on their practice (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2020). Every public-school unit should have a Beginning Teacher Support Plan that has been approved by the local board of education and North Carolina Department of Instruction on file for review.

Teachers who enter the profession under the alternative route – Residency Licensure are provided some additional support under North Carolina State Board Policy LICN-001. This policy states that local educational agencies must provide teachers in their first year of residency

license with ten days of professional development designed to support successful classroom experience. The ten days can be all during a preservice period or five preservice days and the remaining five during the first year of the residency license. The North Carolina State Board of Education LICN-001 policy (2021) includes twelve non-negotiables that must be covered:

“(1) an overview of the school’s/system’s goals, policies, and procedures; (2) an overview of the State Board of Education’s Mission and Goals; (3) a description of available services and professional development opportunities; (4) the process for achieving a continuing license; (5) the guidelines for optimal working conditions for all novice teachers; (6) training on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System; (7) a review of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study including end-of-grade and end-of-course testing; (8) a review of the local curriculum guides; (9) training in lesson planning; (10) assistance in classroom organization; (11) instruction on classroom management including positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior, and safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint; and (12) an overview of the identification and education of children with disabilities.”

Research shows that state mandates alone are not sufficient to ensure that beginning teachers receive a high-quality induction support program at the district and school levels (Wechsler et al., 2012; Youngs, 2007). To be responsive to the needs of beginning teachers, regardless of the entrance route, induction programs should consider the needs in both their first-years and beyond (Cherubini, 2007) and include orientation, mentoring, professional development, and opportunities for collaboration (Jacobson et al., 2020) A comprehensive induction program will provide long-term effects for the teacher as well as the local educational

agency leading to lower attrition rates, increased teacher effectiveness, and a positive impact on student achievement (Jacobson et al., 2020).

### **Teacher Recruitment**

With nationwide teacher shortages it is easy to see that teacher recruitment is imperative. Many factors go into what makes teachers choose schools to work as well as where they are willing to relocate to teach. This section will look into some of the many factors that play a vital role in why rural schools struggle to recruit teachers. With compensation being the most prominent to rurality, it is vital that we delve into what works to recruit teachers. Schools and districts that have problems recruiting teachers also are likely to have trouble retaining teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Recruitment plans should be comprehensive to contain components that address teacher recruitment, induction programs, and teacher development, all of which have the end goal of ensuring teacher retention and supporting quality educators (Clewel & Villegas, 2001). Sutchter et al. (2016) found that the United States is spending more money replacing teachers each year than using the funds for retention, induction and support.

### **Compensation**

Teacher salaries are not standard across states in America and can even vary from district to district in the same state. A report from the National Education Association (2022) found that beginning teacher salaries range from just under \$33,000 in Montana to \$56,313 in our nation's capital. Data provided by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (n.d.a.) shows that even in North Carolina teacher pay fluctuates by local supplements with several counties receiving no additional pay to Wake County's supplement averaging \$8,873. Ingersoll (2004) studied teacher surveys of why they left the profession; and while several factors were given, the

recurring answer to what could be done to encourage teachers to remain in the profession was better salary.

While higher earnings do not equate to higher job satisfaction, it can lead to other benefits for districts, such as improved teacher retention and gains in student performance (Dee & Wyckoff, 2015). Teacher compensation is more than salary, as it encompasses salary, health care, and retirement compensation. Compensation is currently set up to reward career service which unfortunately comes on the heels of beginning teachers, instead of compensating teachers on their effectiveness. Retirement plans have a large monetary value and should not be overlooked by employees (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

Various studies have examined the relationship between teacher pay and the amount of time they stay in the profession, with most demonstrating that increased salaries reduce the probability teachers leave the profession (Hale-Jinks et al., 2006; Whitebrook & Bellm, 1999). By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most public schools had adopted a single-salary schedule where teachers would be compensated based on educational attainment and experience (Sharpes 1987). With little research to support that advanced degrees or education helped improved student achievement in 2013, North Carolina became the first state to quit paying teachers for their Master's degree as read in Session Law 2013-360, Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2013, in section 8.22. Next, Session Law 2014-100 and Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2014 added a provision so that teachers who completed at least one course prior to August 1, 2013, were grandfathered into the Master's pay scale. Kearney and Morgan (1990) define longevity pay as extra compensation for employees who have worked for an organization for a certain number of years. In North Carolina, state employees start receiving longevity pay after ten years of service at 1.5%, with



increases every five years with a maximum of 4.5% after 25 years of service (North Carolina State Human Resource Manual, 2017). In addition to cutting Master's pay in 2013, the state legislature cut longevity for teachers to add it to their annual salary.

In 2011, North Carolina teachers were required to begin contributing to their state health plan to help with a budget shortfall that North Carolina legislators anticipated (S.L. 2011-85). Session Law 2017-57 cut health care benefits to retired teachers who were hired after January 1, 2021, meaning that they would have health care while they worked, but upon retiring teachers would have to get health coverage on their own.

### **Rurality**

Rural American schools fail to attract new teachers for many reasons; however, geographic isolation, lower base salaries, and difficulty managing workloads rank as the recurring few (Jimerson, 2003; Martin & Mulvihill, 2016; Monk, 2007; Provasnik et al., 2007; Reeves, 2003; Tran & Smith, 2019; Viadero, 2018). Rural districts are burdened by a lower number of educator applicants, disintegrating tax bases as well as cultural differences (Pendola & Fuller, 2018). According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (n.d.) in 2019, 21.1% of nonmetro (rural) children lived in poverty, while 16.1% of metro children lived in poverty. Generational poverty is particularly extreme in rural areas, which is also linked to food scarcity, inadequate health care, and substandard housing (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021).

The United States Census Bureau defines rural as any population, housing, or territory that is not in an urban area (Ratcliffe et al., 2016). The definition of urban area consists of two types of geographies: urbanized areas that have a population over 50,000 people and urbanized clusters that have a population of 2,500 to 50,000. Using the 2010 Decennial Census, 19% of

America's population which is almost 60 million people lived in rural areas (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

The National Center for Education Statistics found that approximately one-third of America's public schools were located in rural areas and enrolled only 24% (12 million) of all students for the 2010-11 school year. Rural schools are typically located in areas with low property values and must rely on state and federal funds alone while schools located in high property value areas are able to generate plenty of local resources (Tieken & Montgomery, 2021)

Teachers in rural schools typically are not able to be course specific and are assigned multigrade levels which leaves them to be generalists not specialist which can be challenging. In rural schools, teachers must be able to teach many subjects in a content area, leaving them with restricted time to adequately plan (Biddle & Azano, 2016; Oyen & Schweinle, 2020). For example, someone who has a degree in Chemistry and teaches in a rural community may be licensed in science and have to teach Biology, Chemistry and Physical Science while those in an urban district may be able to teach only Chemistry. Despite the fact that rural schools face more staffing issues than its competitors (Starr & White, 2008), rural schools receive less academic and governmental attention (Howley et al., 2009).

Rural areas have many tight-knit communities, which can be attractive to teachers but can also turn some away if they are looking for a distinct separation between their professional and personal life (Anttila & Vaananen, 2013; Boylan & McSwan, 1998; Miller, 2012). Schools in rural areas that do not have commercial, cultural, and recreational comforts nearby often have trouble recruiting and retaining teachers as they leave to go to areas that provide such amenities (Anttila & Vaananen, 2013; Boylan & McSwan, 1998; Miller, 2012).

## **High-Needs Schools**

High-needs schools can be defined as having high poverty and low performance as measured by standardized test scores (Berry, 2008). Regardless of being in a rural or urban school environment, high-needs schools often serve the most at-risk populations – economically disadvantaged, academically underperforming, and students of color and are staffed with the least qualified teachers. In a report to Congress, Kuenzi (2008) points out that a large majority of secondary students fail to reach proficiency in math and sciences courses which are taught by teachers lacking adequate subject matter knowledge.

Policies created with the best intentions but ignore the many systemic problems schools face (Senge et al., 2000) also lead to principal and teacher turnover, which in turn harms student achievement (Béteille et al., 2012). North Carolina G.S. 115C-105.39 is a specific law that discusses dismissal or removal of personnel in low-performing schools if the principal was working in the school for two years and unable to increase academic achievement. Brockmeier et al. (2013) studied the effects of principal tenure, stability, and educational experience to find that while education had little to do with student achievement, the longer the principal's tenure the higher the student scores increased.

## **Teacher Retention/Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction has been actively researched for over a century from various viewpoints (Judge et al., 2017) but can be defined as how people feel about their jobs in general or about the different facets of their job (Spector, 1997). This section will examine the literature related to several prominent factors of job satisfaction such compensation, relationships in schools, and working conditions.

## **Teacher Compensation**

For decades, research has consistently identified teacher wages as a significant cause impacting the decision for teachers to stay or leave the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hale-Jinks et al., 2006; Whitebook & Bellm, 1999). Since the 1969-70 school term, the average annual salary for teachers in America has only increased by \$4,906 when looking at 2019-20 constant dollars, a 7.7% increase over a 50-year period. While many factors played a part in the 2018 walkouts of teachers across the United States, teacher pay seemed to be a major factor and received the attention of the American public, with 49% of those surveyed saying teachers' salaries should increase (Cheng et al., 2019).

Research gathered by West (2019) suggests that United States teachers' salary has flatlined for a quarter of a century when looking at take-home pay. In order to be eligible for a teaching license, a four-year degree is required. In comparison, U.S. teachers earn 22% less than other skilled college graduates (Hanushek et al., 2019). Hanushek et al. (2019) suggest that increasing teacher wages would decrease teacher turnover but may not necessarily improve the quality of teachers.

The term "teacher wage penalty" describes the difference public school teachers, in percentage, are paid relative to other college-educated workers. In a report for the Economic Policy Institute, Allegretto and Mishel (2018) found that no state in the U.S. pays teachers more than other college graduates. The average teacher wage penalty in the United States is 23.8% but ranged from -3.1% in Wyoming to -36.4% in Arizona. It is important to mention that North Carolina, the site of the study explored herein, had the second-highest teacher wage penalty at -35.5%.

Teacher salaries are not uniform across the United States. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2019, 2020) data, the average annual salary for a teacher in the United States was \$63,645. The lowest average annual salary was found in Mississippi (\$45,192) with the highest annual salary in New York (\$87,543). North Carolina was ranked 29 out of 50 number 22 from the bottom with an annual salary of \$54,682.

Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2015a) five year-longitudinal study shows that teachers who made less than \$40,000 their first year had a 10% higher attrition rate than those who made more than \$40,000. Continuing the survey out four years, 89% of teachers who made more than \$40,000 were still teaching compared to 80% who made less than \$40,000.

Beginning the 2013-14 school term, North Carolina teachers saw an increase in their base pay but additional compensation in their benefit package like longevity pay and Master's level pay was removed (NC Session Law 2013-360). More recently in their benefits package, teachers who started after January 2021 will not have healthcare upon retirement (NC Session Law 2017-57).

### **Relationships in the School**

Current teacher retention data are hard to find, but some data indicate that beginning teachers generally leave within the first five years at an alarming rate of 44% (Gray & Taie, 2015). While several reasons are attributed, lack of support is a major indicator. Given this, relationships within the school building seem critical. Three forms of support – working with a mentor, regular support of another colleague in the building, and common planning time with other teachers – have been shown to have a large effect on retaining beginning teachers (Ingersoll, 2012).

Balsmeyer et al. (1996) define collegiality as “an attitude about professional relationships that leads to genuine collaboration, potentiated individual endeavors, and mutual respect” (p. 265). These relationships lead to a better work environment where staff can prosper and have lasting careers while the absence of collegiality can create a toxic environment with negative effect in the workplace (Delgadillo, 2018).

High quality collegial support is important for both job satisfaction and the intrinsic value to teach (Thomas et al., 2019). Professional support alone has been demonstrated to not be sufficient in keeping beginning teachers in the profession. They require a combination of professional, emotional and social support to overcome the challenges of the first years of teaching (Thomas et al., 2019). According to the 2020 North Carolina Teacher Working Condition Survey (2020), 75% of all teachers who responded report having time to collaborate with colleagues which mirrors the new teacher responses of 75%. When new teachers were asked if they received emotional support from a mentor the response went up slightly to 79%.

### **Working Conditions**

Working conditions are a significant factor in whether teachers will leave the profession (Hanushek et al., 2004). In this regard, a positive climate has been shown to increase teacher retention (Berry et al., 2021; Clifford et al., 2012).

In 2002, Governor Easley and the state of North Carolina rolled out the first-ever North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, a statewide survey for licensed school staff in the nation, with 42,000 educators taking part (North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2021). This survey found five important school conditions that were linked to teacher outcomes: “the allocation of time in schools, the provision of professional development for teachers, the quality of school leadership, the input of teachers into school decision-making, and

the adequacy of school facilities/resources” (North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, 2021, About section, para. 4).

Since North Carolina’s inception of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey, NC legislators in 2005 passed Senate Bill 622, making the survey a permanent part of the state budget (SL2005-02, 2005). Twenty other states have adopted similar surveys capturing 1.5 million educator voices to provide important information on school improvement data.

Hightower et al. (2011) found that workplace conditions such as smaller class sizes and additional support appear to be more influential in recruiting and retaining teachers than increased pay. Leadership and working conditions are of major importance to teaching and learning. One study goes farther than retention to suggest that working conditions for teachers should enable them to be well-prepared in order to teach effectively. Not allowing teachers adequate time to plan and prepare leads teachers to leave (Berry et al., 2021).

### **Bandura’s Theory of Self-Efficacy**

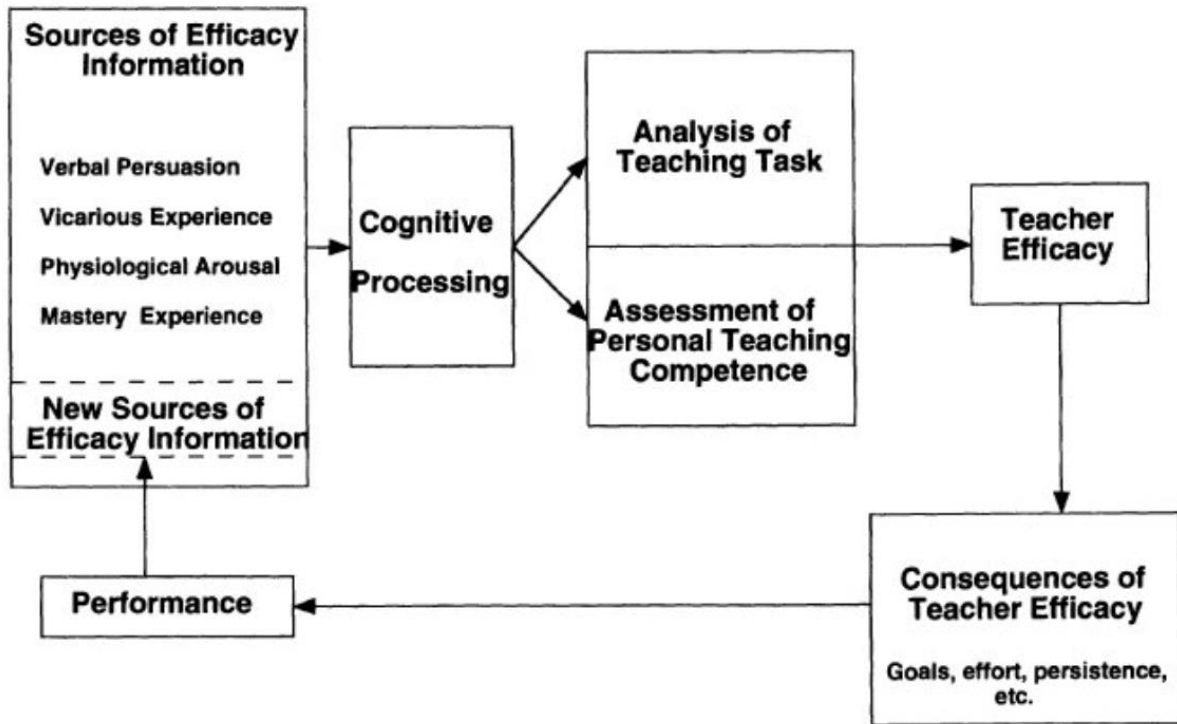
This study is grounded in Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a key construct of Bandura’s social cognitive theory and is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). He clarifies that self-efficacy “is not concerned with the skills one has but with the judgements of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Self-efficacy is formed by two processes: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1977). Efficacy expectation is the conviction that a person can successfully execute a behavior that is required to produce outcomes. Outcome expectations are anticipated outcomes whether positive or negative as a result of engaging in a specific behavior.

Bandura (1986) theorized that individuals are not just efficacious or not, but self-efficacy varies upon context and task. Self-efficacy differs from other forms of self-belief in that it varies among activities and under different conditions (Bandura, 1977). Because of the specificity, self-efficacy has been shown to be a more consistent predictor of achievement than other forms of self-belief. There are four sources that contribute to the development of self-efficacy: (a) mastery experiences (actively performing tasks), (b) vicarious experiences (seeing others perform), (c) social or verbal persuasion (feedback from others), and (d) physiological or emotional responses (mental and physical wellness) (Bandura, 1997) (see Figure 7 and Table 2). However, the most significant one of the four sources to create a strong sense of self-efficacy is based on personal mastery experiences as they provide the most authentic indication of whether one can assemble whatever it takes to succeed (Bandura, 1997). While efficacy beliefs vary in level and strength, it influences task choice, persistence, resilience, and achievement (Bandura, 1977).

Berman et al. (1977) define teacher efficacy as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (p. 137). Teachers who have a high level of personal efficacy believe that they have had adequate training to overcome obstacles in the classroom (DelGreco et al., 2018). “Individuals with a high sense of teacher self-efficacy expect to be able to improve students’ behavior and achievement despite difficulties such as adverse environmental influences” (Dicke et al., 2015, p. 3). Lee et al. (2017) found that when teachers hold strong beliefs about their efficacy, even when the instructional environment was challenging it led them to stay.

Beginning teachers’ experiences and unpreparedness influence their professional identity and their willingness to stay, so it is important that that beginning teachers are nurtured, and time is provided for them to grow and adjust to the teaching field (Du Plessis & Sunde, 2017). As





*Note.* (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 228).

*Figure 7.* Framework of the teacher self-efficacy.

---

Table 2

*Bandura's Sources of Efficacy*

Sources of Efficacy	Description of Source	Influence
Mastery Experiences (performing tasks)	Positive and negative personal experience that can influence the perception of ability to perform a task	Repeated successes develop strong efficacy Failures undermine and weaken self-efficacy
Vicarious Experiences (modeling tasks)	When an individual sees someone with perceived similar ability perform a task	Witnessing an individual succeed can increase self-efficacy Watching someone fail can lower self-efficacy
Physiological/Emotional Responses	Physical and emotional state that individuals experience while performing a task	Positive energy and emotions can increase self-efficacy Negative energy can decrease self-efficacy and impede performance.
Verbal Persuasion (feedback from others)	When individuals are verbally persuaded that they are capable of success	Supportive and specific feedback can increase self-efficacy Criticism can lower self-efficacy

teachers enter into the education field sometimes with no formal training, it is easy to become overwhelmed and self-efficacy diminished from the pressures of being a beginning teacher. Dunn and Rakes (2017) note that “the greater one’s self-efficacy, the more likely one is to persist in the face of adversity” (p. 43). Teachers with high-levels of self-efficacy experience higher levels of job satisfaction as well as lower-levels of job-related stress (Caprara et al., 2006).

### **Summary**

Teachers are leaving the field of education for many reasons, and teacher education programs are not able to solely fill the pipeline that is needed for these vacancies. This is not a new problem but one that has continued to grow exponentially. States have lowered standards to allow districts to hire teachers, but that does not fill the void of skills and content knowledge missing from beginning teachers. In order to retain beginning teachers, further exploration is needed of root causes at the national, state, and district level. Many districts cannot fund additional supplements to create higher salaries so the focus must remain on what can be controlled.

To understand and evaluate the pedagogies that are demonstrated to be effective instructional practices, beginning teachers must be exposed to them, involved in the planning aspects, as well as align them with their prior knowledge of subject matter. This can foster self-confidence and teacher efficacy, allowing beginning teachers to be effective and more likely, when combined with additional supports, to remain in the profession. Additionally, Chapter 3 will address the inquiry approach, summaries of each cycle of the action research design and the inquiry partners who will help with this study.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODS OF INQUIRY**

The focus of this inquiry is to decrease teacher turnover by effectively supporting beginning teachers in their formative years. The teacher turnover rate for Hopeful County Schools was 21.7% in 2019 and 22.3% in 2020. The turnover data remain stagnant from 2016 when it was 21.76%. The 2020 data show that 31 teachers left the district in 2020; 48.4% went to teach in another district. Comparing Hopeful County Schools to the other districts in its region, it was in the top five of the highest attrition rates in the northwest region of North Carolina.

Beginning teachers have several paths by which to enter the educational field, including the following: the traditional route of getting a bachelor's degree in education through an educator preparation program; Residency (formerly known as Lateral Entry); and Permit to Teach, a Limited License or a Restricted License (offered through the Career and Technical Department of North Carolina's Department of Instruction). Regardless of how beginning teachers enter the world of education, many do not make it through the first five years (Jacobson et al., 2020).

In 2017, North Carolina passed into law 115C-300.1. for new teacher induction programs designed to provide ongoing support for beginning teachers. The Beginning Teacher Support Program was created to support first-year teachers who entered teaching through the traditional route, but this does not always help to prepare new teachers who have been hired through one of the alternative licensure pathways with no previous experience or training. The purpose of this study was to support beginning teachers by creating a continuous year-long onboarding process that would support them inside as well as outside their classrooms. This chapter will focus on the implementation of a continuous onboarding process to support beginning teachers in Hopeful

County Schools and the related methods for data collection and analysis to determine the effectiveness of the revised onboarding.

### **Guiding Questions**

This study attempted to address the following questions:

1. How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?
2. How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful's beginning teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
3. What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing EPP coursework?

This study served to better understand how the district can better assist beginning teachers who have multiple barriers in Hopeful County.

### **Inquiry Design and Rationale**

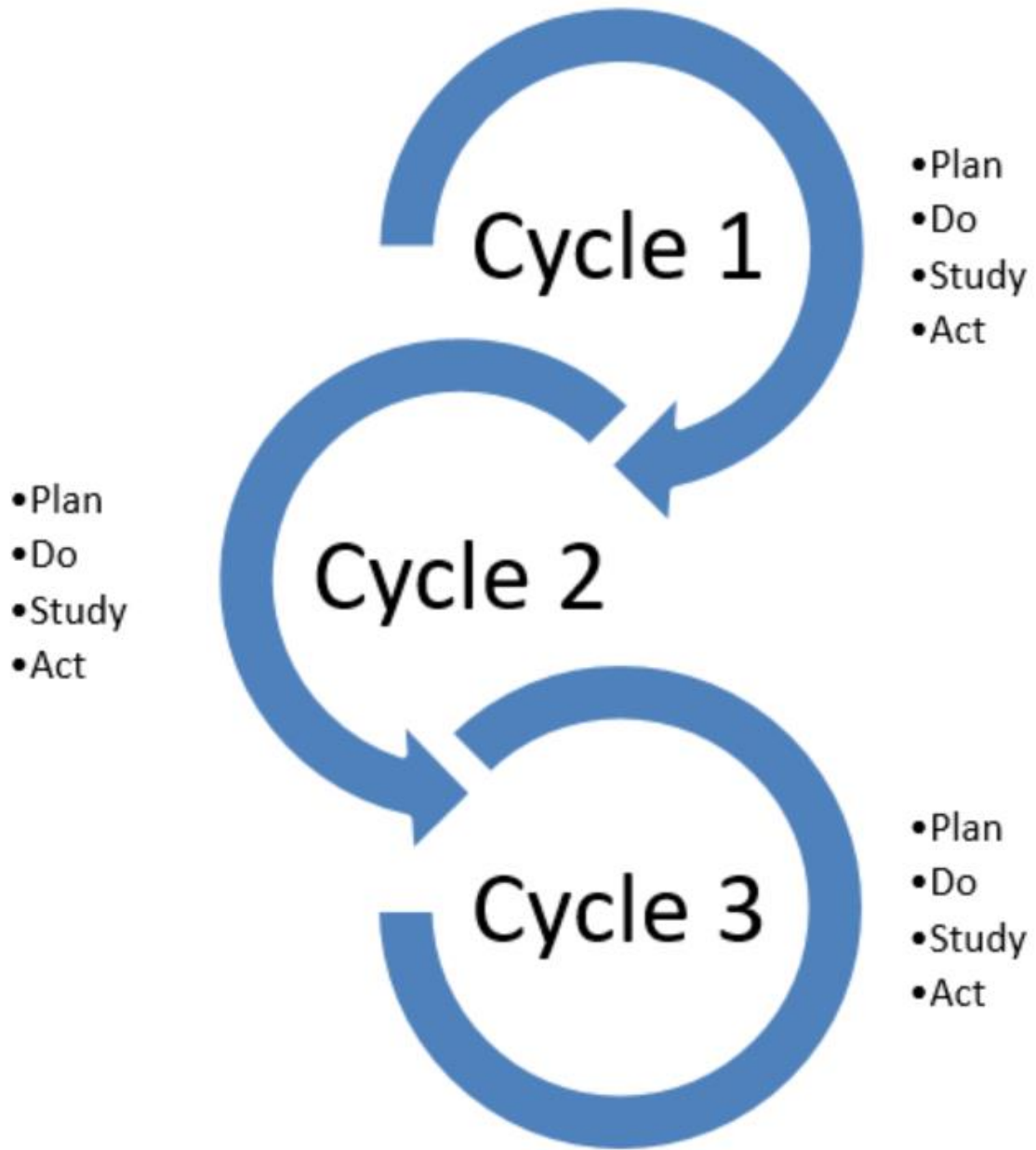
This study employed a mixed-methods action research design. Mertler (2022) describes the mixed-methods action research cycle as a better way to understand and explain a research problem at a local level in hopes of finding an immediate solution. With beginning teacher retention plaguing the district coupled with the lack of formally trained teachers graduating from EPPs in the state, I hope to utilize the results of this mixed-methods action research approach to decrease attrition while helping alternative teachers become fully licensed. Beginning teachers are required to participate in a continuous beginning teacher onboarding program provided by their school district. Such an onboarding program provides an ideal opportunity to build self-efficacy and address issues that can become barriers to retention. This program will focus on

beginning teacher supports both in and out of their classroom to help them fulfill the licensure requirements to becoming a continuing professional license holder.

I used a mixed-methods design because it utilized both qualitative and quantitative data, as just one set of data may be insufficient in answering the guiding questions. The mixed-methods design was structured within three action research cycles used to collect data over a period of time and continue improvement of the intervention, herein called the continuous onboarding program (Mertler, 2022). This allowed me to make continuous changes to our beginning teacher program while looking at feedback and data to fine-tune each practice. Each of the three cycles of the mixed-methods action research design were organized using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model (Langley et al., 2009). This allowed me to collect baseline data in cycle one, modify and deploy a new direction in cycle two and finally analyze the findings in cycle three. Langley et al.'s (2009) PDSA model is a cyclic model for continuous improvement. The first stage was to plan which includes questioning, predicting, and preparing data in each cycle. The second stage of the PDSA cycle was to research and collect data. The third stage of the PDSA cycle was to study the results, allowing me to look at what was collected to see what was working and what was not. The fourth and final stage of the PDSA cycle was to act upon what was learned from the research and reflect on what next steps should take place. See Figure 8 for the PDSA illustration.

### **Inquiry Partners**

This study engaged beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools and data subsequently collected to determine the effect of the intervention. Beginning teacher feedback throughout the study led to iterative changes to the nature of the support being provided, including modifications to professional development and meetings with the beginning teacher support



*Figure 8. PDSA Cycle for the three cycles of inquiry.*

---

facilitator. Another inquiry partner I worked closely with was the beginning teacher support facilitator. Her role is to support beginning teachers from the hiring all the way to the end of their beginning teacher cycle. She sets up professional development for beginning teachers, helps find professional development that fits their needs outside of the district, and works with them with EPP coursework. She was also a close partner when looking at data to see what was and was not working.

Hopeful County Schools had fourteen (14) first year beginning teachers for the 2022-23 school term, and all of them were be asked to participate in this study. They had the option to decline, but none of them did. These participants were spread among six out of our seven schools (the early college did not have any first-year teachers) and were evenly distributed amongst grade spans with six at the elementary level, four in middle grades and four in high school. This distribution among the grades also allowed us to see if and how teachers at various grade levels responded to any changes.

Finally, East Carolina University was one of the primary EPPs where our teachers have attended, so we worked closely with them to make sure beginning teachers completed coursework and progressed. I will work with the University's alternative licensure department with regard to the beginning teachers being scheduled for courses and completing their required coursework. See Table 3 for important details related to Inquiry Partners.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There were no potential academic, financial, or personal interests that compromised the objectivity in the research design or reporting of its findings. As the Executive Director of Human Resources, I coordinate the personnel functions in the system. There was a possibility



Table 3

*Inquiry Partners and Roles*

Inquiry Partner	Role	Cycle
Superintendent	Former HR – Give examples of what worked/ didn't work in another county Look at data Give feedback on practices	1, 2, and 3
Beginning Teacher Coordinator	Former Lateral Entry teacher – give examples of what helped her Look at Data Reflect on Practices Implement changes	1, 2, and 3
Principals	Hire Beginning Teachers – can give expectation for their building Give feedback in regard to what beginning teachers are missing Support beginning teachers in the building Allow beginning teachers to be out for PD	1 and 2
1 <sup>st</sup> Year Beginning Teachers	Actively Participate in PD, Surveys and Focus Groups	2 and 3
East Carolina University	Share information on beginning teachers who are enrolled as their EPP provider	2 and 3

that a beginning teacher may be non-renewed, but that was up to the principal of their school to decide; in my capacity, I would merely facilitate the paperwork and processing following such a decision. Completing this study and the related doctoral degree is not a requirement for my current position. Secondary data that was utilized for this study was collected on an ongoing basis by the human resources department of the school system.

Throughout this study, I attempted to create a safe space for participants and ensure that all ethical considerations were upheld. To this end, I sought the approval of both my district, as required by Board Policy 5230: Participation in Research Projects, and East Carolina University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I made necessary changes to my study as either of these entities saw fit to ensure appropriate treatment of each participant (see Appendix A). As a precaution to help ensure all ethical standards were being upheld, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) modules around Social and Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel.

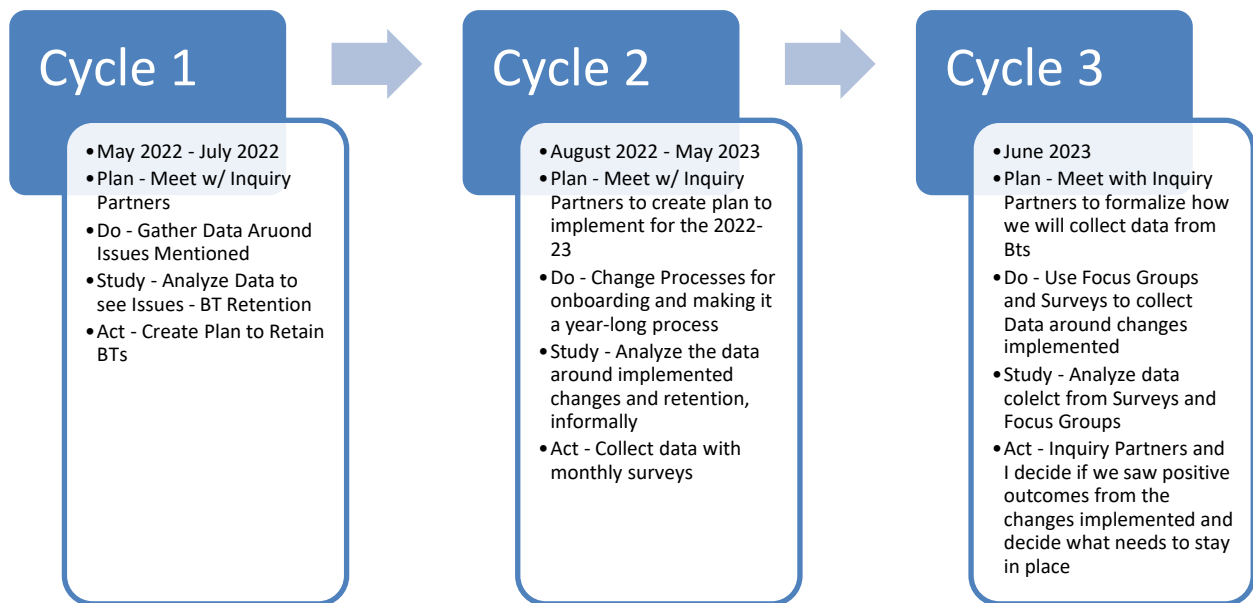
Ethical issues in this study included anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent. Participants, in this instance beginning teachers, and schools were not named, and precautions were taken to ensure their confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and mindfulness of potential identifiers in the data collected throughout the study. I will keep all of the data that are collected stored on a password protected computer for three years before the data will be deleted. All beginning teachers in their first year were offered to take part in this study, with no negative consequences for declining to participate. Participants were required to sign consent forms, making them aware of their rights and protections, including the opportunity to opt of participation at any point throughout the study (see Appendix B).

## **Inquiry Procedures**

Inquiry procedures designed around retaining beginning teachers in rural North Carolina will benefit from the use of the Plan-Do-Study-Act model to organize three cycles of action research. The first cycle established baseline data that was already used by the school district to report to NCDPI for the teacher attrition rate. I worked with the inquiry partners to examine the data collected to create changes that were needed. Action cycle two implemented changes around multiple points that research from Chapter 2 showed damage teacher retention across the country as well as rural areas. During this cycle we collected data around teacher testing and coursework completion and compared it with previous years. The beginning teacher coordinator and I worked closely with the beginning teachers and East Carolina University College of Education to collect data around coursework completion. Finally, in the third cycle of the action research model, we conducted focus groups with beginning teachers to gather additional insight into their perceptions around self-efficacy and what implemented processes helped them to continue to teach during their first year (see Figure 9).

### **Continuous Onboarding**

Beginning teachers who were not formally trained to be a teacher understandably need an intense onboarding process that cannot happen at one time. With this research study, onboarding began August 1 of the 2022-23 school year and continued throughout the year. The first major change is that we hired an eleven-month beginning teacher coordinator to oversee the beginning teachers. The beginning teacher coordinator was originally hired in 2003 as an alternative licensed teacher herself and understands the nuisances alternative licensed teachers face to become a continuing professional licensed teacher.



*Figure 9. PDSA Cycles for study.*

---

The second major change we made was orientation became a five-day event. This allowed time for us to properly introduce all of the required trainings from DPI but also allowed us to make sure new teachers were aware of our local policies and requirements. On the fifth day we met individually with each beginning teacher to go over their licensure requirements and apply for their teaching license. Because all of the beginning teachers were alternatively licensed, we cover 20% of their courses they are required to take through their EPPs.

We set aside time during the instructional day each month for beginning teachers to be outside of their classrooms to catch up on EPP coursework, classroom paperwork, or make phone calls to parents. Time was also set aside for beginning teachers to attend the mandatory monthly teacher talk sessions that were provided by the beginning teacher coordinator which were held the first Thursday of each month. We offered a five-day test prep session around the Foundations of Reading exam for all of the elementary and exceptional children's teacher which is a required test they must pass to clear their license.

### ***Participants***

Due to the nature of this study, beginning teachers in their first year of teaching in Hopeful County Schools were invited to participate in this study. There were eleven first-year beginning teachers in Hopeful County and all were invited to participate via email and verbally at the summer orientation. Since the population was so small and the sampling included everyone, it may be possible for readers to identify participants in this study. Given this information, I assigned pseudonyms for the district, schools, and participants.

### ***Instrumentation***

Using a mixed methods design approach for this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and examined to study the effectiveness of our changes. As such, this study

included self-efficacy surveys to provide quantitative data and focus groups in order to collect qualitative data that provided greater insight into the baseline data and survey responses, along with the effect of the continuous onboarding program.

The quantitative data used was collected from various sources which include but are not limited to: teacher working conditions surveys, North Carolina End-of-Course testing, teacher attrition data and teacher retention data. Using this data helped me and the inquiry partners look at contributing factors as to why beginning teachers leave Hopeful County Schools. This data was also used at the end of the study to see if the interventions of the study made any impact.

The self-efficacy surveys provided more quantitative data while the focus groups gave us the qualitative data, we needed to better understand what about the intervention was effective, what was not, and insight into why or why not. I used Ohio State University's Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (short form) developed by Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy. I did not modify the short form questions, but I added additional items for data collection purposes. Since I added additional data collection questions at the bottom, it was piloted with a group of teachers for validity and to make sure it captured useful data that helped with this study. This survey was administered to first-year beginning teachers monthly starting at the beginning of the year and then each month at their beginning teacher talk session (see Appendix D).

Focus groups were conducted with all first year beginning teachers and facilitated by the beginning teacher coordinator. The focus group questions were designed to help answer the guiding questions of this study where beginning teachers were reflective and gave honest feedback to influence how the beginning teacher program moves forward. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed, so that I could prepare the data for analysis. See Appendix E for the focus group protocol. The results are confidential and kept on a password protected electronic

device. See Table 4 for the connection between the study questions, instrumentation, and the Action Research Cycle.

In order to validate the instrumentation of this study, a pilot study was completed. The purpose of this pilot study was to make sure the survey and interview questions that were asked of participants would ultimately answer the guiding questions for this study. I asked five experienced teachers to come to the professional development room at the Central Office for the pilot study on August 12, 2022. The ethnicity of the experienced teachers who participated in the pilot study were 2 Black, 2 White and 1 Hispanic. All participants in the pilot study were willing to take part and showed up willing to give feedback.

Once the participants were in the room together, I welcomed and thanked them for their time and willingness to help validate my study. First, I provided them the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) short form with 12 questions. I asked them to take the brief survey which took them about 10 minutes. No questions were asked while they were taking it although some looked at me as though they wanted to but did not. After they completed the form, I shared with them the long form and asked them to read over it. They did not take this form, merely looked at it so I could gather feedback on which form would be more purposeful for the study.

I shared guiding question one and asked them do they believe the questions on either survey helped to answer, "How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?" Of the group, 100% agreed that the survey was appropriate for question 1. I then asked which form they thought would work better. All five participants agreed that the short form was better because of time and the receptiveness of doing it every month. One participant asked if it was necessary for them to complete the survey each month. Another participant stated that she liked the questions at the bottom that captured individual data

Table 4

*Connection between the Study Questions and Instrumentation*

Study Questions	Instrumentation	Action Research Cycle
How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?	Teacher Self-efficacy Survey	Action Research Cycle 2
How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful’s beginning teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers’ first year of teaching?	Focus Group	Action Research Cycle 3
What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing educator preparation program (EPP) coursework?	Likert-like Scale Survey	Action Research Cycle 3



so, you could see if there were discrepancies among grade levels, gender, or schools. Another participant stated that he did not think questions 17 or 20 were needed as they asked the years taught and context of school. Another asked why the questions were not needed and the original participant proceeded to answer that the study was for beginning teachers in their first year and that all of our schools were rural.

To validate the interview questions for guiding question 2, “How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful’s beginning teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers’ first year of teaching?” I simply handed the seven questions to the participants and asked for the opinions on would these questions help answer guiding question 2. Conversation arose quickly and questions were reworded to make sure there was no bias towards the beginning teacher support program. By the end of reviewing the guiding question 2 section, I had five questions for the interview.

For the last portion of my pilot study, I shared with the participants a Likert-like scale survey item that beginning teachers would take to answer guiding question 3, “What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing EPP coursework?” They were fine with all of the items that I had listed but suggested I add three additional items that they thought would be helpful. The additional items were (a) professional development, which I had accidentally left off the list, (b) principal of the building, and (c) the initial onboarding orientation. All three were great suggestions and I added them to my Likert scale instrument.

The pilot study seemed to be a great experience for the experienced teachers as they were able to see what was being done at central office to help our beginning teachers acclimate to Hopeful County Schools, and I enjoyed having teachers giving valid feedback that will help us move forward.

## **Action Research Cycle 1**

For the first action research cycle, I met with inquiry partners on issues facing Hopeful County Schools. After ideas have been collected and discussed, we gathered data in regard to teacher turnover, beginning teachers, using data from human resources, NC Teaching Working Conditions Survey (NCTWCS), and academic data including but not limited to student dropout data, graduation rates, and state standardized test scores. After collecting all of this information, the inquiry partners and I analyzed the data to determine what the most pressing issues are so that they could be addressed within the intervention. Looking at the data as a team and communicating what issues we saw in this rural, poverty-stricken district, we decided to focus on an issue that has the biggest return on our investment – beginning teacher retention. Before moving any further in this study, I sought approval from Hopeful County Schools superintendent to conduct this action research study. I then applied for approval from the Internal Review Board at East Carolina University (see Appendix A). Once all approvals were obtained, the last piece of Cycle 1 was to develop a draft plan to retain beginning teachers for a rural district and begin the action research study.

### ***Plan***

Collaborative stakeholders (these may or may not be the exact people as the inquiry partners in this study) for Hopeful County Schools were called for a meeting to make them aware of my intentions and asked what they believe are the greatest issues in Hopeful County Schools. Once the issue has been selected, I moved on to the Do cycle of Action Research Cycle 1, but I reported back to the stakeholders what the findings in the data were. This allowed us to see if this is an issue that is worth researching in Hopeful County.

## ***Do***

I gathered data around teacher retention and beginning teacher retention to see if, in fact there was a problem. Data was gathered around teacher mentoring, reasons teachers leave the county, the onboarding process, and school resources for teachers. This became the baseline data if data support this is an area of focus.

## ***Study***

We, the inquiry partners and I, used the data collected in the Do aspect of the Action Research Cycle 1, to study how teachers (veteran and beginning) felt about their experience in Hopeful County Schools. I reported back to the collaborative stakeholders to see if this was an area they agreed could become a focus for a research study.

## ***Act***

Once the collaborative stakeholders gave their stamp of approval, we started to formulate guiding questions based on the data and trends that were found in the baseline data. Finding inquiry partners who had an interest in the focus of retaining beginning teachers was a necessary step for Action Research Cycle 2.

## ***Summary of Action Research Cycle 1***

We met with Hopeful County Schools stakeholders to determine what was a primary issue to focus a research study around, collected data and reported back findings to come to a collective decision around the focus of practice.

## **Action Research Cycle 2**

Cycle 2 consisted of meeting with inquiry partners and sharing the draft plan created in Cycle 1, focusing around changing key indicators and practices that effect beginning teacher retention in Hopeful County. Upon finalizing the detailed plan, it was now time to create the new

processes for onboarding, mentoring and EPP coursework in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) in our district. After six months of implementing the changes, it was time to evaluate our new processes to see what is going well and what was not providing positive outcomes for our beginning teachers.

### ***Plan***

I invited inquiry partners to a meeting around beginning teacher retention. The superintendent and the beginning teacher coordinator were invited as the collaborative partners for this study. Data was be shared with them from the first cycle of this action research model to engage them and develop a detailed plan to implement around the problem of beginning teacher retention. I shared the guiding questions around this issue and any necessary changes were made.

### ***Do***

We implemented changes around five major areas that affect new teachers in Hopeful County Schools: the onboarding process, mentoring, completing licensure requirements, time and professional development. Based on exit interviews in previous years in Hopeful County, each of these areas have been reasons beginning teachers have left the county or even worse, been non-renewed. The onboarding process was updated to five days of in-service training before ever going into a classroom as well as meet all of the state requirements. This allowed beginning teachers to learn about the district and state goals while allowing them to gain insight from veteran teachers, central office staff and outside stakeholders. Mentoring changes included having a mentor who is staffed in the building and is an instructional coach. Monthly meetings were held for mentors as well as beginning teachers. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has a strict guideline on how long and what must be completed to maintain a license, that was not changed but help assisting beginning teachers made it easier to become affiliated

with an EPP. Hopeful County Schools hired substitutes as needed for beginning teachers to gain extra time to complete coursework that they had fallen behind on and allowed them to study for the licensure exams that must be passed as well as reimburse for passing coursework and licensure exams. Hopeful County Schools adjusted the working time for the beginning teacher coordinator to allow her to work evening hours for beginning teachers to have study sessions and coursework help in the evening after they get off of work.

### ***Study***

We collected data on the amount of time needed for each participant and how much money was needed to set aside to cover all expenses in this study.

### ***Act***

Given the importance that this study must start at the beginning of the school term, when first-year beginning teachers are fresh, the beginning teacher coordinator gave a self-efficacy study to the participants during this cycle to use in a comparison to where the same participants felt they were in the end. The changes mentioned in the Do cycle will be in place when the beginning teachers started and were laid out for them upon hiring. I used the information learned from the quantitative data collected in Cycle 1 and the quantitative data collected from the beginning teachers pre- and post-first year to follow up with collaborative partners.

### ***Summary of Action Research Cycle 2***

I implemented changes to how beginning teachers are onboarded and trained in Hopeful County Schools. Using the explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach to this study allowed me to use the quantitative data in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 and explain this data with the qualitative data from Cycle 3.

### **Action Research Cycle 3**

Action Research Cycle 3 of this research study utilized the qualitative data from focus groups with first-year beginning teachers to explain if the changes made in Cycle 2 of the action research model made a positive change in retaining beginning teacher in a rural, poverty-stricken district. We collected qualitative data using focus groups and surveys from the participants of the study and analyzed them to see what (if any) processes worked. To end our third cycle of the PDSA, the collaborative partners shared the findings of the study with the district in order to determine if the new processes should remain in place, be discontinued, or be modified for future use.

#### ***Plan***

I developed a plan with the collaborative partners to triangulate the data for this study. The inquiry partners and I used quantitative data from Cycles 1 and 2 to hold focus groups and interviews with beginning teachers to obtain qualitative data.

#### ***Do***

By the time the study reached this point, a full year of implementation (school year) had passed, the first-year beginning teachers completed the same self-efficacy survey they took in Cycle 2 again for me to compare how the beginning teachers think they have grown or changed. I also invited all first-year beginning teachers to take part in a focus group. “The intent of a focus group is to promote self-disclosure among participants. We want to know what people really think and feel” (Krueger & Casey, 2008). This included sending reminders out to participants, having the beginning teacher coordinator and I to facilitate with questions on topic, and having the room fully prepared for participants as well as with recording devices.

### *Study*

I used the qualitative data gathered from the Do in Cycle 3 to identify significant patterns, construct a framework for communicating what the data reveals and ultimately what results emerged from the data. Here in Cycle 3, I coded the qualitative data gathered on two levels – the initial coding phase, link between raw data and my cognitive interpretation (Seidel & Kelle, 1995), and a second round focused on categorical coding to build a deeper level of comprehension in hopes to get to a thematic coding level. A code is defined as “a word or phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and /or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldana, 2015, pp. 3-4)

### *Act*

The inquiry partners and I used the qualitative data obtained from Cycle 3 from the focus groups to pair it with the quantitative data collected in Cycles 1 and 2 to share it with the collaborative partners and ultimately see if the changes made throughout the action research study has had a positive or negative result in retaining beginning teachers in Hopeful County.

### *Summary of Action Research Cycle 3*

In Cycle 2, the changes were made in regard to how beginning teachers were onboarded, mentored, and helped to complete necessary EPP coursework and testing requirements. Cycle 3 was about collecting qualitative data and coding it to see what effects the changes made had on retaining beginning teachers.

### **Inquiry Design Rigor**

To ensure the quality of this study, I applied Mertler’s (2022) general definition of rigor as “the quality, validity, accuracy, and credibility of the action research and its findings” (p. 167). In this effort, I, in collaboration with my inquiry partners, consistently checked the

procedures to ensure that they are being followed precisely and that the results were not biased or limited by a single interpretation or perspective. Employing an explanatory sequential mixed methods design allowed me to analyze and collect quantitative data around beginning teacher retention before changing any processes and later consider the qualitative results for improving the intervention.

To limit any potential bias, all survey and interview questions were submitted to the inquiry partners for feedback and revisions prior to administration to participants. Additionally, the survey and interview questions underwent pilot testing to determine their validity. Once the survey and interview questions had been reviewed and validated, we administered them as outlined in the inquiry procedures to the participants accordingly. Upon the conclusion of the surveys and interviews, the collaborative inquiry partners and I reviewed transcripts collected and coded data. After the data was reviewed, I met with participants for member checking and debriefing to review the data and ensure what they were trying to say was collected and reported accurately. This allowed the inquiry partners and me to triangulate the data and ensure the research was not only conducted properly but is in fact reliable, accurate and dependable. Mertler (2022) defines triangulation as using multiple sources of data to examine the findings to see if they support the conclusions made at the beginning of the study.

### **Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions**

With the number of first year beginning teachers being relatively small, the results of this study may not be generalizable. Additionally, the unique setting of this study, namely a small rural setting in eastern North Carolina that predominately hires alternatively licensed teachers, may limit replicability to other schools or district.



There were several potential limitations for this study. My role in the school system as Executive Director for Human Resources could be a potential limitation. Beginning teachers may have felt, based upon my positionality, that they were compelled or that it is inferred that they must take part in the study versus giving them an option. For example, this dynamic could cause a beginning teacher to feel that if they do not participate, they could be non-renewed. As a new hire and new to education, this could be easily assumed by the teacher. I tried to mitigate this speaking with them in their monthly meeting that this was optional as well as sending them a letter asking them to participate and stating in the letter that it was optional.

The amount of time beginning teachers have with working in their classrooms, completing coursework for their license, and being able to attend professional development is a limitation as we do not want to cause burnout. Teachers have a lot of demands, but beginning teachers who are entering the classroom for the first time must focus on time-management and time on task in order to be successful in their new role. As new teachers, they are expected to complete the job just as veterans with little to no experience. During Cycle 2, we were pulling first year teachers out of their classrooms once a month to allow them to catch up on work they feel like they are behind in, including but not limited to – calling parents, grading work, or even lesson planning.

And finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has shut the school system down for face-to-face in person instruction once, and our first year beginning teachers were not adequately prepared to instruct students via online instruction. Beginning teachers who have never taught lack the skills to jump into teaching online with purpose and making sure students are engaged. As such, a recurrence of COVID-19 or another such outbreak could have impacted the planned intervention but did not.

It was assumed for the purposes of this study that beginning teachers want to improve their practice. Additionally, it was assumed that they will participate in professional development openly and answer the self-efficacy surveys and interview questions honestly without fear of reprisal.

### **Role of the Scholarly Practitioner**

In order to maintain reliability, be transparent, and help validate this study, it was imperative that we look at my positionality as the scholarly practitioner. I am the Executive Director for Human Resources and Operations for Hopeful County Schools and second in line of authority after the superintendent. I am originally from Hopeful County and have been in my current role for four years. Beginning Teachers who participated in this study did so of their own volition; although no one chose not to participate, they would not have experienced any repercussions for doing so. No one was forced to conduct or participate in this study, and the beginning teachers did not receive any additional benefits for taking part of this study. I have no authority to non-renew any teachers, as that falls to the principal and superintendent, and this was reiterated to the beginning teachers before and during this study. Their responses were kept in confidence and only known by me as I do not want them to fear retaliation from their supervisor.

### **Summary**

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods action research study was conducted to determine if implementing a continuous year-long onboarding process for beginning teachers in Hopeful County will reduce teacher turnover while helping teacher retention. The research was conducted in three cycles following the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) model. Three research questions guided the study with inquiry partners included in all cycles. Inquiry partners include

the superintendent, beginning teacher coordinator, principals, study participants, and East Carolina University's College of Education. Surveys and focus groups were used with the beginning teachers in the data collection process. Chapter 4 includes participant demographics and the results of the three PDSA cycles including the quantitative and qualitative data collection around our implemented onboarding process.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the impact of implementation of a beginning teachers' program on teacher retention in a rural school district in Eastern North Carolina, Hopeful County Schools. We hoped to see a decrease in teacher turnover by effectively supporting beginning teachers in their formative years. Hopeful County Schools typically hires teachers who are alternatively license and have never been in a classroom, leaving the students we serve at a higher rate to have teachers who are not highly qualified. To help our beginning teachers we used inquiry questions that would allow us to see what strengths our beginning teacher support program had in regards to retention and completing the EPP coursework necessary to continue in the teaching profession. The questions guiding the inquiry were as follows:

1. How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?
2. How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful County's Beginning Teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers' first year of teaching?
3. What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework?

In order to answer these questions, my inquiry partners and I conducted mixed-methods action research centered around beginning teachers and their supports in a rural Northeastern North Carolina County. Mertler (2022) describes the mixed-methods action research design as a better way to understand and explain a problem at a local level in hopes of finding an immediate solution. In order to organize and drive the inquiry for improvement, I utilized three Plan-Do-

Study-Act (PDSA) cycles. Langley et al. (2009) highlights three guiding questions that are the framework for improvement:

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?

The three PDSA cycles paired with the inquiry questions allowed my inquiry partners and I to define which aspects of the beginning teacher program were beneficial for building self-efficacy or helpful in completing EPP coursework, and which were not. The data collected was utilized to create a more inclusive and stronger beginning teacher program to address the needs for beginning teachers in a rural setting like Hopeful County. It is important to state that rural counties have many issues that are not faced by its' counterparts in the suburban and urban areas – lack of housing, lower compensation due to disintegrating tax bases, cultural differences, and a lower number of applicants.

### **Implementation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program**

Hopeful County Schools has had a beginning teacher program since at least 2000 from information that I can find so the idea is not new. However, it was thought through with people in mind who went to college for education. In cycle two of our inquiry study, the inquiry partners used the BT attrition data to think through what could be done differently which is how the new implementation of the beginning teacher program came about. Starting the 2022-2023 school year, Hopeful County Schools had planned and allocated funds for a Beginning Teacher Coordinator, a 20% reimbursement for educational courses passed, 100% reimbursement for state testing that was passed, and Instructional Coaches in every building that had beginning teachers. With the influx of alternatively licensed teachers, it was imperative that we addressed

the need for helping with EPP coursework as well as the state-mandated test. The beginning teacher orientation was extended from three days to five days before school started. This was due to the excessive amount of information that was needed to pour into individuals who had never been inside a classroom to teach but were going to enter into the profession within weeks. A testing training around Reading Foundations was put in place for the beginning teachers in elementary and special education as were Teacher Talks and Work Sessions.

Beginning July 1, 2023, Hopeful County Schools had a Beginning Teacher Coordinator in place. With the growing number of beginning teachers and that they are alternatively licensed the inquiry partners thought it would be beneficial to have a person whose job would be solely to work with the beginning teachers. She was hired as an eleven-month employee to oversee, monitor, and assist beginning teachers in any way possible. The BT Coordinator is a veteran teacher with previous experience in Hopeful County Schools. She was originally an alternative licensed teacher herself. This was purposefully as her experiences allowed her to relate to other alternatively licensed teacher with regard to taking classes, passing state testing, and working as full-time teacher in Hopeful County. We hired six instructional coaches, one Instructional Coaches for each building that had beginning teachers to serve dual roles as instructional coaches but also as mentors for the beginning teachers.

August 1 through August 5, 2022, my inquiry partners (BT coordinator, principals, and the superintendent) and I conducted a five-day orientation for all beginning teachers. We utilized the data collected in cycle two to make sure we covered all important topics that could help retain beginning teachers as well as help them in their classrooms. The first day was geared to getting everyone ready for the start of the school year. We covered multiple topics including financial resources, retirement opportunities, device distribution and MacBook training since we

utilize Apple products in our county, and mentor introductions. Day two covered issues beginning teachers normally face with regard to classroom management techniques, deescalating upset parents, and the importance of the classroom structure. Day three included leadership from the Curriculum and Instruction department to cover topic such as effective lesson planning, Exceptional Children’s programming, instructional pacing guides, and the standards that each teacher would be teaching. The fourth day addressed required NC DPI policies for new teachers, Hopeful County Schools’ policies, and the Hopeful County Schools’ Beginning Teacher handbook. Finally, day five allowed the beginning teachers to return to their classrooms and have support in setting them up accordingly. We also scheduled time for each of the beginning teachers to meet with human resources staff to discuss licensure requirements and apply for their license, along with answering in other relevant questions they may have had.

We collected baseline data for the TSES on our first “Teacher Talk” session in September 2022. Each month throughout the remainder of the school year, we facilitated a mandatory Beginning Teacher “Talk Session” for all of the beginning teachers to continue to learn and share best practices around instructional strategies and classroom management with one another as well as collect additional data for the TSES. We held a five-day training in November of 2022 for teachers who are in the elementary and exceptional children’s classrooms to help prepare them for their Foundations of Reading test that is required of their students by the state. We provided this training during the school day to respect their personal time. In order to do so, I utilized available district funds to provide for substitute teachers, so the schools nor teachers had to incur that expense. We also made available twice a month optional Beginning Teacher Work Sessions. These sessions were not mandatory but allowed the beginning teachers to readily receive any additional support they may have needed. The sessions were from 3:00 pm until 8:00

pm and teachers were able to float in and out as they felt necessary. Given the late time of the work sessions, additional district funds were utilized to provide teachers who attended with childcare and with dinner.

Implementation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program required many hours of planning and making sure finances and resources were in place to adequately give the beginning teachers what they needed and deserved. Each month after the beginning teachers took the TSES, the BT coordinator and myself looked transposed the data into a spreadsheet and looked at the data to see any changes. The BT coordinator and myself tried to modify our next “Teacher Talk” session based on how we saw their responses.

### **Data Collection**

Initial data collection began in January 2022 as part of Cycle 1 of the three PDSA improvement cycles. This involved collecting data around beginning teacher retention and coursework completion. Tables 5 and 6 respectively show the data collected in Cycle 1 where Hopeful County Schools has had an average of 20% of beginning teachers over the past four years with a minimum of 24% turnover rate in 2023 and a high of 50% in 2021.

Cycle 2 of the three PDSA cycles involved changing processes in Hopeful County Schools with the implementation of the beginning teacher support program. This cycle started in May 2022 and ended in August 2022. During this timeframe, Hopeful County Schools hired a Beginning Teacher Coordinator to help address the need of retaining BTs and created a continuous onboarding process. The data collection of the TSES started in cycle 2 during each “Teacher Talk” session.

The third and final Cycle of the PDSA improvement cycles began in August 2022 with monthly surveys to Beginning Teachers on teacher efficacy and ended in June 2023 with focus



Table 5

*Percentage of Beginning Teachers in Hopeful County Schools*

---

Year	# of Teachers in HCS	# of BTs	% of BTs in HCS
2019-2020	140	32	22.9%
2020-2021	138	36	26.1%
2021-2022	129	20	15.5%
2022-2023	130	25	19.2%

---

Table 6

*Percentage of Beginning Teachers Hopeful County Schools Lost*

Year	# of BTs	# non-renewed	Left on their own	% of BTs lost
2019-2020	32	3	5	25.0%
2020-2021	26	8	10	50.0%
2021-2022	21	5	3	38.1%
2022-2023	25	3	3	24.0%

groups being conducted following administration of Likert-type surveys on the supports they received. My inquiry partners and I had planned to have 14 beginning teachers participate in the inquiry, as that was how many beginning teachers started the 2022-2023 school term. However, one teacher resigned in December of 2022, so starting in January 2023, there were only 13 participants in the inquiry. I used a monthly Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) short form survey to obtain data from 14 first year teachers (nine surveys total). Each teacher was assigned a letter at the beginning of the year as a confidential identifier so that we could track their efficacy over time by teacher. The teachers completed a paper version of the survey during the Beginning Teacher Talks, and I transposed their responses into an Excel spreadsheet. Each month's data was tracked by teacher, by school level (elementary, middle, high), as well as by entire cohort. When teachers had absences for various reasons over the course of the year during the Beginning Teacher Talks, either the BT Coordinator or I would deliver the survey to the teacher in person so that they could complete it accordingly. Descriptive statistics were collected and analyzed from the data for the entire cohort to examine how the self-efficacy of the cohort of teachers changed over the course of the year. For focus groups conducted in June 2023, 11 participants attended out of the 13 inquiry participants invited. One participant notified us in advance that they would not be able to attend, while the other participate merely did not show up with no explanation provided.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data collected around inquiry question 1 – how does self-efficacy change over the course of the beginning teacher's first year – descriptive statistics were employed, including comparison of pre-implementation and post-implementation data. All descriptive statistics were calculated using Excel, and I reviewed the data and results for accuracy.

For inquiry guiding question two regarding the level of effectiveness of the strategies delivered during Hopeful County's Beginning Teacher preparation program, two focus groups were conducted with participants at the end of the year. I divided the 13 teachers into two separate focus groups (elementary and secondary). The participants' responses were captured by video as well as a notetaker in the room. I transcribed the video in conjunction with the notes taken and uploaded the transcript into NVivo14 for coding. I utilized an initial coding method including highlighting and making notes of key words or phrases from the focus groups. Following second level coding whereby codes were categorized and reviewed for patterns, several emergent themes were identified: inadequate building-level support, encouraging district-level support, and informative licensure support.

The third and final question of this inquiry examined which supports beginning teachers identified as helpful in completing their Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework. I utilized a Likert-type survey for participants to answer on paper. The questionnaire utilized eleven Likert-type questions and one open-ended question. The Likert-type questions were on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 being "a waste of time" and 5 being "very important". I transposed the paper survey responses into a Google Form to acquire the response rate for each support to see how beginning teachers felt with regard to completing their coursework.

To help ensure the validity of the results for each guiding question, I triangulated the multiple sources of data collected, both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

### **Demographics**

Participants were 14 teachers (100% female) working in a rural high poverty district in Northeastern North Carolina whose age ranged from 25 to 61 years. The participants were first

year teachers who were hired on Permit to Teach (PtT) 21.4%, Emergency License (EL) 21.4%, or a Residency License (RL) 57.1%. Forty-two percent (42.8%) of them taught at the elementary level, 28.6% taught at the middle grades level, and 28.6% taught at the high school level. Of the participants, 57.1% taught a core subject (math, English/language arts, reading, science, or social studies), 28.6% taught in an Exceptional Children’s classroom, and 14.3% taught an elective course. Of the 14 participants, none of them completed a traditional EPP with some form of student teaching. I directly contacted the teachers who participated on a voluntary basis. One teacher resigned (7.1%) in the middle of the inquiry; however, the remaining 13 teachers completed the program from beginning to end. The participant who resigned in December took the survey until then and her surveys were used in the data process. Overall, six of the seven schools (85.7%) in Hopeful County Schools had a teacher participant involved in the inquiry. Table 7 provides participants by licensure type at each level. Table 8 lists participant demographics.

## **Results**

The results for this study have been organized by each inquiry question.

### **Inquiry Question 1**

How does beginning teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching? The pre-TSES survey (given in September 2022) against the post- TSES survey (given in May 2023) allows us to look at each question and compare beginning data with the ending data (see Figure 10). Out of the twelve questions asked on the TSES survey, all of them increased from the beginning to the end with the exception of question 12. The largest gain (1.59 points, or a 19.9% increase) was for question 1 which asked about one’s capacity to control

Table 7

*Hopeful School District Licensure by Grade Level for 2022-2023 Academic Year*

Grade Level	PtT	Emergency	Residency
Elementary	7.14%	7.14%	21.42%
Middle	-	7.14%	21.42%
High	14.29%	7.14%	14.29%
Total	21.43%	21.43%	57.14%

Table 8

*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Age	Gender	Race	Licensure Type	Content Area Taught	Grade Level
Teacher A	26	Female	Black	Residency	Exceptional Children	Elementary
Teacher B	27	Female	White	Emergency	Exceptional Children	Elementary
Teacher C	61	Female	Black	Residency	All Subjects	Elementary
Teacher D	30	Female	Black	Emergency	All Subjects	Elementary
Teacher E	39	Female	Black	Residency	All Subjects	Elementary
Teacher F	60	Female	Black	Permit to Teach	All Subjects	Elementary
Teacher G	51	Female	Black	Residency	Elective	Middle
Teacher H	60	Female	Black	Residency	Exceptional Children	Middle
Teacher I	47	Female	Black	Residency	Core Content	Middle
Teacher J	36	Female	Black	Emergency	Core Content	Middle
Teacher K	44	Female	Black	Residency	Elective	High
Teacher L	32	Female	Black	Residency	Exceptional Children	High
Teacher M	26	Female	Black	Permit to Teach	Core Content	High
Teacher N	25	Female	White	Permit to Teach	Core Content	High

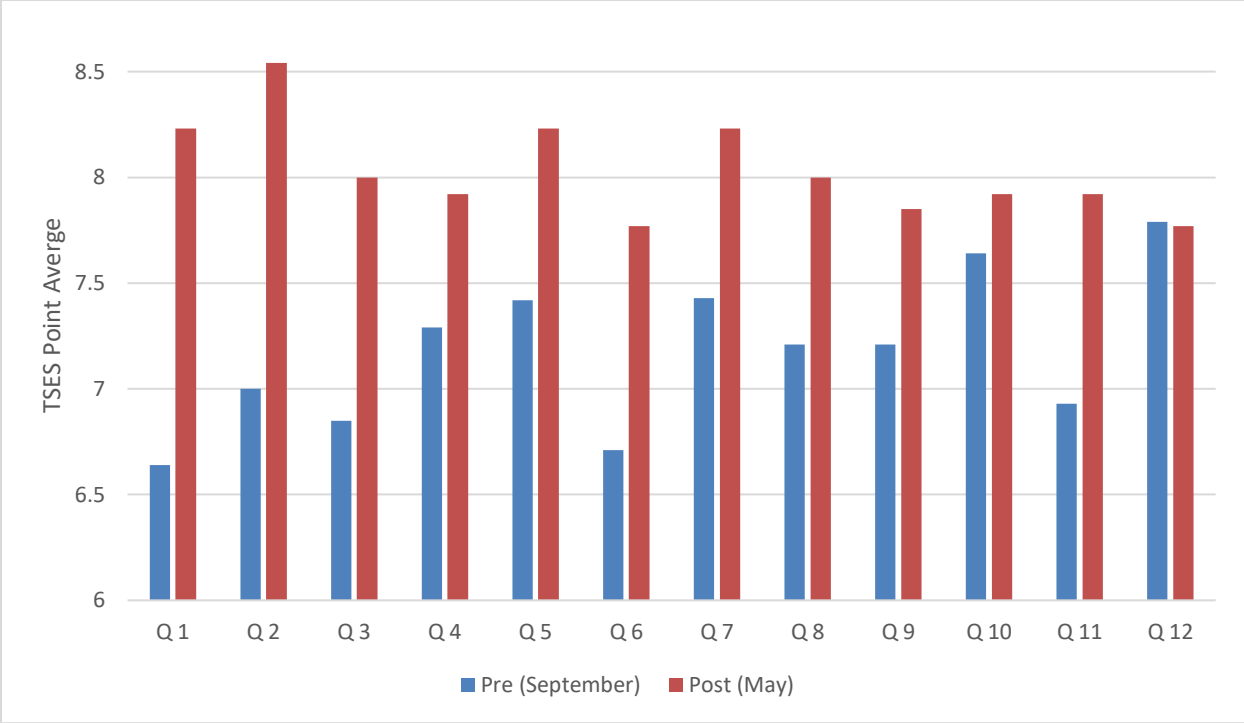


Figure 10. TSES average pre- and post-BT program.



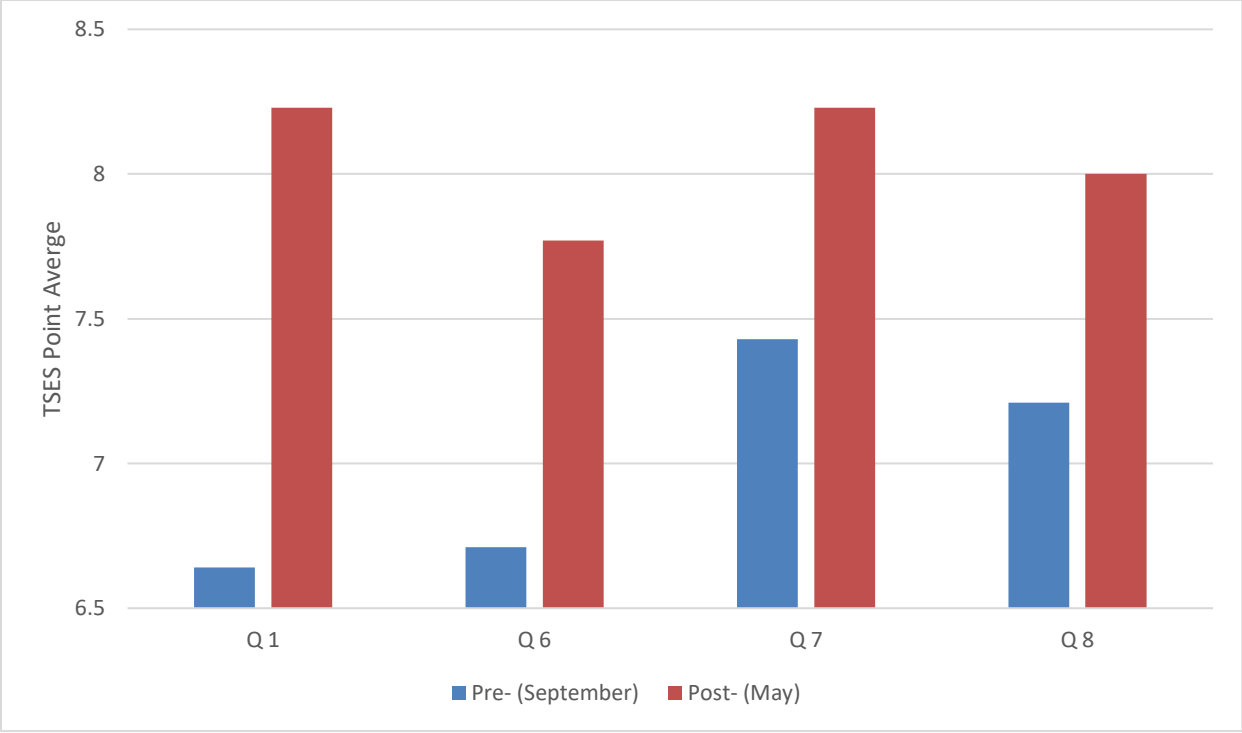
disruptive behavior in the classroom, followed closely by question 2 (1.54 points, a 19.3% increase), which asked about teacher capacity to motivate disinterested students.

TSES questions and responses were organized into three subgroups: classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies. For classroom management, four questions were asked of the participants. Efficacy in classroom management had the second highest overall increases from pre- to post- with an average increase of 1.06 points or 13.3% per question (see Figure 11).

For efficacy in student engagement, questions 2, 3, 4, and 11 were utilized. Efficacy in student engagement was the subgroup we saw the highest overall increase from pre- to post- with an average increase of 1.08 points or 13.5% per question (see Figure 12).

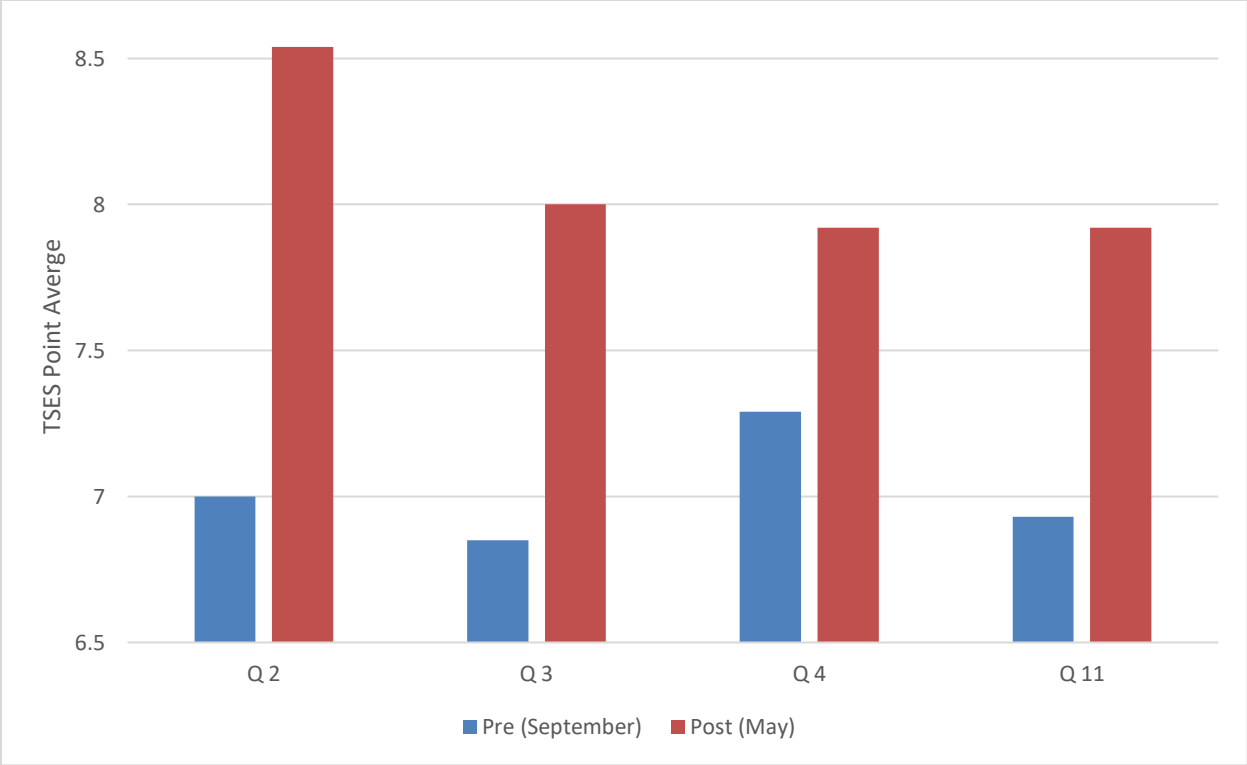
Efficacy of instructional strategies used questions 5, 9, 10, and 12 from the TSES. This is the only time in the survey where there was a decrease from pre- to post- with question 12. There was still an increase but much notably lower with an average increase of 0.43 points or 5.4% per question (see Figure 13).

Figures 14 through 25 look at each question on the TSES survey from the first survey given in September 2022 to the last survey given in May 2023. The trend data for question 1, how much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom, has an average of 6.64 for the initial survey and ends at 8.23 in May with an increase of 1.59 points, or 19.9%, the highest increase we see in this survey (see Figure 14). Question 2's trend data, how much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork, September's average is 7.0 and we end in May with an average of 8.54 which is the second highest increase (1.54 points, 19.3%) we see in the TSES survey (see Figure 15).

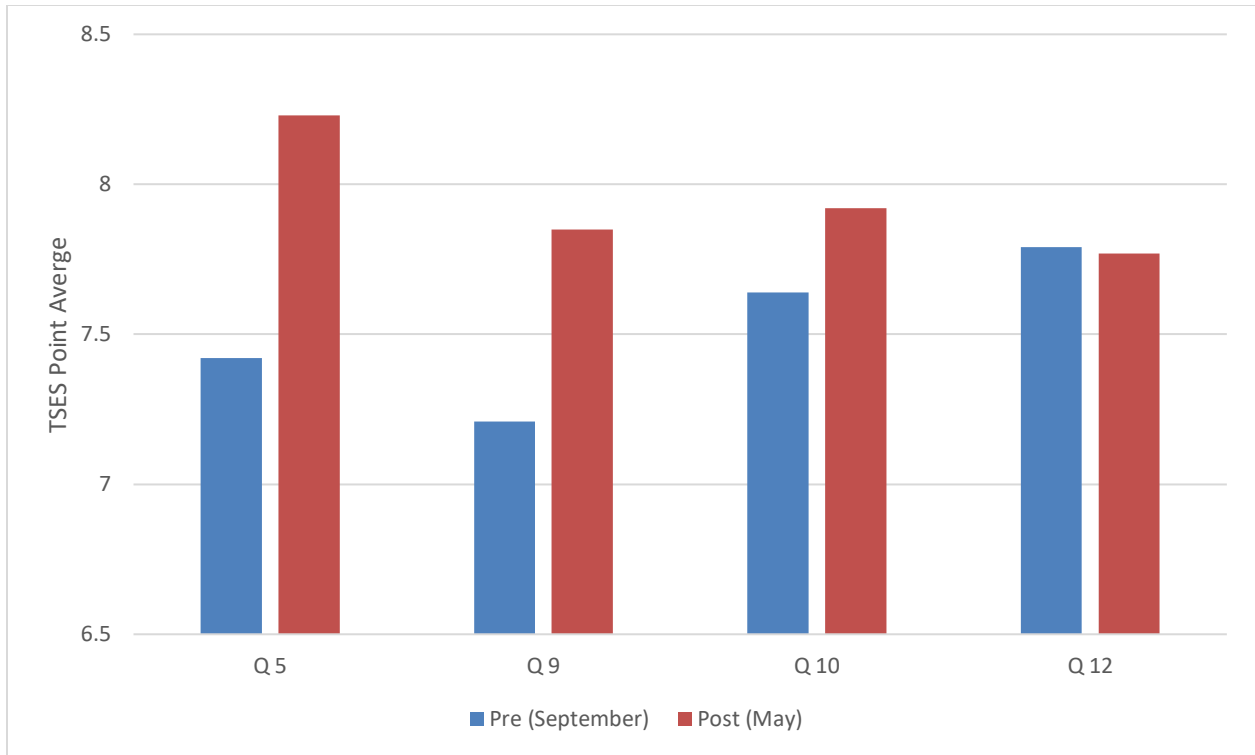


*Figure 11.* Survey questions for efficacy in classroom management.

---

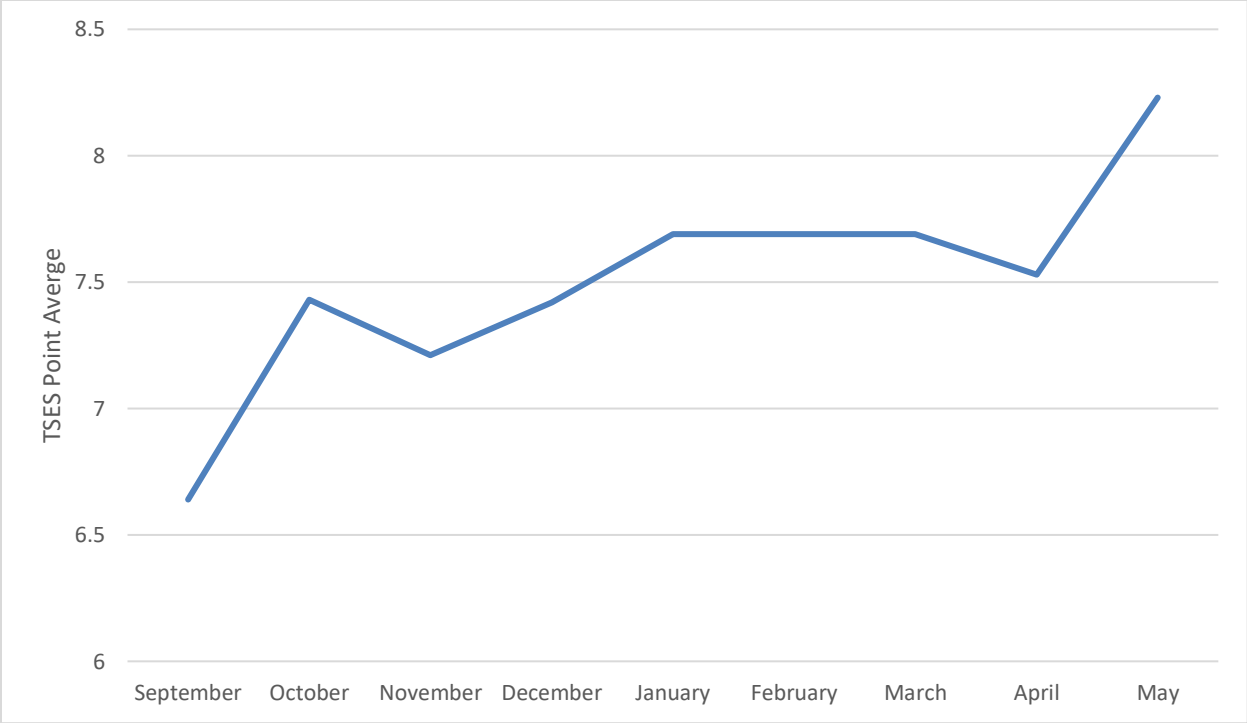


*Figure 12. Survey questions for efficacy in student engagement.*

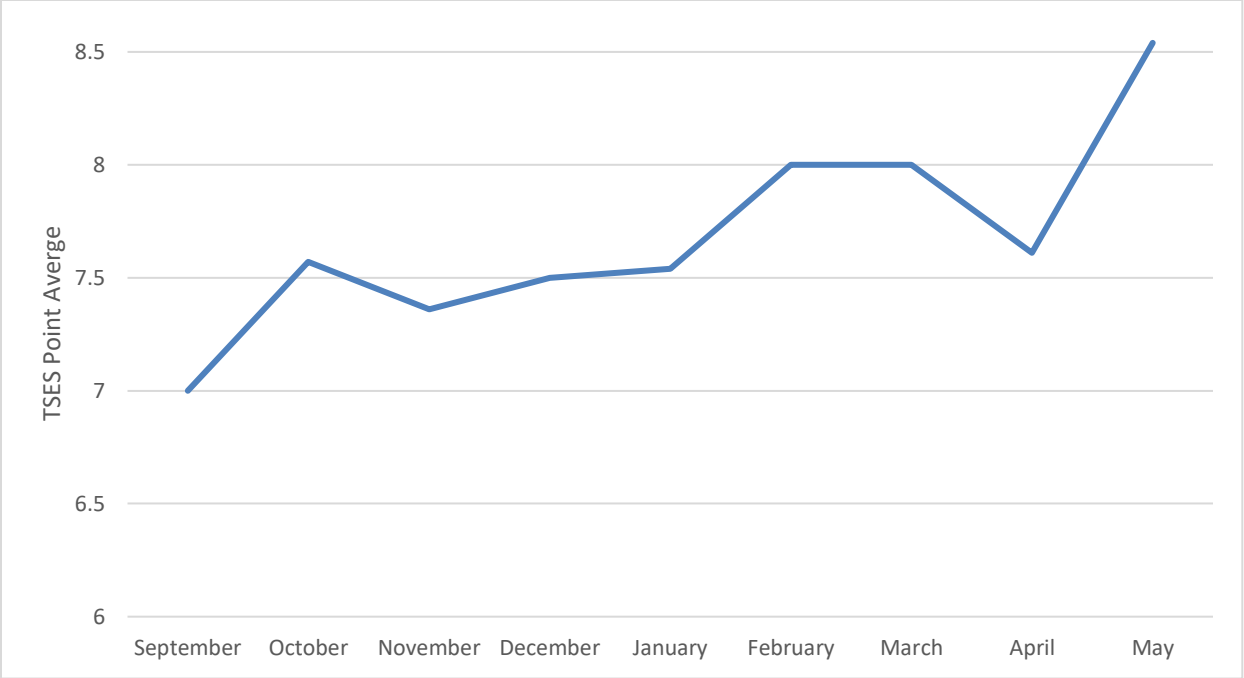


*Figure 13. Survey questions for efficacy in instructional practices.*

---



*Figure 14. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control disruptive behavior (Question 1).*



*Figure 15. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control student motivation (Question 2).*

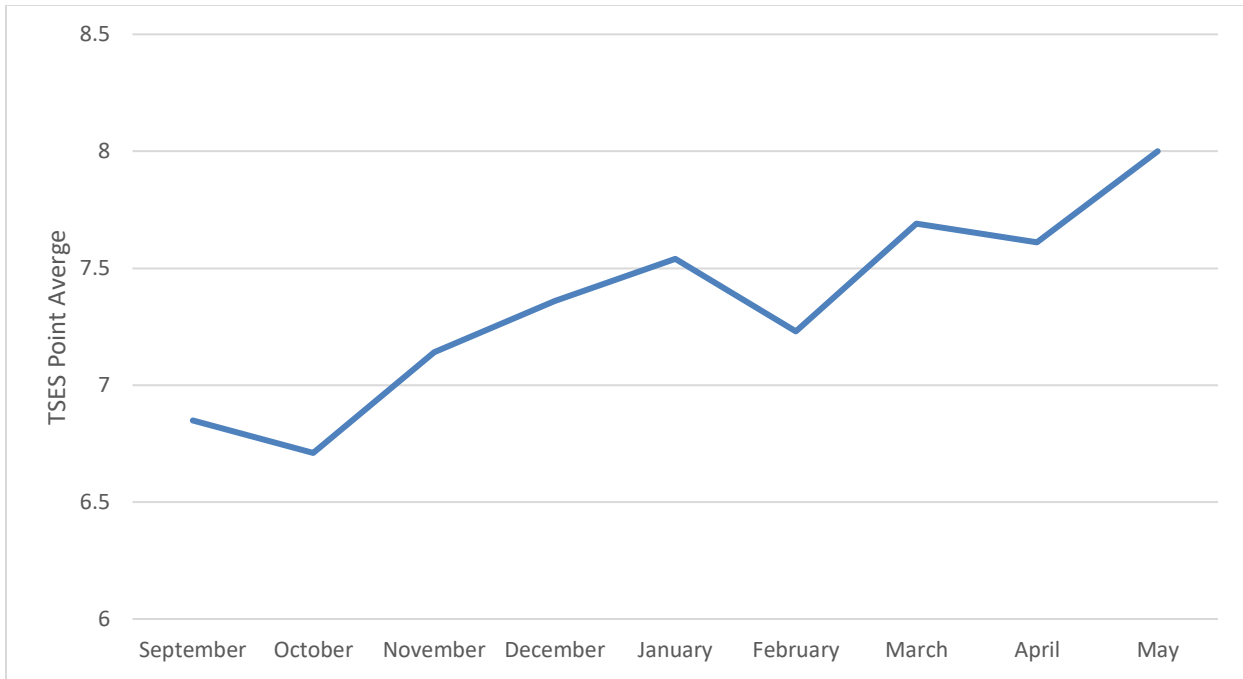
---

For question 3, how much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork, the trend data shows an increase of 1.15 points, 14.4%, from 6.85 in September to 8.0 in May is our third highest increase we see in the TSES survey (see Figure 16). In regard to question 4, how much can you do to help your students value learning, while there was an increase of 0.63 points, 7.9%, it was the third lowest increase we saw. The pre- response average was 7.29 in September and ended in May with the post-TSES average being 7.92 (see Figure 17).

The trend data for TSES survey question 5, to what extent can you craft good questions for your students, had a decrease in October but a sharp incline following in November. From pre- to post- we see an increase of 0.81 points or 10.1% overall (see Figure 18). TSES question 6, how much can you do to get children to follow classrooms rules, increased or remained the same with the exception of April when it dips to 7.53 only to rebound to a high in May at 7.77. The increase from pre- (6.71) to post- (7.77) was 1.06 points (13.3%) and the fourth highest increase we saw in the TSES survey (see Figure 19).

The trend data for question 7, how much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy, had an increase of 0.8 points, 10%, from September (7.43) to May (8.23) (see Figure 20). Question 8 from the TSES survey, how well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students had an average response in September of 7.21 and ended in May at 8.0 with an increase of 0.79 points, 9.9% (see Figure 21).

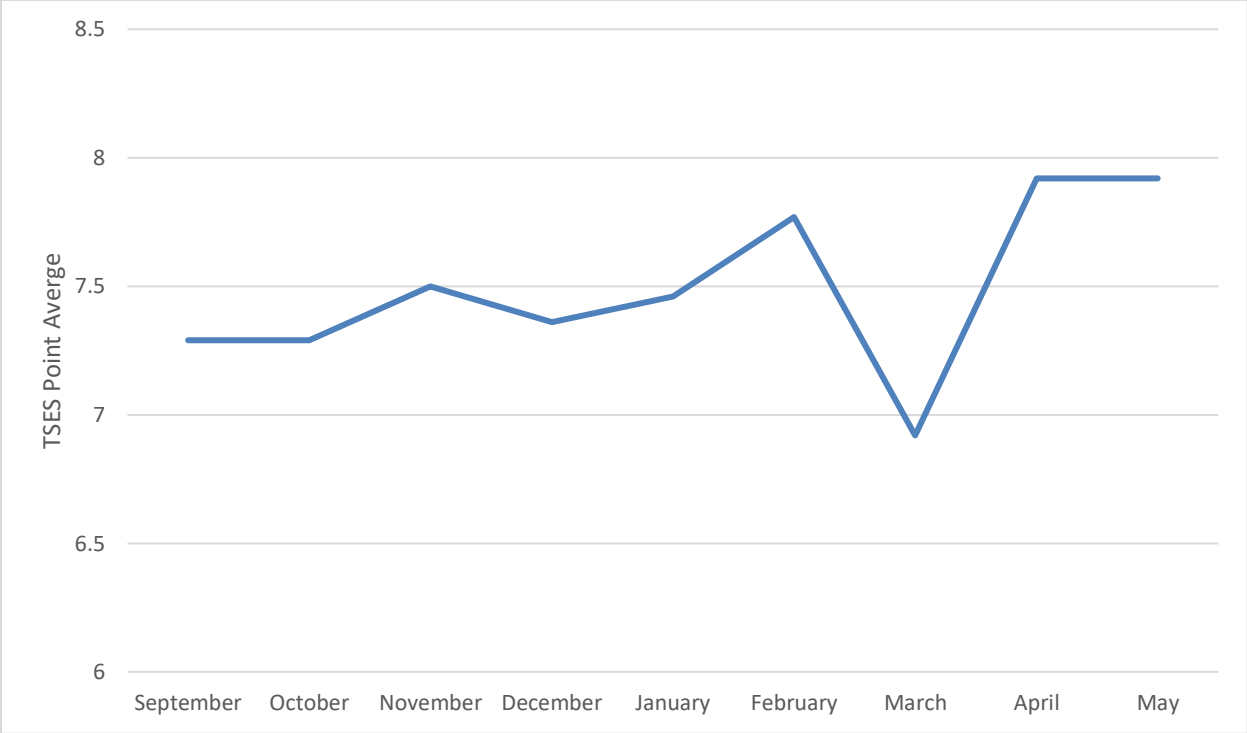
We observe an increase for question 9, how much can you use a variety of assessment strategies, of 0.64 points or 8%, which was our fourth lowest increase of the survey and one of two times in which we see a question have a dip from the middle of the survey to the end (see Figure 22). The average of survey question 10, to what extent can you provide an alternative



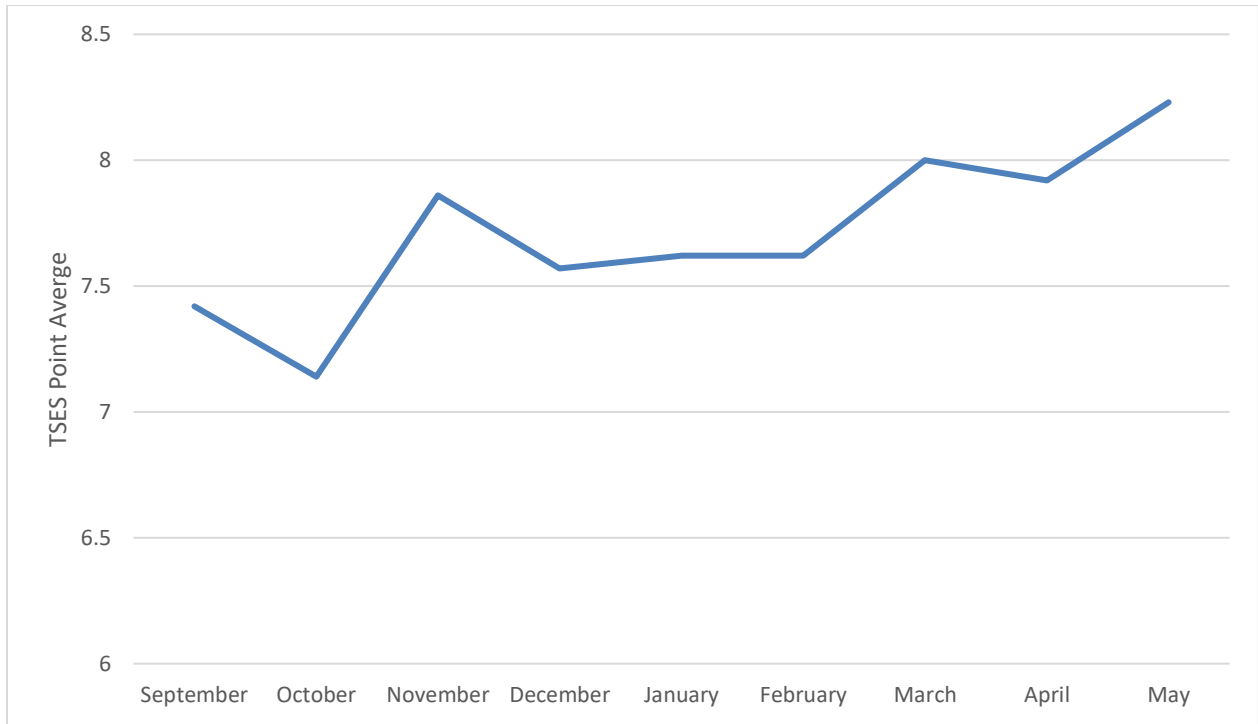
*Figure 16. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to control students to believe in themselves (Question 3).*

---

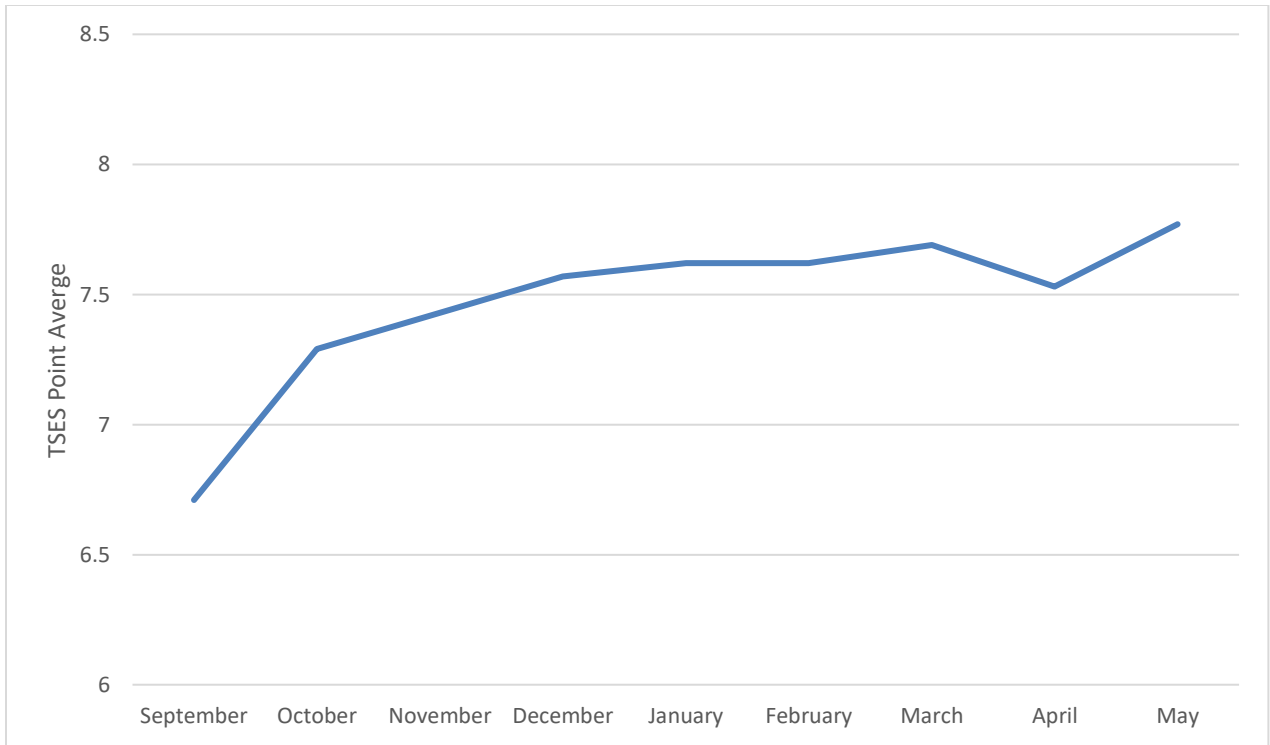




*Figure 17. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to help students value learning (Question 4).*



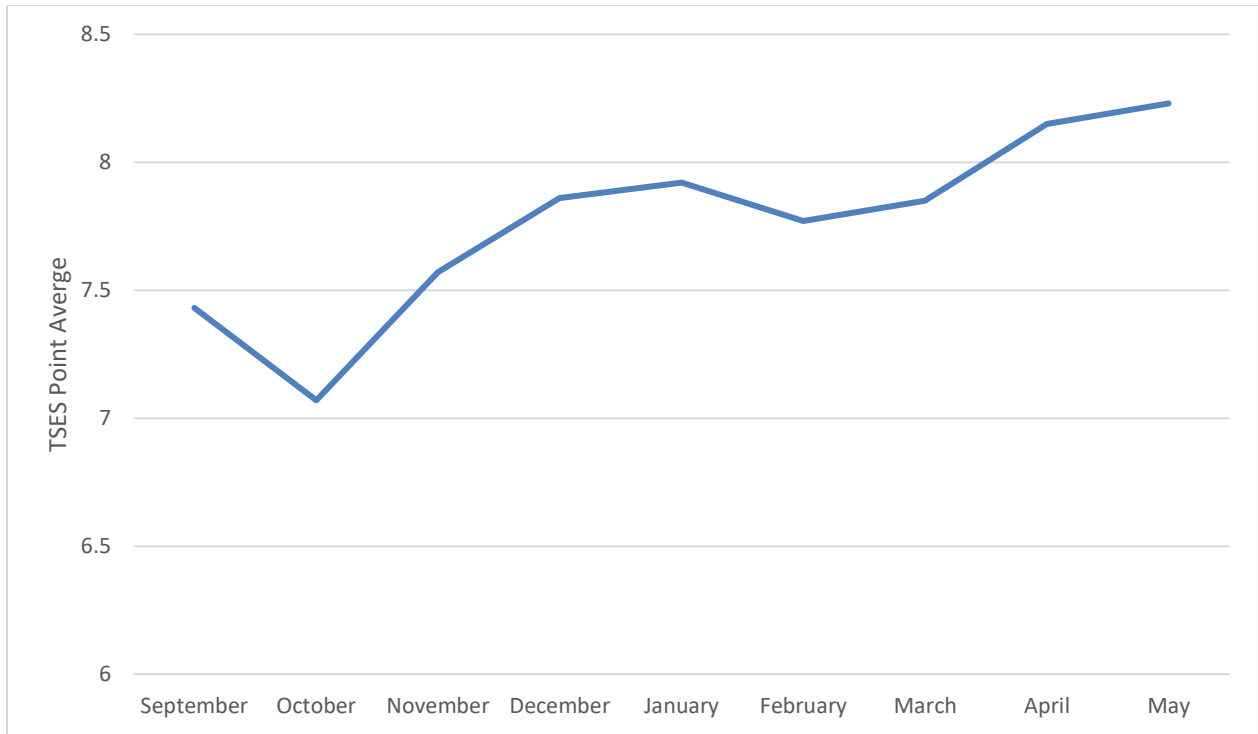
*Figure 18. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to craft good questions for students (Question 5).*



*Figure 19.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to get children to follow classroom rules

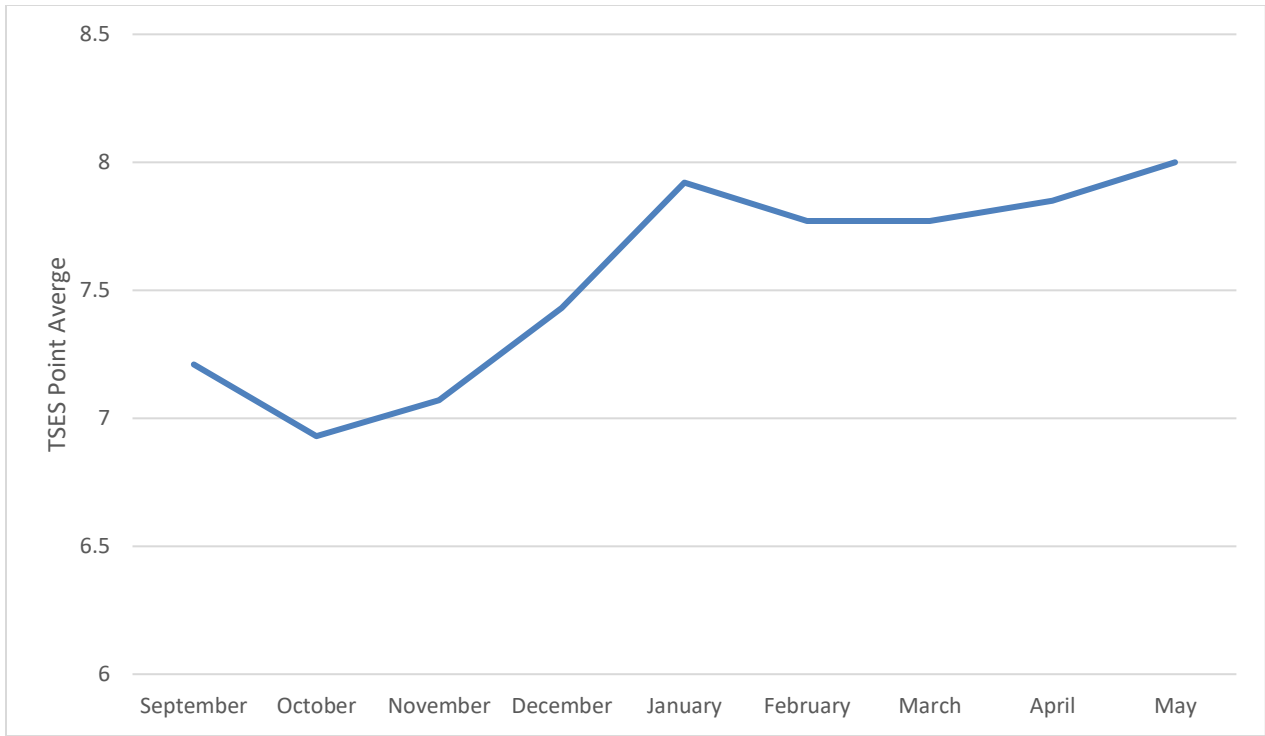
(Question 6).

---



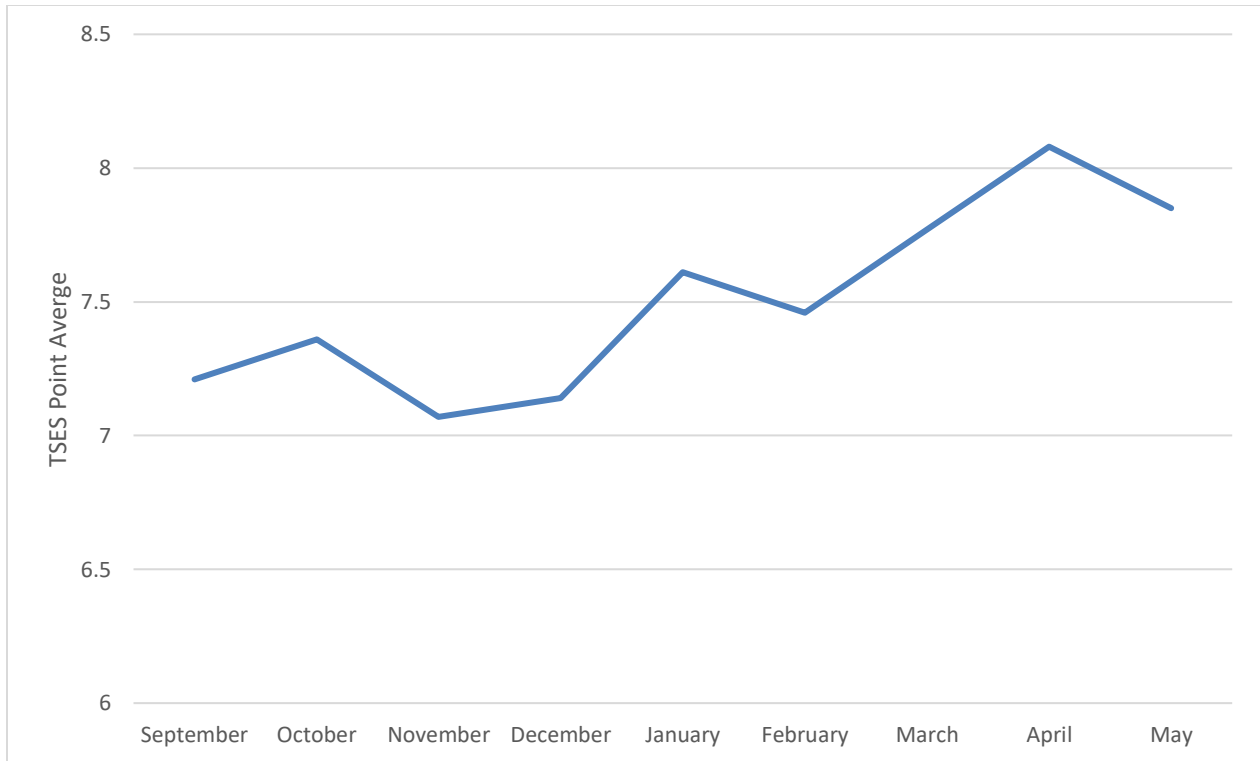
*Figure 20.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy (Question 7).

---



*Figure 21.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to establish a classroom management system with each group of students (Question 8).

---



*Figure 22. Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to use a variety of assessment strategies (Question 9).*

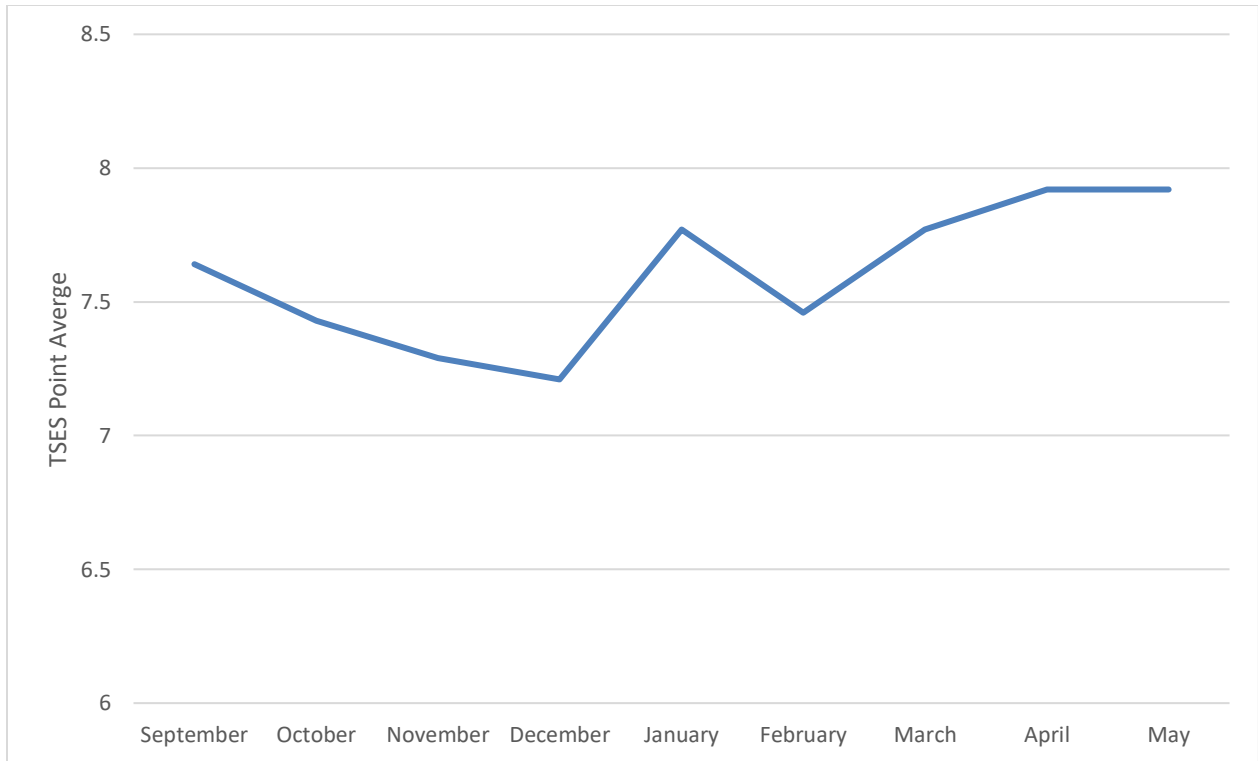
---

explanation or example when students are confused, remained between 7.21 and 7.92, the only question that did not ever hit a 6 or an 8 on the TSES scale. The difference from September (7.64), our second highest pre- data, to May (7.92) left us with an increase of 0.28 points (3.5%) which was the second lowest increase we observed (see Figure 23).

Trend data for Question 11, how much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school, starts out in September with an average of 6.93 and the survey ends in May with an average of 7.92, causing us to have an increase of 0.99 points, 12.4% (see Figure 24). The trend data for the last question, question 12 of the TSES survey, how well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom, is the second time we see a dip from the middle of the survey to the end, but it is the only question we see a decrease from the pre- and post- results. With September having the highest average of all questions (7.79) and May being the lowest average we see in the survey (7.77) it gives us a negative difference of 0.02 points, a 0.3% decrease, the only one seen throughout the entire survey (see Figure 25).

## **Inquiry Question 2**

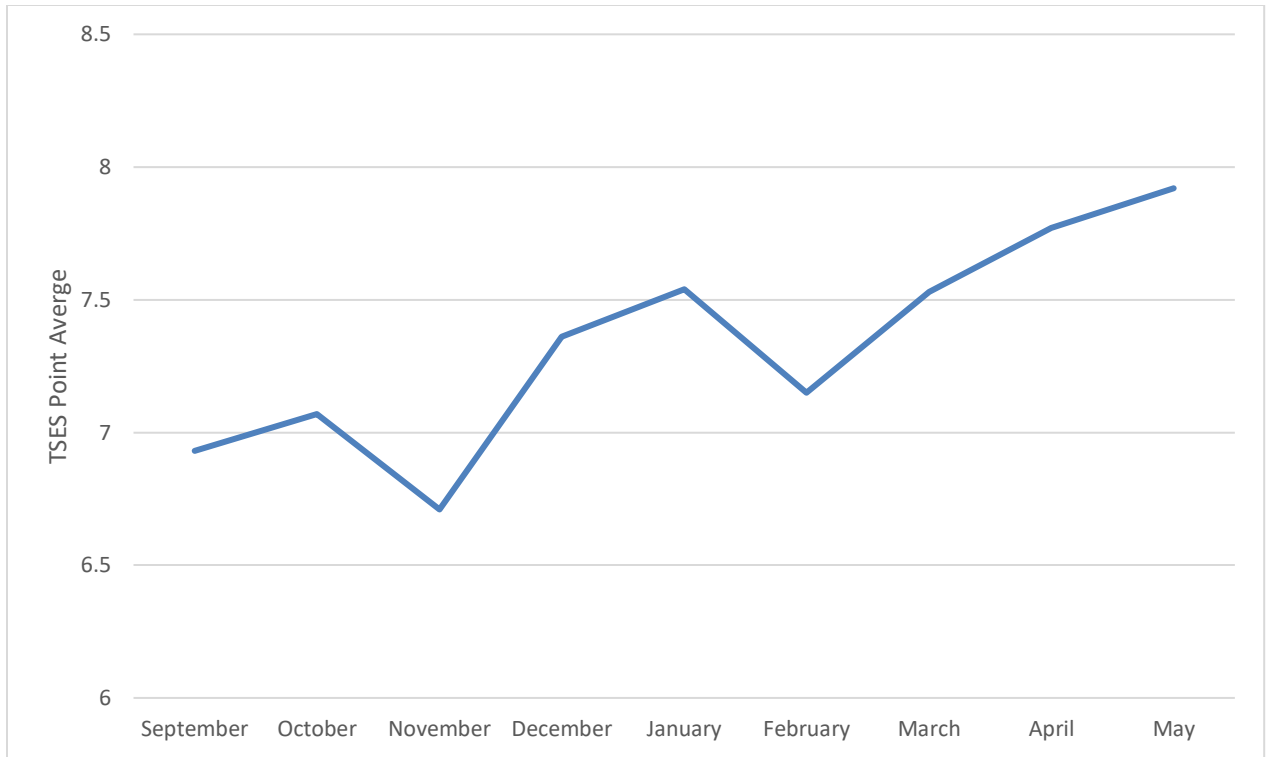
How effective were the strategies delivered during Hopeful County's Beginning Teacher preparation program in having an impact on beginning teachers' first year of teaching? Qualitative results were collected using two focus groups in June 2023 with beginning teachers. The beginning teachers were divided into the groups by elementary and secondary to keep the groups small. Two teachers, teacher K and teacher M, did not participate in the focus groups, leaving 11 participant responses reflected in this data set. In the first set of coding, I was looking for concrete items we had implemented that the BTs thought helped in their first year. When no one support stuck out I broadened my search to what they identified as support in their responses. Following first and second level coding, themes that emerged included inadequate



*Figure 23.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused (Question 10).

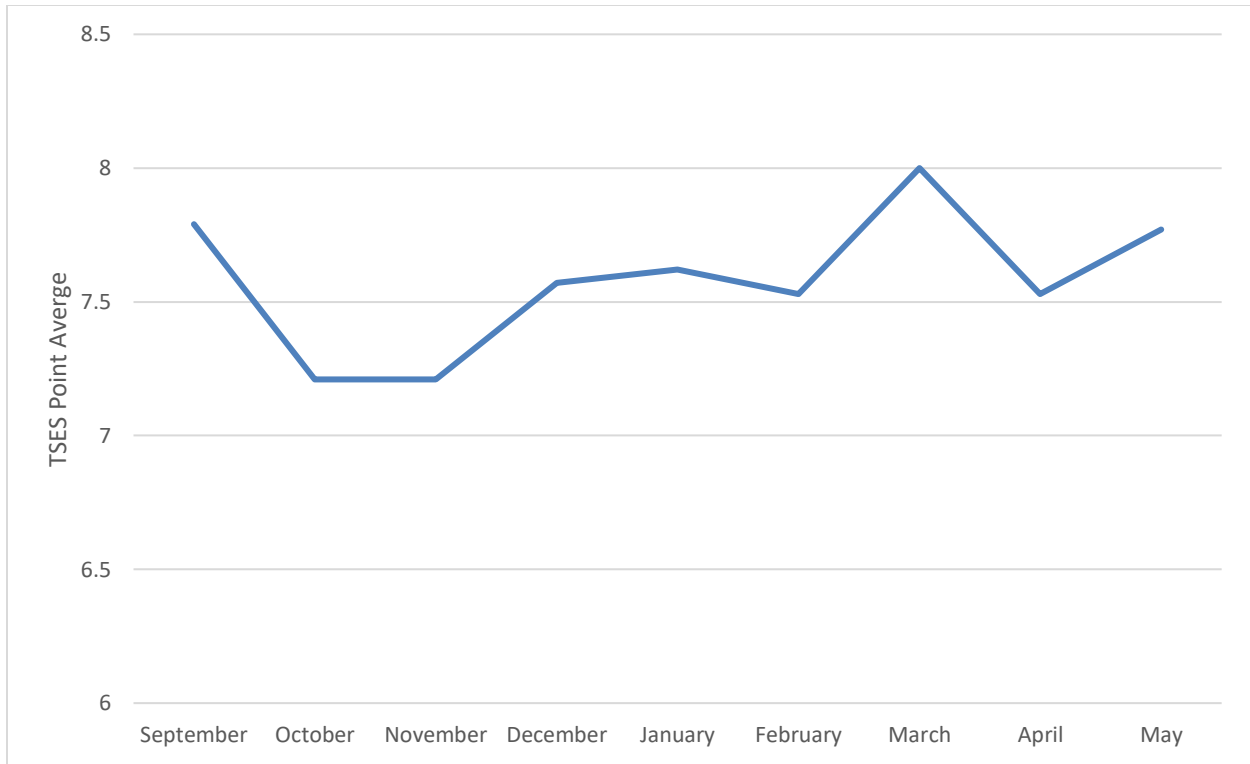
---





*Figure 24.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to assist families in helping their children do well in school (Question 11).

---



*Figure 25.* Self-efficacy trend data for capacity to implement alternative strategies in your classroom (Question 12).

---

building-level support, encouraging district level support, and informative support with licensure.

### ***Inadequate Building-Level Support***

Using the data collected and analyzed from improvement Cycles 1 and 2, my inquiry partners and I realized that beginning teachers needed additional support in their buildings. Therefore, we hired six instructional coaches, one for every building that had new teachers in them. Instructional coaches were interviewed and hired based off of their performance in the classroom as well as their EVAAS and state testing data. These instructional coaches would also be the mentors for each of the beginning teachers.

Throughout the interviews, thoughts on the instructional coaches were not positive. Out of all of the comments that were received regarding building level support, 92% of them were negative. Teachers believed that they would be checked on regularly from their mentors and receive help, but the level of support received did not meet their expectations. “You have to look for support in the building” said Teacher I, quickly followed by Teacher L. “They are nice but not always flexible so I would skip talking to my mentor...I don’t feel like I got what I needed from my mentor.” Teacher I responded in agreement, “What I thought I should get from my mentor was not what I received. To me it was let’s talk and sign this paperwork.” Teacher J concurred, “I agree, seeing me in the hallway and asking how I am doing is not a meeting.” The teachers thought that the tasks performed by the instructional coaches were mostly administrative and performative not helpful in their actual classrooms. “Instructional coaches need to do a better job with curriculum because they are paid to help us with that and it should not fall on you two [the BT Coordinator any myself].” Teacher L took issue with the lack of clear expectations, which resulted in her being reprimanded by the principal. “Instructional coaches in the building

need to talk to us more about what needs to happen. I didn't know I needed to progress monitor my kids so I didn't until six weeks had passed by when I got called into the principal's office for not completing them." Teacher D tried to assess the communication breakdown, stating "I think they [instructional coaches] are already programmed and think we know things that we don't. And we don't ask because we don't know." All of the beginning teachers in the elementary focus group agreed that the instructional coaches "need more accountability, if they are going to take on the role, you need to be more aware of what BT's need – make sure they are thriving in the building, not just surviving."

Depending upon which school the beginning teachers worked in, the principals received mixed reviews. Some were positive remarks, such as "My admin makes me feel comfortable asking questions and going to her if I need help. As a new EC teacher, I can't begin to tell you how much that means." Teacher B said that her principal was also helpful and made her feel welcomed in the building at the beginning of the year in which Teacher E (who shares the same principal) replied that she "agrees wholeheartedly. My admin is the best, when I had a problem with one of my students, she was right there to support me when the mother got upset."

And there were negative comments to contrast. "[I] never saw my administrator on a regular basis." One teacher went as far as to say her administrator didn't care about her class, "elective classes are taken for granted and just throws students in those classes. Our principal consistently takes time away from the elective schedule to have other events such as a pep rally or a dance but expects us to still produce high-quality work. It leads us to being frustrated and I don't feel like they really care about the subject I teach."

The perception of each principal in the building varied from school to school, however the overall attitude towards the instructional coaches were very defined. Instructional coaches

needed to focus more on the needs of beginning teachers instead of checking the boxes to say they worked with the beginning teachers. The beginning teachers did not feel supported by the people that were hired to help them the most.

### ***Encouraging District-Level Support***

Again, with the growing need to hire alternatively licensed teachers to fill vacancies, we realized that we need to hire a beginning teacher coordinator to help handle not only first year teachers but teachers in years 1 through 3. Throughout the focus groups, the beginning teachers sang praises for the beginning teacher coordinator. Eleven out of the 11 teachers interviewed all had positive things to say in regards to the beginning teacher coordinator. “Lots of support in regards to classroom management and such a wonderful support system” while another followed up with “coming in and helping set up my classroom, watching a lesson and giving feedback the same day.” Teacher E noted that “we were provided resources, we were prepped early on so I think it gave us great insight into our classrooms as well as keeping us in the classrooms.” It was noted that the early classroom management sessions were instrumental with the beginning teachers. “Help with classroom management played a big part of our first year – without classroom management we can’t teach anything. You all helped us out with lesson planning in the beginning and I needed that. It prepared me for what was expected of us.” Teacher D added “even though some of the meetings felt time consuming, it wasn’t bad because we needed to be here with you all. We were able to collaborate with other teachers going through the same thing in different building and piggyback off of ideas from their classrooms.” The support during the day and outside of the workday did not go unnoticed by the beginning teachers either. “I was surprised when you all showed up with pom poms cheering us on after we walked out of the Reading Foundations test, it was nice to see that kind of support system from you two.”

The support that the beginning teachers were appreciative of and expected came from the district level. While they did not always like coming to the additional meetings, they felt like they were worth the time.

### ***Informative Licensure Support***

While coursework was not required from all of the beginning teachers in their initial year, we encouraged all of the first-year teachers to start working on licensure testing regardless of coursework. Teacher L said, “Having multiple conversations around licensure requirements helped me tremendously. The reading foundations course you all made us take was helpful as well. I procrastinate so I wouldn’t have taken the test as early as I did on my own. I would not have taken it and passed it as I did if it wasn’t set up like you all did.” Teacher I went on to say “you all did a great job telling us what was required of us, beginning teachers need to know up front what is expected, if they aren’t willing to put in the time for coursework there is going to be problems. It is a lot!” Teacher L responded, “Yes, Day 1 you told us what was required and the beginning teachers need to know. I think they agree to get the job but then it is more than they actually bargained for – take coursework, take test and teach full time is a lot.” Teacher C suggested, “maybe do a better job explaining the residency program, from Permit to Teach and Emergency.” Teacher D shared “I thought the Reading Foundations course you set up for all of us to take showed me that you cared about me as a teacher and that you wanted me to pass my test. It made me feel that you want me to do my best and stay in Hopeful County to teach.” With coursework and testing being a hot topic of renewal, beginning teachers appreciated the extra time that was taken to plan professional development around licensure support.

### **Inquiry Question 3**

What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing EPP coursework? Six participants did not have to take coursework their first year because they were hired under a Permit to Teach (PtT) or an Emergency License as shown in Table 9. The study started with 14 participants and lost one participant in December who held a Permit-to-Teach. The remaining thirteen participants took the survey in May 2023 at our last Teacher Talk session. Each question asked was the support helpful in completing Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework. There were five individuals, 38.5%, who did not have to complete coursework and answered neutral to each question.

We examine how the thirteen participants felt in regards to each of the supports given around completing EPP coursework. Figure 26 addresses the support of the five-day orientation where 39% felt neutral, 38% felt that this support was important, and 23% thought it to be very important in regards to completing EPP coursework. Figure 27 deals with the monthly beginning teacher talks. One person, 7.7%, of participants thought this to be unimportant, 46% had neutral feelings, 31% thought it was important and 15% responded as it was very important.

The importance of tuition reimbursement is shown in Figure 28, where one person said it was unimportant and 23% felt it was either important or very important. Figure 29 shows the responses to the beginning teacher support coordinator in regards to completing EPP coursework where 62% answered neutral, 38% regarded the BT Coordinator as either important or very important. There was no negative response to that support.

Regarding the level of support of the principal in completing EPP coursework, two participants or 15.4% answered that it was unimportant while 15.4% answered it was either important or very important. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of participants had no positive or negative

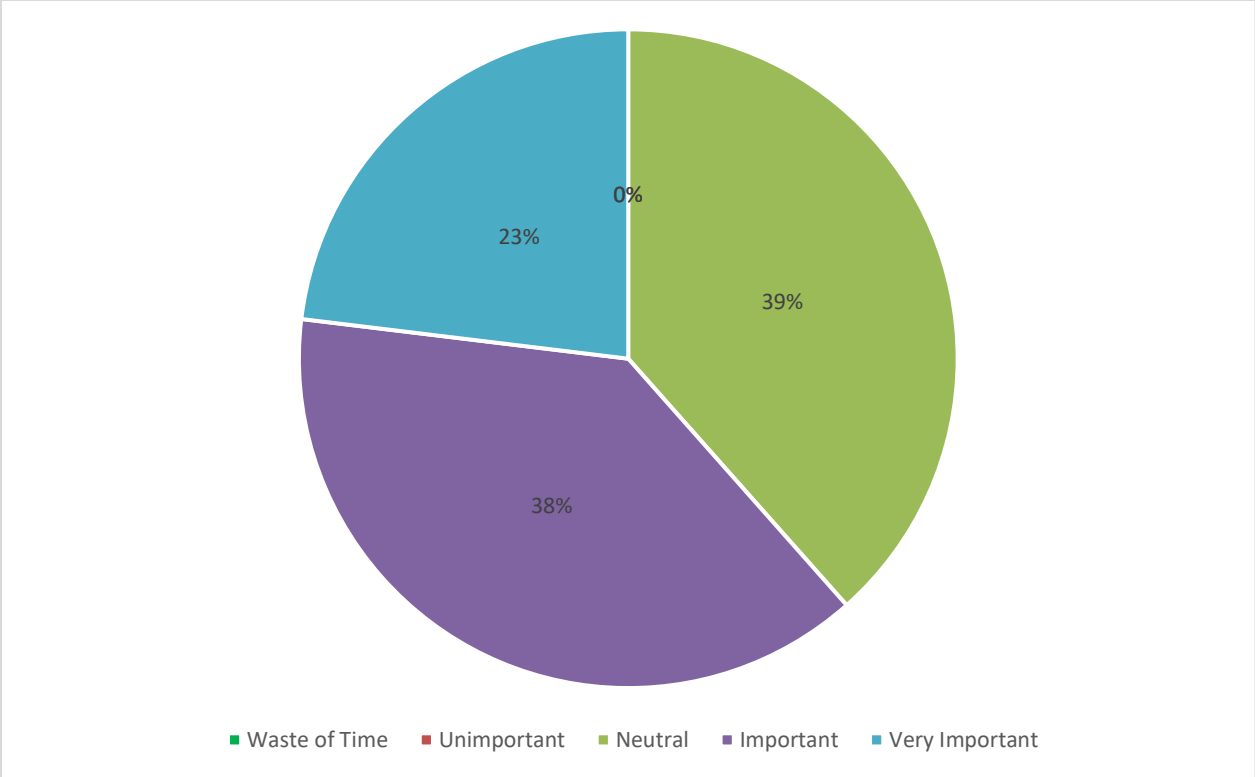
Table 9

*Number and Percentage of Beginning Teachers by Licensure Type*

---

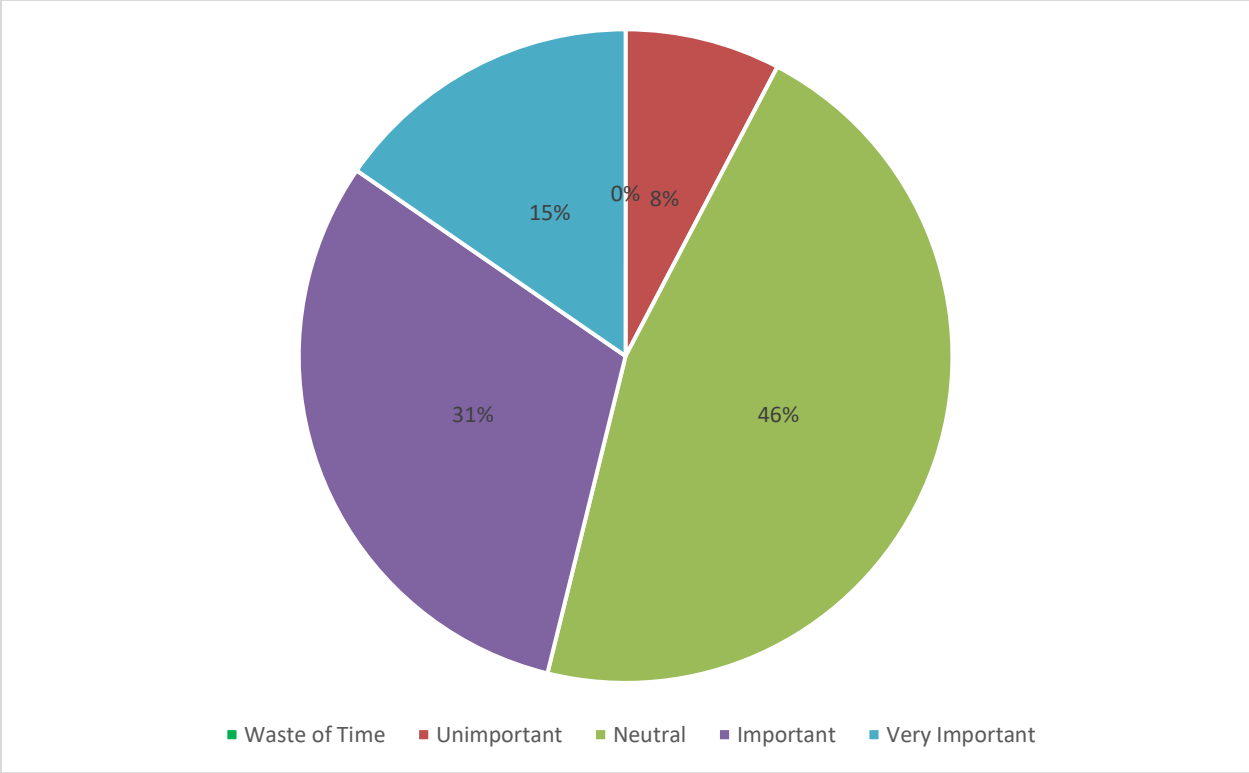
<u>Licensure Type</u>	<u>Number of Participants from Inquiry</u>	<u>Percentage of Participants</u>	<u>Coursework Required</u>
Permit to Teach (PtT)	3	21.43%	Not Required to Take Coursework
Emergency Licensure	3	21.43%	Not Required to Take Coursework
<u>Residency Licensure</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>57.14%</u>	<u>Coursework Required</u>





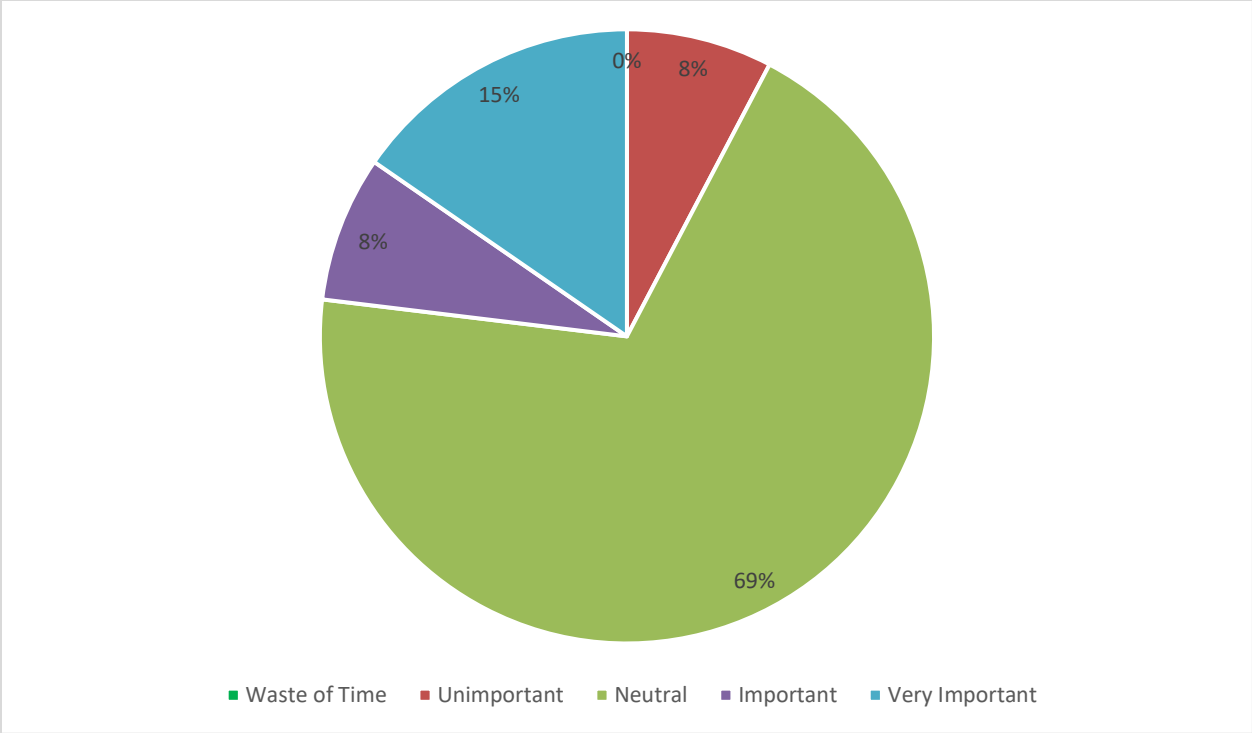
*Figure 26.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the five-day orientation in completing EPP coursework.

---



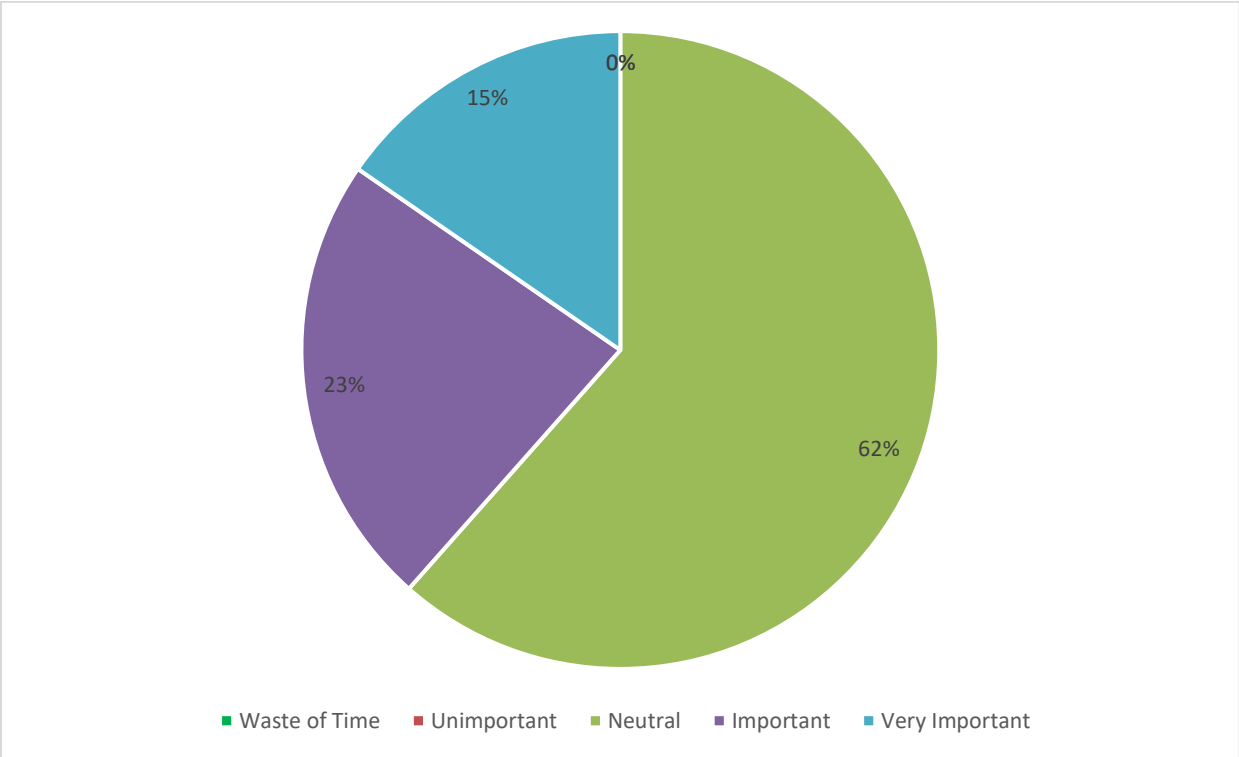
*Figure 27.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the monthly teacher talks in completing the EPP coursework.

---



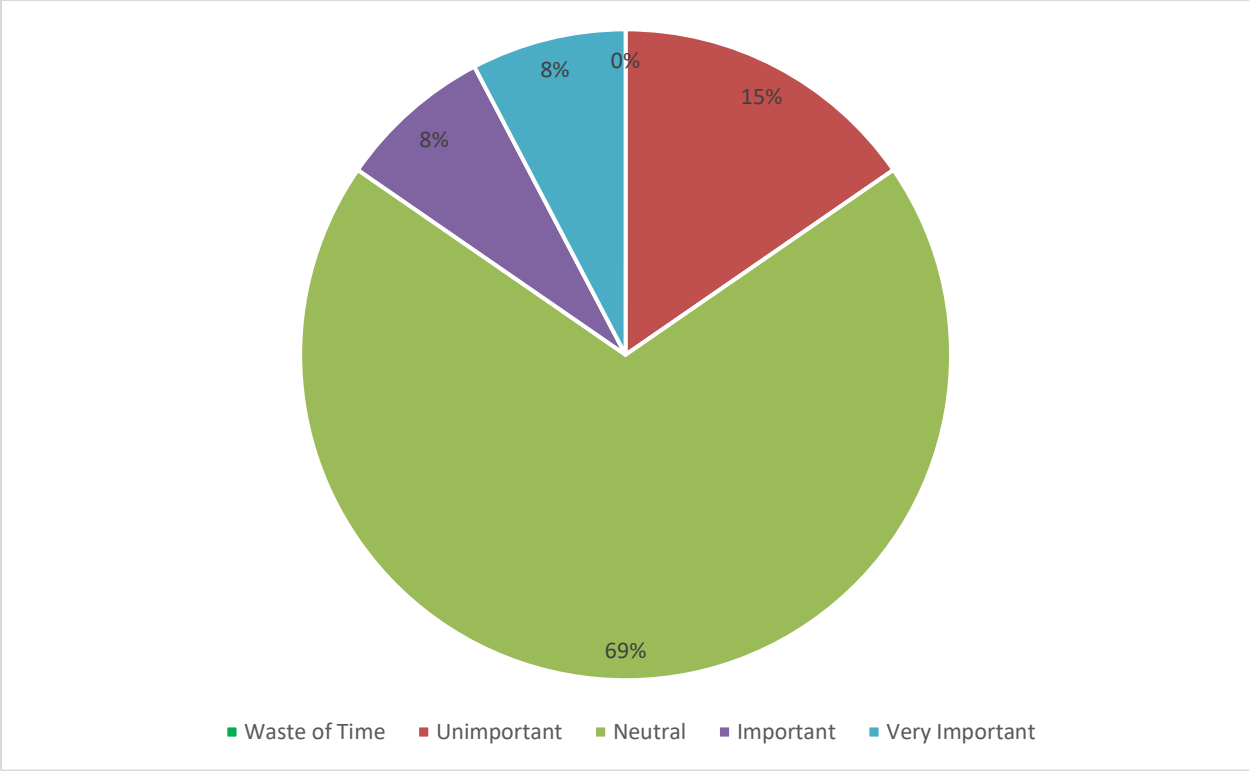
*Figure 28.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the 20% tuition reimbursement in completing EPP coursework.

---



*Figure 29.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the beginning teacher coordinator in completing EPP coursework.

---



*Figure 30.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the principal in completing EPP coursework.

---

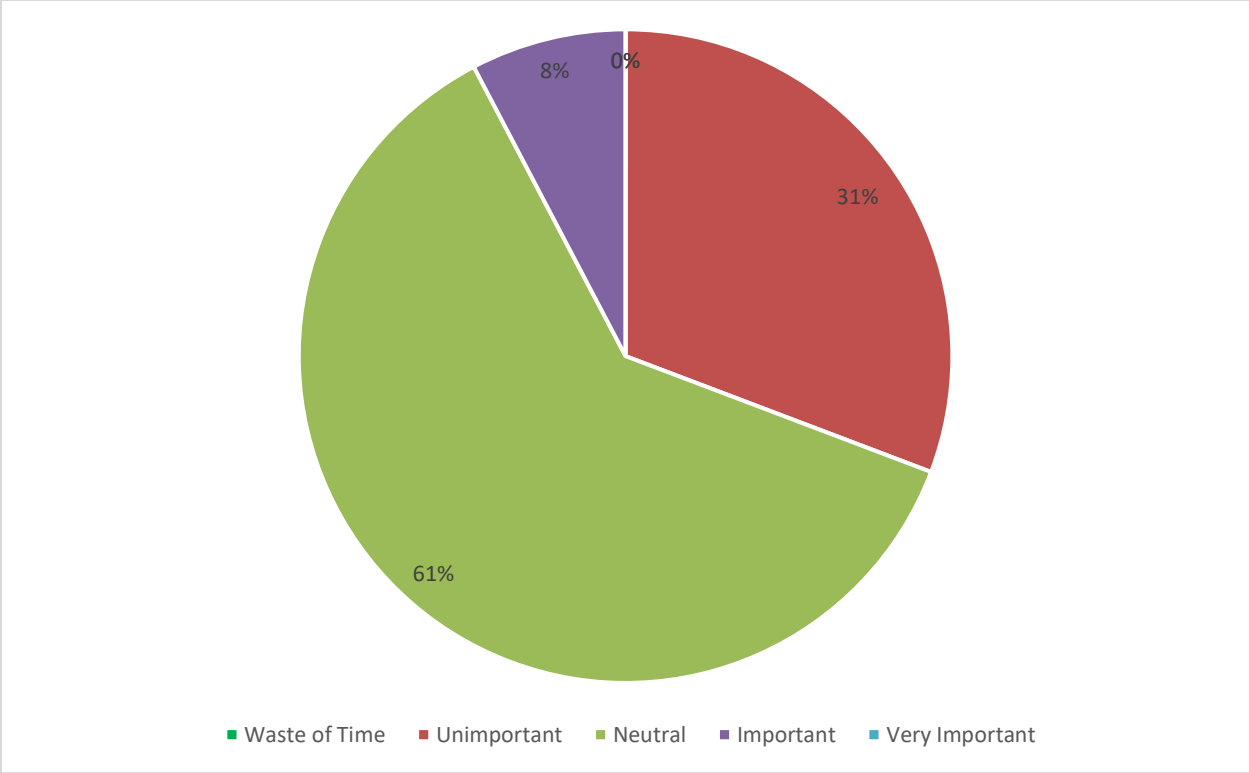
feelings when it came to the principal support of completing EPP coursework (see Figure 30). For the importance of having the mentor in the building with completing EPP coursework, this question received the highest level of dissatisfaction of all of the supports with 30.8%, or 4 participants, saying it was unimportant and only 7.7% saying it was important in completing EPP coursework (see Figure 31).

The support of after-hour childcare sessions had 69% with neither positive or negative and split 15.4% saying it was not important and 15.4% feeling that it was either important or very important (see Figure 32). In regard to how important the professional development offerings were, 23% felt that professional development was important in completing EPP coursework and 7.7% felt as though it was unimportant (see Figure 33).

We see the first and only time a participant (7.7%) said a support was a waste of time, while speaking of the five-day reading foundation course. While five participants thought it was either important or very important in completing the EPP coursework (see Figure 34). The last support, end of semester check-ins, had 23.1% (3 participants) feel that this was very important, and 38.5% (5 participants) felt this was important in completing EPP coursework. This is the only time we saw only five participants, 38.5% answer neutral which is the number of participants that did not have to take any coursework during their first year (see Figure 35).

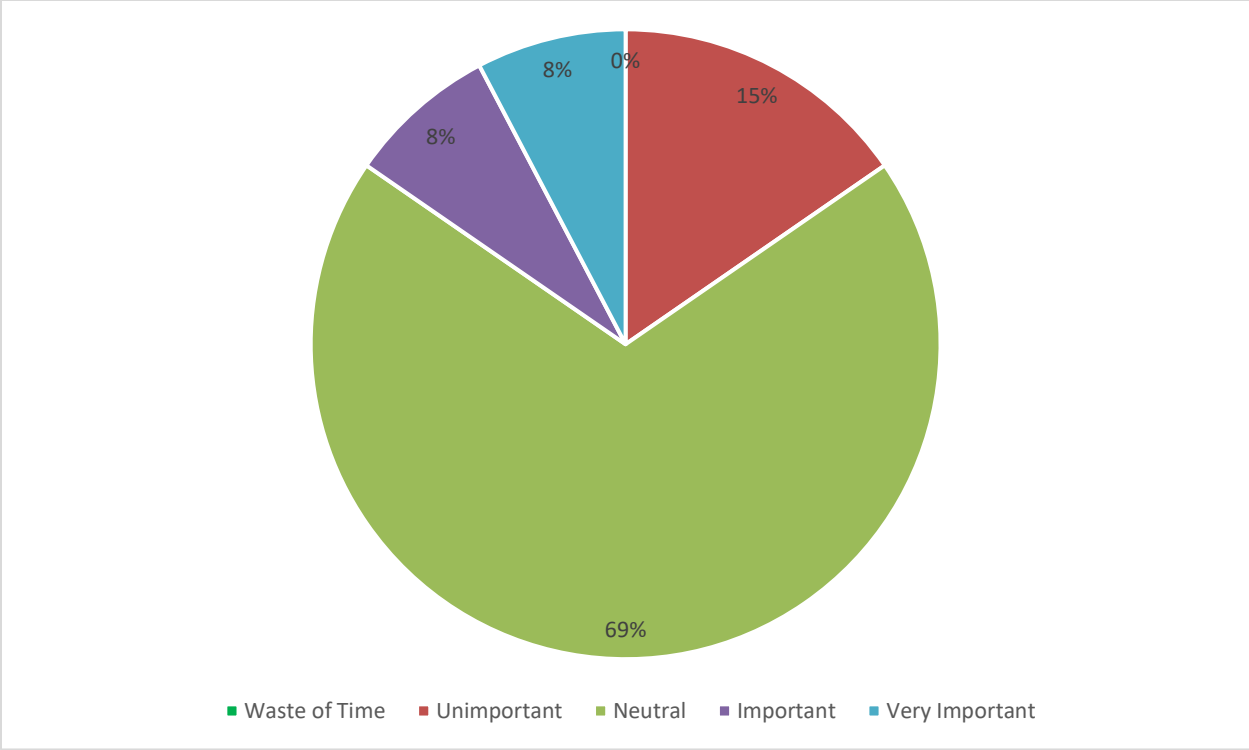
### **Summary**

The continuous, year-long beginning teacher support onboarding program was deemed satisfactory by the first-year beginning teachers. Out of the 14 participants, none of them went to college for education and all were on an alternative licensure route. One participant left in the middle of the year, leaving us with 13 first year teachers starting in January 2023. All of the first-year teachers were appreciative of the dinners we provided, the professional developments we



*Figure 31.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the mentor in completing EPP coursework.

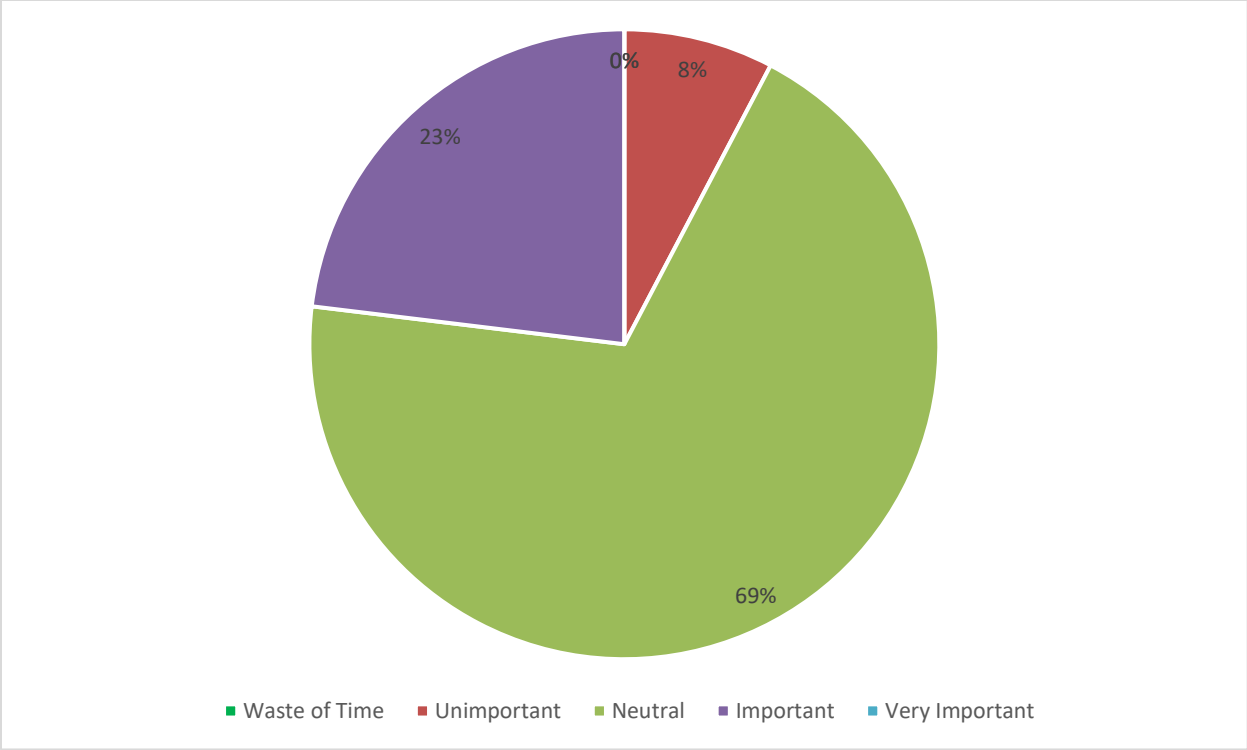
---



*Figure 32.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the after-hour childcare session in completing EPP coursework.

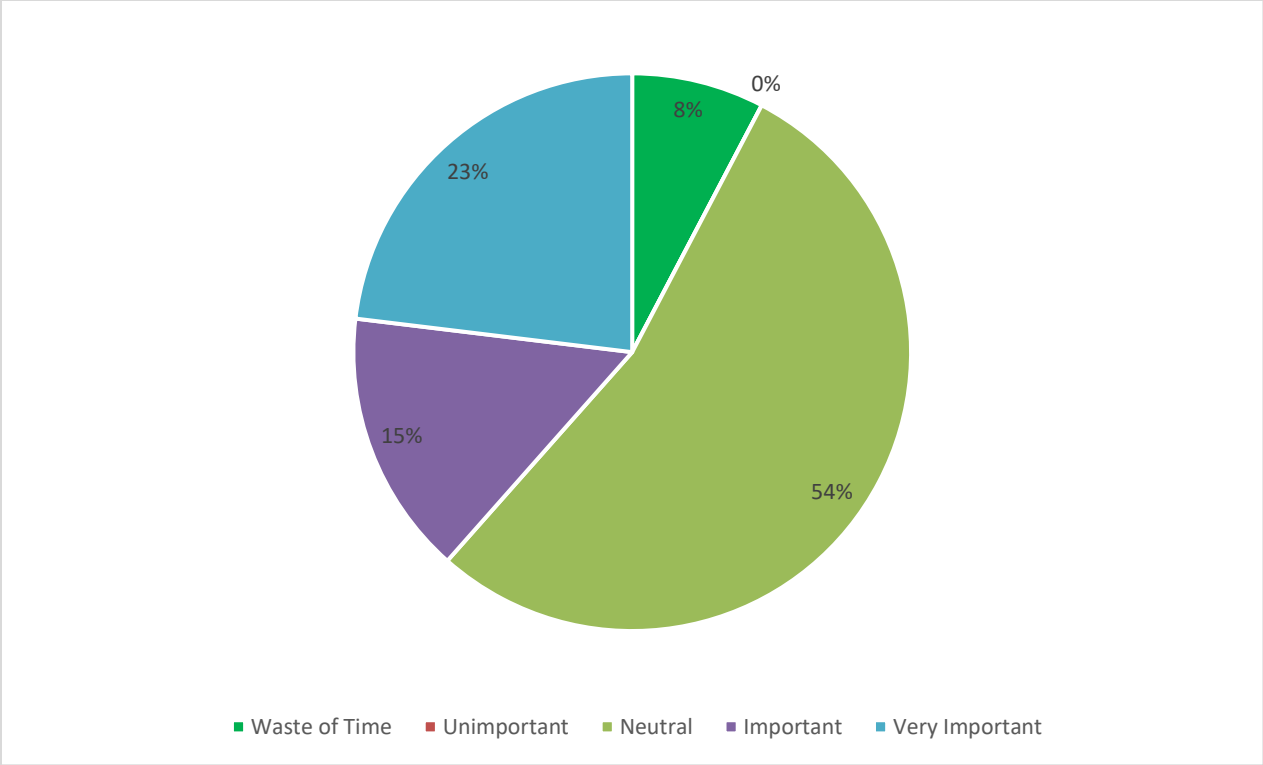
---





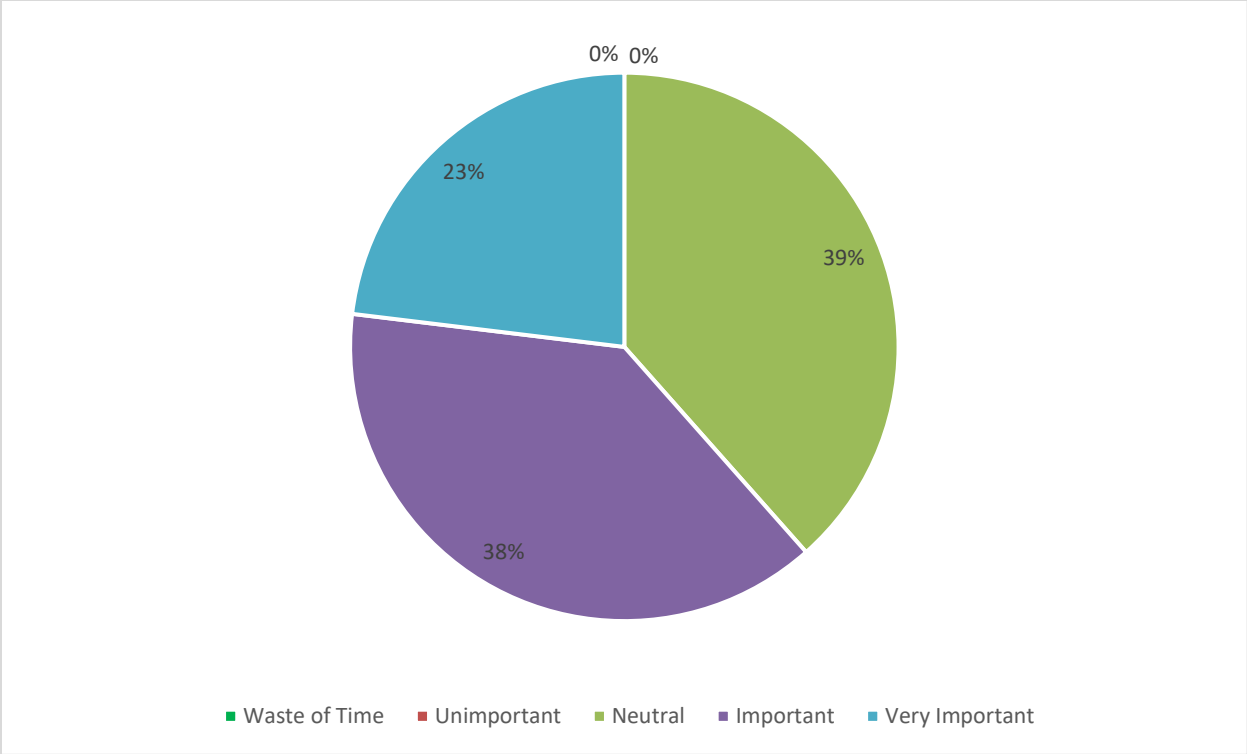
*Figure 33.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the professional development in completing EPP coursework.

---



*Figure 34.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the five-day reading foundations course in completing EPP coursework.

---



*Figure 35.* Likert-type survey responses for the importance of the end-of-semester check-ins in completing EPP coursework.

---

hosted and the supports that we put in place for them. For the 2022-23 school term, the beginning teacher turnover rate was 24%, which is a four year low for Hopeful County Schools and a large decrease from the 2021-22 term where it was 38.1%. While there were positive effects indicated, it is not conclusive that the continuous onboarding process alone made this happen. Chapter 5 will provide more insight into the findings, limitations of study, implications and recommendations for practice and future study.

## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS**

Every child deserves a highly qualified teacher in every single classroom. In rural Northeastern North Carolina, Hopeful County Schools has an ongoing challenge in providing every child with a highly qualified teacher. With the teacher preparation pipeline shrinking (U.S. Department of Education, 2015b) and multiple alternative licenses added by the state (Devier, 2019), Hopeful County School employs beginning teachers with no experience and no educational background to help fill the void. The aim of this inquiry was to see how much impact a beginning teacher program could have on retaining beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools. Exstrom (2010) found that to encourage teachers to remain in education and be effective, they need three things: to feel happy and safe, to be supported by school and district administration, and to receive professional development that helps them grow. To address this problem of practice, Hopeful County Schools hired a Beginning Teacher Coordinator, six Instructional Coaches, and revamped the beginning teacher induction program with teacher talks, work sessions, professional development around testing, and end of semester check-ins. The knowledge acquired through this inquiry is being used to improve the quality of the beginning teacher program as well as the support beginning teachers receive at the school and district level.

### **Summary of the Findings**

#### **Teacher Efficacy Over the Course of the First Year**

Teacher efficacy from pre-implementation (September 2022) to post-implementation (May 2023) of the beginning teacher support program increased in every question with the exception of one, Question 12 the ability to implement alternative strategies in your classroom. The TSES questions were divided into three subgroups around efficacy: student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The largest increase was in the area of

student engagement, followed by classroom management and, lastly, instructional strategies.

While all three subgroups saw an increase from pre- to post-, two subgroups stood out with an increase over double what we observed with the third subgroup. Efficacy in student engagement had a 13.5% increase from pre- to post- and the efficacy in classroom management had a 13.3% increase. In the third subgroup, efficacy in instructional strategies, we observed a 5.4% increase from September 2022 to May 2023.

For each question over the course of the academic year, while there were occasionally dips in efficacy, overall teacher efficacy continually rose from beginning to end of implementation. Noteworthy was a decrease in efficacy across all questions and subgroups in the Spring (February, March, and April). However, scores rebounded to their highest point in May at the conclusion of the school year. This makes sense when a beginning teacher has made it through the entire school year and the most significant one of the four sources to create a strong sense of self-efficacy is based on personal mastery experiences as they provide the most authentic indication of whether one can assemble whatever it takes to succeed (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1986, p. 391) states that self-efficacy “is not concerned with the skills one has but with the judgements of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses”

### **Greatest Impact on Beginning Teachers' First Year**

The data show that beginning teachers valued the beginning teacher coordinator and district-level induction program. With 100% of Hopeful County's beginning teachers coming into education with no prior experience in education, they appreciated the support they received in and out of their classrooms from the beginning teacher coordinator. The beginning teacher coordinator and I were prior alternative licensed teachers who understood what the teacher participants were going through and the additional support they needed. Beginning teachers also

valued the time that was allotted for them to grow and learn during the formative years of the teaching profession. This included time spent training on the various license types and what the next steps are for each participant. This finding is supported by the findings of the NCTWCS survey which found five important school conditions that were linked to teacher outcomes: “the allocation of time in schools, the provision of professional development for teachers, the quality of school leadership, the input of teachers into school decision-making, and the adequacy of school facilities/resources” (North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey, 2021, About section, para. 4).

Jacobson et al. (2020) defines a comprehensive induction program as one that includes peer mentoring, mentor observations, network groups, face-to-face professional learning, book studies as well as requiring video recording and reflection. We hypothesized that a mentor in the building would have the greatest impact on the beginning teachers’ first year because the mentor is right in the building and should have been easily accessible, but with the data collected this outcome was not evident. The beginning teachers deemed the mentoring inadequate and thought they should have received more support from their assigned mentor. The beginning teachers felt that the mentor focused on completing paperwork for compliance rather than provide meaningful guidance or assistance to them in the classroom.

### **Supports in Completing Educator Preparation Program Coursework**

The supports that first year beginning teachers deemed most helpful in completing Education Preparation Program coursework were the five-day orientation held at the beginning of the year and the end-of-semester check-ins where the beginning teacher coordinator met individually with each participant. Both of those supports received 61% of the beginning teachers saying the support was either important or very important in completing EPP

coursework. A 20% tuition reimbursement had one teacher saying that it was unimportant and three teachers saying it was either important or very important to completing EPP coursework. This support had monetary value to it yet received little mention from participants.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

National data reveals that teacher turnover negatively impacts student achievement but also consumes valuable time and resources. Podolsky et al. (2017) estimates that the United States loses over \$8.5 billion to teacher attrition annually. If teachers consistently leave a district, it is time, money and manpower that walks out year after year. Such departures lead to frustration at the school and district level as students' achievement falls due to an influx of new teachers who require training and support to learn how to be effective in the profession. The beginning teachers that participated in this inquiry consistently acknowledged the beginning teacher program's support but did not feel they received enough school-level support from their principal or mentor. The beginning teachers all secured an unofficial mentor or "buddy" who was an educator in their schools that they felt helped them grow in their classroom teaching role. Jones et al. (2020) states that an unofficial mentor had the same if not more impact as an official mentor. An unofficial mentor normally develops based on personality, the time tables of the school day and who is perceived to have a similar teaching style.

Hopeful County Schools is located in rural Northeastern North Carolina and serves a low socio-economic area. It is the second largest employer in the county with the highest average pay. While much can be said about teacher pay in the United States (Garcia & Weiss, 2019), none of the participating teachers referenced their pay during this inquiry. It should be noted that since the inception of this inquiry, North Carolina enacted a new supplement for teachers calculated according to the tax base of each county. Hopeful County Schools beginning teachers



received an additional \$4,000 as a result of this supplement in May 2023 plus a 5% local supplement. In 2022-2023, a beginning teacher with no experience made \$42,850 in Hopeful County Schools. This is just over the 2020 median household income of \$41,889 for Hopeful County (*Bertie County Profile*, 2023). With the start of the North Carolina teacher pay scale at \$39,000 for 2023-2024 and \$41,000 in 2024-25, beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools are set to make \$44,950 starting 2023 and \$47,050 in 2024. Dee and Wyckoff (2015) found that higher earnings do not always equal higher job satisfaction but have led to teacher retention. There are no findings in this inquiry to support or negate the importance of benefits and compensation with regard to beginning teachers.

Teacher self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to affect student learning (Yoo, 2016). When beginning teachers completed the first survey in September and the average rating was 6.64 or higher for every question (with nine being the highest), my inquiry partners and I were interested to see the progression of their self-efficacy throughout the year. Teachers who have strong beliefs in their efficacy persist even when the learning environment was difficult (Lee et al., 2017). The first year beginning teachers who had never been in a classroom had a relatively high self-efficacy which showed in their retention rate of 92% remaining in the classroom for the full 2022-2023 school year, and 85% are still the classroom for the 2023-2024 school year in Hopeful County Schools. The greatest increase in self-efficacy was found in the area of student engagement followed by classroom management, which were the two domains covered most throughout the Teacher Talk Sessions.

Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy – performing tasks, modeling tasks, emotional persuasion, and feedback – were the areas that my inquiry partners and I focused on to help the beginning teachers gain self-efficacy. Through the Teacher Talk Sessions and the Work

Sessions, beginning teachers were able to perform tasks to mastery as well as model tasks for their peers. Instructional Coaches were placed in buildings to help beginning teachers master tasks in their classrooms as well as model best practices so the beginning teacher could see it at work. All interactions with the BT Coordinator and myself were positive and upbeat to promote their success in the classroom, on state required tests, or with coursework. To help with the emotional state in their classrooms, we held Work Sessions where teachers could come plan lessons with veteran teachers allowing the beginning teacher to feel more comfortable with the delivery of the lesson.

Teacher licensing requirements in North Carolina require attention to detail and can be confusing to seasoned administrators, let alone teachers who are just beginning in the profession. In Hopeful County Schools, beginning teachers normally start out with a PtT or an Emergency license because of the time frame in which they are hired or a low GPA. Everyone in this inquiry was a first-year teacher, but there were three different groups based on licensure type – PtT, Emergency, and Residency, causing everyone to have different requirements to meet to be renewed at the end of the year. If a beginning teacher has a grade point average (GPA) below a 2.7, they had to take classes to increase their GPA within their EPP. If they were hired in the middle of the year and had a GPA of 2.7 or better, additional classes were not needed, but they had to become affiliated with an EPP so they could start the Residency license the following year. Teachers typically became affiliated in the Spring semester to start in the Fall. If a beginning teacher was hired early enough to become affiliated with an EPP and had a GPA of 2.7 or higher, they were able to receive a Residency license and take courses beginning in the Fall.

While our Beginning Teacher Coordinator was an alternative licensed teacher when she was hired in 2003, many of the licensure components were new to her and she could not answer many of the beginning teachers' questions early in the process. The BT Coordinator quickly realized that her job was not only to check on the beginning teachers in the classroom and hold meetings but to become an overseer of beginning teacher enrollment in licensure courses, beginning teachers who are attempting to increase their GPA, and beginning teachers who need to become affiliated with an EPP. Failure to do any of these required tasks would lead to non-renewal of the beginning teacher the following year.

Based upon the results of the Likert-type surveys, six teachers did not take course for EPPs, as they were licensed at PtT or Emergency. In two of the Likert-type survey questions, we found less than six participants answered neutral. The supports that were asked about were the five-day orientation and the End-of-Semester check-ins. This is noteworthy because neutral should have been a minimum 46%, or six participants, each time. At the five-day orientation we took an hour to go over and describe the various types of alternative licensure and what type of license each participant would be applying for. At the end of each semester, we met with each beginning teacher to follow up on how they were feeling and where they were in their licensing journey. I believe while neither of these would have been helpful to someone who was not taking coursework complete EPP coursework, participants who were completing EPP coursework would have been expected to indicate that they were more comfortable in the process and answer other than neutral.

Effective mentors can help a beginning teacher remain in the teaching profession (Hudson et al., 2019). Beginning teachers constantly mentioned the lack of support from the instructional coaches/mentors. Given that we utilized the most highly-regarded and evaluated

teachers, pulling them from classroom teaching assignments to serve as mentors in support of the rest of the teachers in the schools, this response was not anticipated. Training for the instructional coaches was not provided through the human resource department but we did support the mentoring piece for instructional coaches. More discussion on what could be done better can be found in the implication of findings.

To sum up all of the interpretations of this study, Hopeful County Schools needs to fund the beginning teacher coordinator position as she utilized Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy to help beginning teachers grow over the course of their first year. Hopeful County Schools must continue to the work that has been started around the year-long onboarding process and find quality mentors for the beginning teachers. All while continuing to teach and engage the beginning teachers in the licensure process.

### **Limitations of the Inquiry**

This inquiry engaged all of the first year beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools. They voluntarily participated and provided their informed consent prior to the research cycle. While the year-long onboarding program may be replicated in other districts, it is to be noted that the research is specific to a low-socioeconomic county, based on high teacher turnover, and serves predominately students and teachers of color and is located in rural Northeastern North Carolina. Since we started this inquiry with only first year teachers and did not include beginning teachers in year two or three, there are some limitations that should be looked at with a different lens. Teachers in years two and three are typically who would not be renewed because of coursework or testing issues but they were not in our inquiry study.

Losing a teacher during the course of the implementation of this inquiry was not anticipated. No contingency plan was developed. However, her data was not significantly higher

or lower than any of the other beginning teachers in the study. Ultimately, all of the data was utilized, including that which was provided by the participant prior to their departure from the district.

This inquiry looked at what we put in place for beginning teachers. We had no control group. We used all beginning teachers so it limits us to see if efficacy grew because of what we put in place or if teaching over time (experience and practice alone) had the biggest impact.

### **Implications of the Findings for Practice**

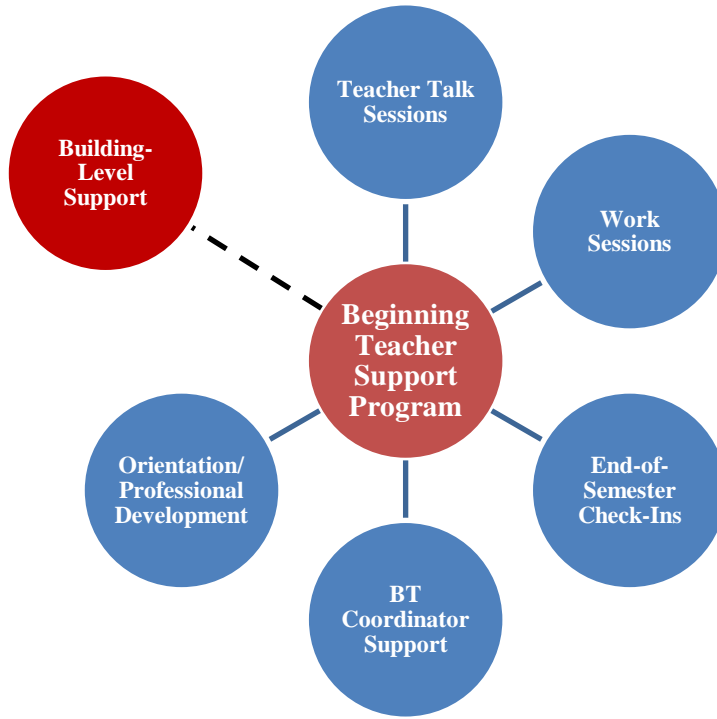
New teachers bring a plethora of ideas, positivity, and eagerness to the teaching profession each year, but in the first five years a staggering 20-50% will leave the profession (Jacobson et al., 2020). With the United States spending over \$8,500,000,000 (Podolsky et al., 2017) every year to recruit and retain teachers, it is no wonder so much work is done around teacher retention. These investments do not return their value if the teachers leave the profession within the first few years.

With the rise of alternative licensure in the teaching profession, it is extremely important that time and resources are utilized strategically to provide the best training for beginning teachers as well as make them aware how they are to proceed to get a continuing professional license. It could take a beginning teacher up to five years before they ever complete all coursework and testing requirements. This is both frustrating and stressful for beginning teachers who are starting in a very demanding profession and trying to maintain a work-life balance. Beginning teachers have to endure high levels of stress and anxiety but the pressure of completing coursework and state testing adds yet another layer. Makara-Studzińska et al. (2019) suggest that the occupational trauma of teaching can compare to firefighters, doctors, nurses and paramedics.

This inquiry examined six supports and how their effect on beginning teachers (see Figure 36). The degree of building-level support within the school was the area in need of additional improvement, based upon the negative feedback from the participants. It is imperative that principals and mentors support beginning teachers but in Hopeful County Schools where the beginning teachers were all alternatively licensed, it becomes even more important for building-level supports to be in place and ready to assist beginning teacher to be successful.

Based on the findings of this inquiry, Hopeful County Schools made changes beginning in the 2023-24 school term with professional development around alternative licensure for principals and instructional coaches. The goal being for principals to better understand when they hire teacher who are not licensed what is being expected of the beginning teachers outside of their buildings and for the instructional coaches to better understand so they can support in different ways in their classrooms. Another change is the newly hired beginning teachers must sign off on what license they are receiving as well as what their next steps are to hold them more accountable.

If Hopeful County Schools continues to implement the baseline of this inquiry study around teacher self-efficacy while correcting necessary changes while adding additional supports it has the chance to further retain beginning teachers while positively effecting student achievement. Donohoo (2018) finds that collective teacher efficacy has a stronger effect on student achievement than the link of socio-economic status on student achievement. Because collective teacher efficacy has positive factors including greater job satisfaction, commitment to students and the teaching profession, and positive attitudes toward teaching students with special needs as well as professional development it is easy to see the benefits of continuing the strategies and supports that have begun with this study.



*Figure 36. Hopeful County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program Model.*

---

## **Implications of the Findings for Equity**

High-needs schools often serve the most vulnerable at-risk populations – economically disadvantaged, academically underperforming, and students of color – while being staffed with the least qualified teachers. Hopeful County Schools is no exception to this statement and we must find solutions to help mitigate the inequities. Recruiting and retaining the best teachers is a must. Comprehensive support to retain our beginning teachers must include mentor support, collaborative opportunities, and supportive work environments. All of our first-year beginning teachers for this inquiry were female of which 85.7% were black and 14.3% were white.

If Hopeful County Schools can continue to cut the teacher turnover rate while providing our beginning teachers with a quality multi-year continuous onboarding process, it would not have high-needs schools staffed with unqualified teachers but schools staffed with teachers who are knowledgeable and capable of making the changes in education to meet the needs of the students in the building. This would allow at-risk students opportunities and access to a world where they could flourish.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

A recommendation for Hopeful County Schools is continue the five-day orientation before school starts. It cost more money but appears to be well worth it considering the lower beginning teacher turnover in the year of inception. It allows more time to cover valuable items such as the alternative licensure types and procedures that will help them to become successful.

School-level supports need to be carefully aligned to working with beginning teachers. Training should encompass the alternative routes to becoming a teacher and what the beginning teachers will have to complete each year to remain in the teaching profession. Instructional



coaches and principals will also need additional training on what supports the beginning teachers may need in their classrooms to be successful.

Instructional coaches were pulled to complete other duties instead of modeling and mentoring in the building. I would recommend to keep the positions of instructional coaches but allow them to remain in the building and work with all teachers instead of administrative duties. This would allow beginning teachers as well as veteran teachers to feel better supported. It would also allow the instructional coaches more time to complete the role of mentorship with beginning teachers.

As the Executive Director of Human Resources, I was able to quickly get access to the addresses and phone numbers of the beginning teachers so we could reach out to them and welcome them to our district. Within days of their hire date, they had received written information of our orientation dates which allowed us to ease anxiety upfront. For this reason, I would suggest to keep the beginning teacher program under the human resources purview.

With the growing number of beginning teachers and alternative licensure, I would recommend a second Beginning Teacher Coordinator. Hopeful County Schools' BT Coordinator had twenty-four beginning teachers for the 2022-2023 school year. This number has increased for the 2023-2024 school term to thirty-one beginning teachers. It is nearly impossible to make sure everyone gets what they need with one person doing the job. With the positive data the Beginning Teacher Coordinator received in this inquiry, it would be worth the investment to retain beginning teachers.

### **Recommendations for Future Study**

A recommendation for any future studies would be to plan for resignations throughout the inquiry. Fortunately, this did not impact this particular inquiry overall, however it did seem to

impact the self-esteem and motivation of the inquiry partners when we lost a beginning teacher, which is contrary to the focus of the inquiry in its effort to retain teachers. Having been in education for twenty years, and knowing that it is a trying time for all educators, research could be completed on why teacher efficacy decreases in the last months of winter /first months of spring.

Unfortunately, this inquiry did not address the question of why did the beginning teacher enter into the field of education. It may be beneficial to question beginning teachers as to their reason for entering into the field of education. Someone who is coming into education because they cannot find a job elsewhere at the time may lack justification to persist when they are offered a position in their original field or training or preparation. It may even be valuable to look at grade point averages and undergrad colleges of the beginning teachers to see if it makes a difference in retention. If GPAs are a hinderance to being accepted into an Educator Preparation Program, do they know the content and if they struggle with content, that could be another issue with retaining them in a field where there are many issues to juggle.

Lastly, I would recommend a longitudinal study over four or five years. This inquiry observed first year teachers over one year but more information could come out of examining a cohort over four or five years as this is how long it could take a beginning teacher to clear licensure requirements. This multi-year study would allow us to have more accurate data on when beginning teachers are leaving in the process as well as how the supports are helping with EPP coursework completion.

### **Conclusions**

Losing teachers whether beginning or veteran is horrific, as the price tag that is attached is costly, and the effect such turnover has on our students is detrimental to their learning.

Hopeful County Schools is located in rural North Carolina and serves predominately students of color and who are low-socioeconomic status. We know what effects teacher turnover – compensation, induction, job satisfaction, working conditions, and relationships in the building. From the inception of hiring beginning teachers, the clock is ticking as 20-50% will be gone within the first five years (Jacobson et al., 2020).

It is imperative from the first footstep onto Hopeful County Schools, beginning teachers should feel welcomed and invited. Tours of the school and introductions to faculty and staff will not resolve teacher turnover but will give the beginning teacher a sense of belonging to the building and a level of comfort to ask questions. District office personnel must also be willing to step in and help beginning teachers to feel comfortable with resources and teaching standards. It is everyone’s job to grow beginning teachers if we are going to see a decrease in teacher turnover.

Deliberate supports must be put in place to assist beginning teachers in their journey in the field of education. These supports take time and cost money but are worth it to help overwhelmed beginning teachers. Monthly meetings with the BT Coordinator were helpful and allowed the beginning teachers to time to reflect, vent, and learn. Work sessions allowed teachers who wanted to come in and get additional help the time and opportunity without worrying about childcare or feeding a family.

The additional licensure pathways are allowing many more people into the field of education to fill the void in teacher vacancies but I am unsure to what extent. These alternative licenses have allowed many people to go into education to see if they like it or to “try it out”. With being able to be hired as a teacher easier, beginning teachers must be prepared for what they are walking into. It is imperative that districts make sure beginning teachers understand the

requirements of teaching, going back to school to take coursework, and passing the required testing while trying to maintain a healthy work-life balance when accepting the job.

### **Scholarly Practitioner Reflections on Leadership**

This dissertation in practice has been a journey of love and hate. Writing a dissertation has been a process of its' own, and I am sure there are ten thousand ways to improve this inquiry. (I am thankful this one way is complete.) As a student the support and guidance of my chair has been tremendously useful and he always pushes me to reflect upon my practice. East Carolina University afforded me the opportunity to be a doctoral student and I did not take it lightly as many did not get accepted and some who were did not finish the journey.

As a leader in Hopeful County Schools, my superintendent supported me in ways that are appreciated and I know everyone in my doctoral cohort did not receive the same accommodations from their district. I felt supported through this journey in my workplace and understand the importance of supporting others to create a space where they can be successful which was one reason this inquiry was important to me.

Personally, I grew in many ways during these three years. Perseverance is one word that would describe writing a dissertation – I surely did not know I had three years of that for one topic! But for me, the biggest area of growth was trust and believing in myself. I did not tell anyone I was applying or had been accepted into the program for fear I may quit along the way. Being in the first year of a new job was nerve-racking as I do not like to disappoint and to add something else to my plate felt selfish. I allowed myself to trust people with the “secret” of starting on my doctorate but asked them to please not tell. They quickly became my cheerleaders and support system. At the beginning of year two of this journey, it was out that I was working

on my doctorate, of course the beginning teachers had to know but they were the best assets to me. They volunteered, they showed up and they were supportive along this journey.

As an educator, a true teacher at heart, this inquiry meant a lot to me. I was hired with an emergency license in 2002 in Hopeful County Schools. I was employed three weeks into the 2002-2003 school term and my classroom was a trailer in the back of school where I taught Algebra I Part A to 9-12 graders. I had a Biology degree and not a clue what I was doing or even getting into for that matter. My first year as a teacher I had the assistant principal come into my classroom to observe me one time and that is the only time I received feedback on what I was doing. I wanted to quit every day and I swore I was going to. There were two teachers in that building who helped me – one a beginning teacher and friend who we just got through it together working on weekends to get by and the other a veteran teacher and unofficial mentor who just took the time to speak to me and ask how I was doing. This inquiry was my chance to make sure beginning teachers in Hopeful County Schools did not feel that way. Continuous and deliberate onboarding are effective and contribute to teacher retention. Most teachers love their jobs but want to feel valued and appreciated. If improvements could be made where teachers are being retained in education and teacher turnover decreased, I believe we would see a change in student achievement especially in low-socioeconomic, rural areas. It is important we make sure our students receive education from competent, knowledgeable teachers who can move students grade levels above their current status and give them access and opportunities to a world they have never known.

## REFERENCES

- Allegretto, S., & Mishel, L. (2018). *The teacher pay penalty has hit a new high: Trends in the teacher wage and compensation gaps through 2017*. Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC. <https://www.proquest.com/reports/teacher-pay-penalty-has-hit-new-high-trends-wage/docview/2228689753/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Anttila, E., & Vaananen, A. (2013). Rural schoolteachers and the pressures of community life: Local and cosmopolitan coping strategies in mid-twentieth century Finland. *History of Education, 42*, 182-203. doi:10.1080/0046760x.2013.766267
- Balsmeyer, B., Haubrich, K., & Quinn, C. (1996). Defining collegiality within the academic setting. *Journal of Nursing Education, 35*(6), 264-267. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/defining-collegiality-within-academic-setting/docview/1026696940/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Behrstock-Sherratt, E. (2016). *Creating coherence in the teacher shortage debate: What policy leaders should know and do*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED582418.pdf>
- Berman, P., McLaughlin, M. W., Bass-Golod, G. V., Oauly, E., & Zellman, G. L. (1977). *Federal programs supporting educational change, Vol. VII: Factors affecting implementation and continuation*. RAND.

- Berry, B. (2008). Staffing high-needs schools: Insights from the nation's best teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(10), 766-771.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/003172170808901017>
- Berry, B., Bastian, K. C., Darling-Hammond, L., & Kini, T. (2021). *The importance of teaching and learning conditions: Influences on teacher retention and school performance in North Carolina*. Research Brief. Learning Policy Institute, Palo Alto, CA.  
<https://www.proquest.com/reports/importance-teaching-learning-conditions-influences/docview/2526812849/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Béteille, T., Kalogrides, D., & Loeb, S. (2012). Stepping stones: Principal career paths and school outcomes. *Social Science Research*, 41(4), 904.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.03.003>
- Bertie County Profile*. (2023, June 16). MyFutureNC. [https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Bertie\\_County.pdf](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Bertie_County.pdf)
- Biddle, C., & Azano, A. P. (2016). Constructing and reconstructing the "rural school problem": A century of rural education research. *Review of Research in Education*, 40(1), 298-325.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16667700>
- Boe, E. E., Shin, S., & Cook, L. H. (2007). Does teacher preparation matter for beginning teachers in either special or general education? *The Journal of Special Education*, 41(3), 158-170. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/00224669070410030201>
- Booth, J., Coldwell, M., Müller, L., Perry, E., & Zuccollo, J. (2021). Mid-career teachers: A mixed methods scoping study of professional development, career progression and retention. *Education Sciences*, 11(6), 299. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060299>

- Boykin, A. W., & Noguera, P. (2011). *Creating the opportunity to learn: Moving from research to practice to close the achievement gap*. ASCD.
- Boylan, C., & McSwan, D. (1998). Long-staying rural teachers: Who are they? *Australian Journal of Education*, 42(1), 49-65. doi:10.1177/000494419804200104
- Brockmeier, L. L., Starr, G., Green, R., Pate, J. L., & Leech, D. W. (2013). Principal and school-level effects on elementary school student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, 8(1), 1-13.
- Callahan, J. (2016). Encouraging retention of new teachers through mentoring strategies. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 83(1), 6-11. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/encouraging-retention-new-teachers-through/docview/1822382396/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Caprara, G., Barbaranelli, C., Steca, P., & Malone, P. (2006) Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students' academic achievement: A study at the school level. *Journal of School Psychology*, 44(6) 473-490.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0022440506000847?via=ihub>
- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L., (2017). *Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.  
[https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Teacher\\_Turnover\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Teacher_Turnover_REPORT.pdf)
- Chang, F., Early, D. M., & Winton, P. J. (2005). Early childhood teacher preparation in special education at 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 27(2), 110-124. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/early-childhood-teacher-preparation-special/docview/233252345/se-2?accountid=10639>



- Cheng, A., Henderson, M. B., Peterson, P. E., & West, M. R. (2019). Public support climbs for teacher pay, school expenditures, charter schools, and universal vouchers. *Education Next*, 19(1). <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/public-support-climbs-teacher-pay-school/docview/2161053503/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Cherubini, L. (2007). A personal services paradigm of teacher induction. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 11(6), 1. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/personal-services-paradigm-teacher-induction/docview/210675456/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teacher II: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2,633-2,679.
- Clark, M. A., Chiang, H. S., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfield, K., Erbe, A., & Puma, M. (2013). *The effectiveness of secondary math teachers from teach for America and the teaching fellows program*. NCEES 2013-4015. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.
- Clewell, B., & Villegas, A. M. (2001). *Evaluation of the DeWitt-Wallace reader's digest fund's pathways to teaching careers program*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/61801/410601-Evaluation-of-the-DeWitt-Wallace-Reader-s-Digest-Fund-s-Pathways-to-Teaching-Careers-Program.PDF>
- Clifford, M., Menon, R., Gangi, T., Condon, C., & Hornung, K. (2012). *Measuring school climate for gauging principal performance: A review of the validity and reliability of publicly accessible measures. A quality school leadership issue brief*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED531401.pdf>

- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, L., & Vigdor, J. (2010). Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 45(3), 655-681.
- Constantine, J., Player, D., Silva, T., Hallgren, K., Grider, M., & Deke, J. (2009) *An evaluation of teacher trained through different routes to certification. Final report.* NCEE 2009-4043. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504313.pdf>
- Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Hayes, K., & Theobald, R. (2015). *Missing elements in the discussion of teacher shortages.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.  
<http://www.caldercenter.org/missing-elements-discussion-teachershortages>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2013, North Carolina. Session Law 2013-360, Senate Bill 340 (2013).  
<https://www.ncleg.gov/EnactedLegislation/SessionLaws/HTML/2011-2012/SL2011-85.html>
- Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2014, North Carolina. Session Law 2014-100, Senate Bill 744 (2014).
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 5(1).
- Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teacher should learn and be able to do.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

- Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D. J., Gatlin, S. J., & Heilig, J. V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 73(42), 2-50.
- DeAngelis, K. J., Wall, A. F., & Che, J. (2013). The impact of preservice preparation and early career support on novice teachers' career intentions and decisions. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(4), 338. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/impact-preservice-preparation-early-career/docview/1428653750/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Dee, T. S., & Wyckoff, J. (2015). Incentives, selection, and teacher performance: Evidence from impact. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 34(2), 267.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/pam.21818>
- Delgadillo, L. M. (2018). Collegiality as a component in faculty development. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 110(3), 58-62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14307/JFCS110.3.58>
- DelGreco, R., Bernadowski, C., & Parker, S. (2018). Using illustrations to depict preservice science teachers' self-efficacy: A case study. *International Journal of Instruction*, 11(2), 75-88.
- Devier, B. H. (2019). Teacher shortage and alternative licensure solutions for technical educators. *Journal of Technology Studies*, 45(2), 48-59.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/teacher-shortage-alternative-licensure-solutions/docview/2362119993/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Dias-Lacy, S. L., & Guirguis, R. V. (2017). Challenges for new teachers and ways of coping with them. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(3), 265-272.  
<http://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n3p265>

Dicke, T., Elling, J., Schmeck, A., & Leutner, D. (2015). Reducing reality shock: The effects of classroom management skills training on beginning teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 48*, 1-12.

Donohoo, J. (2018). Collective teacher efficacy research: Productive patterns of behavior and other positive consequences. *Journal of Educational Change, 19*(3), 323-345.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-018-9319-2>

Doolittle, P. E., & Camp, W. G. (1999). Constructivism: The career and technical education perspective. *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education, 16*(1).  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.21061/jcte.v16i1.706>

Drago-Severson, E. (2012). The need for principal renewal: The promise of sustaining principals through principal-to-principal reflective practice. *Teachers College Record, 114*(12), 1.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/need-principal-renewal-promise-sustaining/docview/1033742940/se-2?accountid=10639>

Du Plessis, A. E., & Sunde, E. (2017). The workplace experiences of beginning teachers in three countries: A message for initial teacher education from the field. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 43*(2), 132-150.

Dunn, K. E., & Rakes, G. C. (2011). Teaching teachers: An investigation of beliefs in teacher education students. *Learning Environments Research, 41*(1), 39-58.

Elizabeth City State University. (n.d.). *Teacher education candidates dispositions assessment*.  
<https://www.ecsu.edu/documents/current-students/admissionRequirements.pdf#search=teacher>

- Exstrom, M. (2010). *Research into why teachers leave the profession is helping lawmakers craft better policies to hold onto them*. National Conference of State Legislatures.  
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/education/sl-mag-what-teachers-need.aspx>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2016). Surviving the transition shock of the first year of teaching through reflective practice. *System, 61*, 12-19.
- Fauth B., Decristan J., Decker A., Büttner G., Klieme E., Hardy I., & Kunter M. (2019). The effects of teacher competence on student outcomes in elementary science education: The mediating role of teaching quality. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 86*(2019), 102,882. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2019.102882
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2001). From preparation to practice: Designing a continuum to strengthen and sustain teaching. *Teachers College Record, 103*(6), 1013-1055.  
<http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/33196/From%20Preparation%20to%20Practice-Feiman-Nemser-2.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>
- Fontenelle-Tereshchuk, D. (2020). Diversity in the classrooms: A human-centered approach to schools. *Interchange, 51*(4), 429-439. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-020-09402-4>
- Garcia, E., & Weiss, E. (2019). *U.S. schools struggle to hire and retain teachers: The second report in "The Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market" series*. Economic Policy Institute.
- Gay, L. R., & Airasian, P. W. (2003). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications*. Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Glover, C. P., & Harris, C. (2016). Professional dyads and culturally relevant literacy through the eyes of a beginning teacher leader. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 83*(1), 25.

- Goldstein, D. (2018, April 3). *Teacher walkouts: What to know and what to expect*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/03/us/teacher-walkouts-strikes.html>
- Graham, K., Harris, K. R., Fink, B., & MacArthur, C. A. (2001). Teacher efficacy in writing: A construct validation with primary grade teachers. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 5(2), 177-202. doi:10.1207/S1532799Xss0502\_3
- Gray, L., & Taie, S. (2015). *Public school teacher attrition and mobility in the first five years: Results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007-08 beginning teacher longitudinal study*. First Look. NCES 2015-337. National Center for Education Statistics, Available from: ED Pubs., Jessup, MD. <https://www.proquest.com/reports/public-school-teacher-attrition-mobility-first/docview/1697494176/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Gujarati, J. (2012). A comprehensive induction system: A key to the retention of highly qualified teachers. *The Educational Forum*, 76(2), 218-223. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/comprehensive-induction-system-key-retention/docview/1010620037/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Hale-Jinks, C., Knopf, H., & Kemple, K. (2006). Tackling teacher turnover in child care: Understanding causes and consequences, identifying solutions. *Childhood Education*, 82(4), 219-226. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/tackling-teacher-turnover-child-care/docview/210392684/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Hamilton, E. R., & Margot, K. C. (2019). Preservice teachers' community-based field experiences in a public museum setting. *Frontiers in Education*, 4, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00115>

- Harmsen, R., Helms-Lorenz, M., Maulana, R., & van Veen, K. (2019) The longitudinal effects of induction on beginning teachers' stress. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89(2) 259-287.
- Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004). Why public schools lose teachers. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 39(2), 326–354. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3559017>
- Hanushek, E. A., Piopiunik, M., & Wiederhold, S. (2019). Do smarter teachers make smarter students? *Education Next*, 19(2). <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/do-smarter-teachers-make-students/docview/2198518092/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Harfitt, G. J. (2015). From attrition to retention: A narrative inquiry of why beginning teachers leave and then rejoin the profession. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(1), 22-35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2014.932333>
- Hightower, A. M., Delgado, R. C., Lloyd, S. C., Wittenstein, R., Sellers, K., & Swanson, C. B. (2011). *Improving student learning by supporting quality teaching: Key issues, effective strategies. Editorial Projects in Education*. Agency for UNESCO. <https://pdf4pro.com/fullscreen/improving-student-learning-by-supporting-quality-teaching-5b7175.html>
- Howley, A., Rhodes, M., & Beall, J. (2009). Challenges facing rural schools: Implications for gifted students. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, 32(4), 515-536. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/challenges-facing-rural-schools-implications/docview/61859458/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Hudson, S., Lasczik, A., & James, S. (2019). *Six ways to support new teachers to stay in the profession*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/six-ways-to-support-new-teachers-to-stay-in-the-profession-106934>

- Imig, D. G., & Imig, S. R. (2006). What do beginning teachers need to know? An essay. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 286-291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487105285964>
- İnci, S., & Kaya, V. H. (2022). The relationship between the teacher qualities perceived by students and the achievements of high and low socioeconomic level students \*. *Çukurova University. Faculty of Education Journal*, 51(1), 293-320.  
[doi:https://doi.org/10.14812/cufej.873723](https://doi.org/10.14812/cufej.873723)
- Ingersoll, R. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.  
[https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=gse\\_pubs](https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=gse_pubs)
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2004). *Why do high-poverty schools have difficulty staffing their classrooms with qualified teachers?* Renewing Our Schools, Securing Our Future - A National Task Force on Public Education; Joint Initiative of the Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future. [https://repository.upenn.edu/gse\\_pubs/493](https://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/493)
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tells us. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 93(8), 47-51. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/beginning-teacher-induction-what-data-tell-us/docview/1347459378/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Ingersoll, R., & Merrill, L. (2010). Who's teaching our children? *Educational Leadership*, 67(8), 14-20.  
<https://eric.ed.gov/?redir=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ascd.org%2fpublications%2feducational-leadership%2fmay10%2fvol67%2fnum08%2fabstract.aspx>



- Ingersoll, R. M., Merrill, L., & May, H. (2014). *What are the effects of teacher education and preparation on beginning teacher attrition?* CPRE Research Report. #RR-82. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA. <https://www.proquest.com/reports/what-are-effects-teacher-education-preparation-on/docview/1968425535/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Ingersoll, R., & Perda, D. (2009). *The mathematics and science teacher shortage: Fact and myth*. Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/76392344.pdf>
- Jacobson, E., Leibel, M., Pitkin, R., & Clifton, H. (2020). Strengthening all educators through mentoring and coaching. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 43-54. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/strengthening-all-educators-through-mentoring/docview/2435720946/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Jenset, I. S., Klette, K., & Hammerness, K. (2018). Grounding teacher education in practice around the world: An examination of teacher education coursework in teacher education Programs in Finland, Norway, and the United States. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 69(2), 184-197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022487117728248>
- Jimerson, L. (2003). *The competitive disadvantage. Teacher compensation in rural America*. (Policy brief). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED474248>
- Jones, L., Tones, S., & Foulkes, G. (2020). Associate teachers' learning networks: a figurational analysis of initial teacher education. [Associate teachers' learning networks] *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education*, 9(2), 205-218. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMCE-09-2019-0088>

- Judge, T. A., Weiss, H. M., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., & Hulin, C. L. (2017). Job attitudes, job satisfaction, and job effect; A century of continuity and of change. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(3), 356-374. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ap10000181>.
- Kang, S., & Berliner, D. C. (2012). Characteristics of teacher induction programs and turnover rates of beginning teachers. *The Teacher Educator, 47*(4), 268.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/characteristics-teacher-induction-programs/docview/1324506327/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Kearney, R. C., & Morgan, K. S. (1990). Longevity pay in the states: Echo from the past or sound of the future? *Public Personnel Management, 19*(2), 191.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/longevity-pay-states-echo-past-sound-future/docview/60949096/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Kelly, N., Cespedes, M., Clarà, M., & Danaher, P. A. (2019). Early career teachers' intentions to leave the profession: The complex relationships among preservice education, early career support, and job satisfaction. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(3), 93–113.  
<https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/aeipt.222922>
- Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. FT Press.
- Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2008). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). SAGE Publications.
- Kuenzi, J. J. (2008). *CRS report for Congress: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education: Background, federal policy, and legislative action*.  
<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL33434.pdf>.

- Langley G. J., Moen, R. D., Nolan T. W., Norman, C. L., & Provost, L. P. (2009). *The improvement guide: A practical approach to enhancing organizational performance*. WILEY Publishers.
- Lee, W. C., Chen, V. D. T., & Wang, L. Y. (2017). A review of research on teacher efficacy beliefs in the learner-centered pedagogy context: Themes, trends and issues. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 18*(4), 559-572.
- Makara-Studzińska, M., Golonka, K., & Izydorczyk, B. (2019). Self-efficacy as a moderator between stress and professional burnout in firefighters. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16020183>
- Martin, L. E., & Mulvihill, T. M. (2016). Voices in education: Teacher shortage: Myth or Reality? *Teacher Educator, 51*(3), 175-184.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2016.1177427>
- Mertler, C. A. (2022). *Introduction to educational research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Miller, L. C. (2012). *Understanding rural teacher retention and the role of community amenities*.  
<http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/1MillerCEPWCWPRRuralRetention.pdf>
- Monk, D. H. (2007). Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers in rural areas. *Future of Children, 17*, 155-174. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2007.0009>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (1999). *Teacher quality: A report on the preparation and qualifications of public-school teachers*. (Publication No. NCES 1999080).  
<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/1999080/index.asp?sectionid=6>
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2003). *The condition of education 2003*.  
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/2003067.pdf>

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2010) *The condition of education 2010*.

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2010/2010028.pdf>

National Education Association. (2022). *Educator pay and student spending: How does your state rank?* National Education Association. <https://oese.ed.gov/archived/oii/teacher-compensation/>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.a.). *Selected statistics of local salary supplement: School year 2020-21*.

[http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=145:25:2092097986063::NO::P25\\_SELECTYEAR:2021](http://apps.schools.nc.gov/ords/f?p=145:25:2092097986063::NO::P25_SELECTYEAR:2021)

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (n.d.b.). *Educator preparation*.

<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/educator-preparation>

North Carolina State Board of Education. (2020). *Policy TCED-016: Beginning teacher support program*.

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=tVuIXhnsIshAfZg3y3xSd2rWg==&ptid=muNUIKiR2jsXcslsh28JpBkiw==&secid=&PG=6&IRP=0>

North Carolina State Board of Education. (2021). *Policy LICN-001: General licensure requirements*.

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=10399&revid=64H8MpWV5ioyRpme1CeCqg==&ptid=muNUIKiR2jsXcslsh28JpBkiw==&secid=&PG=6&IRP=0>

North Carolina State Human Resources Manual. (2017). *Salary administration, section 4* (p. 86).

<https://oshr.nc.gov/media/1483/open>

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. (2020). *Agree analysis*.

[https://adincsurvey.azurewebsites.net/#/nctwcs/2020\\_NCTWCS](https://adincsurvey.azurewebsites.net/#/nctwcs/2020_NCTWCS)

North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. (2021). *About*.

[https://asqnc.com/?page\\_id=2302](https://asqnc.com/?page_id=2302)

Norton, M. S. (1999). Teacher retention: Reducing costly teacher turnover. *Contemporary Education*, 70(3), 52. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/teacher-retention-reducing-costly-turnover/docview/233045115/se-2?accountid=10639>

Oyen, K., & Schweinle, A. (2020). Addressing teacher shortages in rural America: What factors encourage teachers to consider teaching in rural settings? *The Rural Educator*, 41(3), 12-25. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/addressing-teacher-shortages-rural-america-what/docview/2504556539/se-2?accountid=10639>

Pendola, A., & Fuller, E. J. (2018). Principal stability and the rural divide. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 34(1), 1-20. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/principal-stability-rural-divide/docview/2034286192/se-2?accountid=10639>

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). Sticky schools: How to find and keep teachers in the classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98(8), 19-25.

10.1177/0031721717708290

Provasnik, S., Kewal, Ramani, A., Coleman, M.M., Gilbertson, L., Herring, W., & Xie, Q. (2007). *Status of education in rural America* (NCES 2007-040). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Ratcliffe, M., Burd, C., Holder, K., & Fields, A. (2016). *Defining rural at the U.S. Census Bureau: American community survey and geography brief*. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/acs/acsgeo-1.pdf>

- Redding, C., & Henry, G. T. (2018). Leaving school early: An examination of novice teachers' within-and end-of-year turnover. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(1), 204-236. <https://doi.org/10.3102%2F0002831218790542>
- Redding, C., & Smith, T. M. (2016) Easy in, easy out: Are alternatively certified teachers turning over at increased rates? *American Educational Research Journal*, 53(4), 1,086-1,125.
- Reeves, C. (2003). *Implementing the no child left behind act: Implications for rural schools and districts*. Illinois: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Ruhland, S. D., & Bremer, C. D. (2002). *Alternative teacher certification procedures and professional development opportunities for career and technical education teachers*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED472438.pdf>
- Saldana, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). SAGE.
- Seidel, J., & Kelle, U. (1995) Different functions of coding in the analysis of textual data. In U. Kelle (Ed.), *Computer-aided qualitative data analysis*. Theory, Methods and Practice (52-61). SAGE.
- Senge P., Cambron-McCabe, N. H., Lucas T., Smith B., Dutton J., & Meiner A. (2000). *Field book for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York, New York: Doubleday.
- Sharpes, D. K. (1987). Incentive pay and the promotion of teaching proficiencies. *Clearing House*, 60(9), 406-08. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/incentive-pay-promotion-teaching-proficiencies/docview/63273695/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Sheninger, E. C., & Murray, T. C. (2017) *Learning transformed: 8 keys to designing tomorrow's schools, today*. ASCD

- Smith, T. M., & Ingersoll, R. M. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), 681-714.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/what-are-effects-induction-mentoring-on-beginning/docview/62067659/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Soodak, L. C., & Podell, D. M. (1996). Teacher efficacy: Toward the understanding of a multifaceted construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 12(4), 401-411.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X\(95\)00047-N](https://doi.org/10.1016/0742-051X(95)00047-N)
- Spector, P. E. (1997). *Job satisfaction; Application, assessment, causes, and consequences*. SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452231549>.
- Stanulis, R. N., & Floden, R. E. (2009). Intensive mentoring as a way to help beginning teachers develop balanced instruction. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(2), 112. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/intensive-mentoring-as-way-help-beginning/docview/224031582/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Starr, K., & White, S. (2008). The small rural school principalship: Key challenges and cross-school responses. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 23.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/small-rural-school-principalship-key-challenges/docview/1999844839/se-2>
- Strauss, V. (2019, April 10). *The historic strikes and protests by teachers across the country aren't over*. The Washington Post.  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/04/10/historic-strikes-protests-by-teachers-around-country-arent-over/>

- Stites, M. L., Rakes, C. R., Noggle, A. K., & Shah, S. (2018). Preservice teacher perceptions of preparedness to teach in inclusive settings as an indicator of teacher preparation program effectiveness. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education, 9*(2), 21-39. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/dcse-2018-0012>
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016, September 15). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S. Learning Policy Institute*. [https:// learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching-brief](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching-brief)
- Teacher Working Conditions Survey, General Assembly of North Carolina Session Law 2005-276, Senate Bill 622, Section 7.40 (a). <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2005/Bills/Senate/PDF/S622v9.pdf>
- The University of North Carolina System. (2022). *Interactive data dashboards*. UNC System. <https://myapps.northcarolina.edu/p12division/educator-quality-data-research-2/>.
- Thomas, L., Tuytens, M., Moolenaar, N., Devos, G., Kelchtermans, G., & Vanderlinde, R. (2019). *Teachers' first year in the profession: the power of high-quality support*. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice.
- Tieken, M. C., Montgomery, M. K. (2021). Challenges facing schools in rural America. *National Association of State Boards of Education, 6*-11. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1286832.pdf>
- Tran, H., & Smith, D. (2019). Insufficient money and inadequate respect: What obstructs the recruitment of college students to teach in hard-to-staff schools? *Journal of Educational Administration, 57*(2), 152-166. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jea-07-2018-0129>
- Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Ho, W. K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research, 68*(2), 202-248.



U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.).

[https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?](https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=49cd4bc9c8eb444ab51218c1d50001ef6)

[appid=49cd4bc9c8eb444ab51218c1d50001ef6](https://mtgis-portal.geo.census.gov/arcgis/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=49cd4bc9c8eb444ab51218c1d50001ef6)

U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.) *Rural poverty & well-being*.

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/rural-poverty-well-being/>

U.S. Department of Education. (2015a). *Public school teacher attrition and mobility in the first*

*five years: Results from the first through fifth waves of 2007-08 beginning teacher*

*longitudinal study*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015337.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. (2015b). *Teacher shortage areas nationwide listing 1990-1991*

*through 2015-2016*. Washington, DC: Office of Postsecondary Education, U.S.

Department of Education.

U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *The condition of education 2018*.

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583502.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education. (2021). *Teacher compensation*.

<https://oese.ed.gov/archived/oii/teacher-compensation/>

Viadero, D. (2018). Teacher recruitment and retention: It's complicated. *Education Week*, 57(18),

4-5. [https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-itscomplicated/2018/01)

[itscomplicated/2018/01](https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-itscomplicated/2018/01)

- Villar, A., & Strong, M. (2007). Is mentoring worth the money? A benefit-cost analysis and five-year rate of return of a comprehensive mentoring program for beginning teachers. *Ers Spectrum*, 25(3), 1-17. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Michael-Strong-3/publication/228653979\\_Is\\_mentoring\\_worth\\_the\\_money\\_A\\_benefit-cost\\_analysis\\_and\\_five-year\\_rate\\_of\\_return\\_of\\_a\\_comprehensive\\_mentoring\\_program\\_for\\_beginning\\_teachers/links/54a2daa50cf267bdb9042a9d/Is-mentoring-worth-the-money-A-benefit-cost-analysis-and-five-year-rate-of-return-of-a-comprehensive-mentoring-program-for-beginning-teachers.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Michael-Strong-3/publication/228653979_Is_mentoring_worth_the_money_A_benefit-cost_analysis_and_five-year_rate_of_return_of_a_comprehensive_mentoring_program_for_beginning_teachers/links/54a2daa50cf267bdb9042a9d/Is-mentoring-worth-the-money-A-benefit-cost-analysis-and-five-year-rate-of-return-of-a-comprehensive-mentoring-program-for-beginning-teachers.pdf)
- Warren, L. (2018). The relationship between teacher leaders and teacher attrition. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies*, 3(4), 34.
- West, M. R. (2019). The strikes keep coming. *Education Next*, 19(2). <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/strikes-keep-coming/docview/2198518315/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Wechsler, M., Caspary, K., & Humphrey, D. (2012). Examining the effects of new teacher induction. *National Society for the Study of Education*, 111(2) 387-416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811211401408>
- Whitebook, M., & Bellm, D. (1999). *Taking on turnover: An action guide for child care center teachers and directors*. Center for the Child Care Workforce, Washington, DC.
- Yan, H. (2019, May 8). *Oregon teachers are walking out, forcing 600 schools to close. But they're not demanding raises*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/08/us/oregon-teachers-walkout>

- Yoo, J. H. (2016). The effect of professional development on teacher efficacy and teachers' self-analysis of their efficacy change. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 18(1), 84-94. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/jtes-2016-0007>
- Youngs, P. (2007). How elementary principals' belief and actions influence new teachers' experiences. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 43(1) 101-137.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0013161X06293629>
- Zhang, G., & Zeller, N. (2016). A longitudinal investigation of the relationship between teacher preparation and teacher retention. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 43(2), 73-92.  
<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/longitudinal-investigation-relationship-between/docview/1850121538/se-2?accountid=10639>
- Zirkle, C. J., Martin, L., & Mccaslin, N. L. (2007). *Study of state certification/license requirements for secondary career and technical education teachers*.  
[http://www.nrccte.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/state\\_certication\\_secondary\\_teachers\\_0.pdf](http://www.nrccte.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/state_certication_secondary_teachers_0.pdf)

# APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



**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** ·  
[rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/](http://rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/)

## Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Michael White](#)  
CC: [Daniel Novey](#)  
Date: 1/25/2023  
Re: [UMCIRB 22-002274](#)  
Retaining Beginning Teachers in Rural NC

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) occurred on 1/23/2023. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6, 7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

As the Principal Investigator you are explicitly responsible for the conduct of all aspects of this study and must adhere to all reporting requirements for the study. Your responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Ensuring changes to the approved research (including the UMCIRB approved consent document) are initiated only after UMCIRB review and approval except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All changes (e.g. a change in procedure, number of participants, personnel, study locations, new recruitment materials, study instruments, etc.) must be prospectively reviewed and approved by the UMCIRB before they are implemented;
2. Where informed consent has not been waived by the UMCIRB, ensuring that only valid versions of the UMCIRB approved, date-stamped informed consent document(s) are used for obtaining informed consent (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the ePIRATE study workspace);
3. Promptly reporting to the UMCIRB all unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others;
4. Submission of a final report application to the UMCIRB prior to the expected end date provided in the IRB application in order to document human research activity has ended and to provide a timepoint in which to base document retention; and
5. Submission of an amendment to extend the expected end date if the study is not expected to be completed by that date. The amendment should be submitted 30 days prior to the UMCIRB approved expected end date or as soon as the Investigator is aware that the study will not be completed by that date.

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Dissertation Proposal	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Focus Group Protocols	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Instrumentation Likert-type Scale	Surveys and Questionnaires
Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	Surveys and Questionnaires
Updated Consent Form	Consent Forms

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**

4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682

600 Moyer Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914 · Fax 252-744-2284

[rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/](http://rede.ecu.edu/umcirb/)

## Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Robert Reardon](#)  
CC:  
Date: 9/28/2023  
Re: [UMCIRB 23-001917](#)  
Principals' Perspectives on the Characteristics of Inclusive Schools

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 9/28/2023. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category # 1,2 AB.

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.

Document	Description
Informed Consent_Characterictics of Inclusive Schools_Sept 22 2023.docx(0.01)	Recruitment Documents/Scripts
Informed Consent_Characterictics of Inclusive Schools_Sept 22 2023.docx(0.01)	Consent Forms
Interview protocol_Inclusive School Leadership.pdf(0.01)	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions

For research studies where a waiver or alteration of HIPAA Authorization has been approved, the IRB states that each of the waiver criteria in 45 CFR 164.512(i)(1)(i)(A) and (2)(i) through (v) have been met. Additionally, the elements of PHI to be collected as described in items 1 and 2 of the Application for Waiver of Authorization have been determined to be the minimal necessary for the specified research.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

## **APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

Dear Potential Participant,

I am requesting your participation in a research study that is specifically focused on the impact of the beginning teacher supports and how it effects teacher retention. Your participation is optional, and all information shared will be anonymous. Volunteering for this study would require additional time after the BT meetings to complete a survey as well as setting aside approximately 45 minutes for a focus group meeting in April 2023. Any teacher that decides to participate will not be penalized for what is shared during the focus group. It is the intentions of the researcher to gather quantitative and qualitative data to answer the following guided questions.

- How does the Beginning Teacher self-efficacy change over the course of the first year of teaching?
- What do beginning teachers believe had the greatest impact on their first year from the Hopeful County Beginning Teacher Preparation Program?
- What supports do beginning teachers identify as helpful in completing their educator preparation program (EPP) coursework?

Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity. At our next meeting there will be a consent form for you to sign if you choose to participate in this study.

Always,

Michael White  
Executive Director  
Human Resources and Operations

## **APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

Title of Research Study: Teaching in Rural North Carolina: The Impact of Beginning Teacher Support on Teacher Retention

Principal Investigator: Michael White (Person in Charge of this Study)

Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University

Address: 715 US Hwy 13 N. Windsor, NC 27983

Telephone #: (252) 794 - 6016

Study Coordinator: Dr. Travis Lewis

Telephone #:(252) 794-6016

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

### **Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**

The purpose of this research is to explore what measures can be taken from a district level to decrease teacher turnover by effectively supporting beginning teachers. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a first year beginning teacher in this district. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn what had the greatest impact on your first year of teaching and completing your educator preparation program (EPP) coursework.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about eleven (11) people to do so.

### **Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**

The study has minimal risk. You may feel slightly stressed in needing to complete each survey.

### **What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**

You can choose not to participate.

### **Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research will be conducted at Hopeful County Schools Central Office. You will need to come to the professional development room (Room 126), ten (10) times during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is eleven (11) days over the next 210 days (the 2022-23 academic school term).

**What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. Complete a TSES survey each month at the Beginning Teacher Monthly Teacher Talk Meeting.
2. Participate in a focus group at the end of the school term.
3. Complete a final survey between May 1, and May 30, 2023 that helps us to understand what helped you complete EPP coursework.

**What might I experience if I take part in the research?**

We don't know of any risks associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We do not know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. By participating in this research study, you will receive a yearlong subscription to eduCrate and the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study.

**Will it cost me to take part in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?**

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?**

The records of this study will be kept private and will be protected to the fullest extent provided by law. In any sort of report, we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be stored securely and only the principal investigator and co-principal investigator will have access to the records. However, your records may be inspected by authorized University or other agents who will also keep the information confidential.

The research records will be stored in a locked cabinet or on a protected electronic storage device (computers or the cloud). The records will be kept for seven years and then shredded or permanently deleted from electronic devices.

**What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?**

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.



**Who should I contact if I have questions?**

The people conducting this study will be able to answer any questions concerning this research, now or in the future. You may contact the Principal Investigator, Michael White, at (252) 794-6016 from M–F between the hours of 8am to 4pm or you via email, whitem97@students.ecu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, you may call the Director for Human Research Protections, at 252-744-2914

**I have decided I want to take part in this research. What should I do now?**

The person obtaining informed consent will ask you to read the following and if you agree, you should sign this form:

- I have read (or had read to me) all of the above information.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about things in this research I did not understand and have received satisfactory answers.
- I know that I can stop taking part in this study at any time.
- By signing this informed consent form, I am not giving up any of my rights.
- I have been given a copy of this consent document, and it is mine to keep.

---

<b>Participant's Name (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
-----------------------------------	------------------	-------------

**Person Obtaining Informed Consent:** I have conducted the initial informed consent process. I have orally reviewed the contents of the consent document with the person who has signed above, and answered all of the person’s questions about the research.

---

<b>Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
---	------------------	-------------

---

<b>Principal Investigator (PRINT)</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
---------------------------------------	------------------	-------------

# APPENDIX D: INSTRUMENTATION TEACHER SELF EFFICACY SURVEY

<b>Teacher Beliefs</b>		This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.								
<p><b>Directions:</b> Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum.</p> <p>Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.</p>		None at all	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal				
1.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
2.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
3.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
4.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
5.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
6.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
7.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
8.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
9.	To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
10.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
11.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9
12.	How well can you implement alternative teaching strategies in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5	<input type="radio"/> 6	<input type="radio"/> 7	<input type="radio"/> 8	<input type="radio"/> 9

13. What is your gender?	<input type="radio"/> Male	16. What level do you teach?	<input type="radio"/> Elementary
	<input type="radio"/> Female		<input type="radio"/> Middle
			<input type="radio"/> High
14. What is your racial identity?	<input type="radio"/> African American	17. What is the context of your school?	<input type="radio"/> Urban
	<input type="radio"/> White, Non-Hispanic		<input type="radio"/> Suburban
	<input type="radio"/> Other		<input type="radio"/> Rural
15. What subject matter do you teach? (as many as apply)	<input type="radio"/> All (Elementary/ Self-contained)	18. What is the approximate proportion of students who receive free and reduced lunches at your school?	<input type="radio"/> 0-20%
	<input type="radio"/> Math		<input type="radio"/> 21-40%
	<input type="radio"/> Science		<input type="radio"/> 41-60%
	<input type="radio"/> Language Arts		<input type="radio"/> 61-80%
	<input type="radio"/> Social Studies		<input type="radio"/> 81-100%

19. What grade level(s) do you teach?	<input type="checkbox"/> K	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
20. How many years have you taught?	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

For office use only.

<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 9

## APPENDIX E: PROTOCOL FOR TEACHER FOCUS GROUP

1. Begin with the facilitator providing introductory comments:
  - a. Welcome everyone and thank you for volunteering to participate.
  - b. Introduce yourself, the cofacilitator, and the note taker.
  - c. Hand out the consent form.
2. Ask participants to review, ask any questions, and then sign the consent form. Offer a copy of the consent form to each person. Some will may want a copy others may not but offer anyway.
3. Give a very brief overview of the study and the goals for the focus group.
  - a. We are talking to you today to find out what you identify as having the greatest impact on your first year of teaching from the Beginning Teacher Preparation Program. We would like to know what works well and what does not and how we can improve our program to better impact future beginning teachers.
4. Give participants information about the process, times and breaks, restrooms, and so forth.
  - a. We will be using focus groups guidelines to create a safe space which we will go over shortly.
  - b. Refreshments are located on the front table if you would like something to drink or snack.
  - c. This process should take one hour with no breaks.
  - d. The restrooms are just outside the door. Females directly in front of the exit door, gentlemen turn to the right and it is the second door you will see.
5. We will distribute name tags with first names only so the notetaker will know who is speaking and can record data accordingly. (This will be odd to the participants as they will know each other.)
6. Provide basic guidelines for the focus group, review them with participants, and consider posting them for everyone to see.
  - a. If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you have the right to leave or pass on any question. There is no consequence for leaving. Being here is voluntary.
  - b. The meeting is not a counseling session or support group.
  - c. If you need additional support after the meeting, we will provide information that can direct you to the appropriate person.
  - d. Keep personal stories “in the room”; do not share the identity of the attendees or what anyone said outside of the focus group.
  - e. Everyone’s ideas will be respected. Please refrain from commenting on or making judgements about what someone else says, and do not offer advice.
  - f. One person talks at a time.
  - g. It is okay to take a break if needed or help yourself to food or drink.
  - h. Everyone has the right to talk. The facilitator may ask someone who is talking a lot to step back and give others a chance to talk and may ask a person who isn’t talking if he/she has anything to say.
  - i. Everybody has the right to pass on a question.
  - j. There are no right or wrong answers.
  - k. Does anyone have any questions?

7. Make everyone aware that the project staff (notetaker and cofacilitator) will be taking notes and that it will be recorded but individual names will not be attached to comments.
8. Begin with opening question asking how everyone is doing today. This will allow us to see moods of people and how their day was.
9. Follow with key questions:
  - a. What two words come to mind when you think of the Beginning Teacher Preparation Program? Could you elaborate.
  - b. Did the Beginning Teacher Preparation Program have any impact on your first year as a teacher? How so?
  - c. As you prepare for year 2 in teaching, what are your fears or concerns?
  - d. Compare your expectations about the Beginning Teacher Preparation Program with the reality of it.
10. Let the people know that this is the last question. This cues participants to share relevant information that may or may not have come up in answering the key questions.
  - a. Is there anything additional you want to share (comments, concerns, thoughts) that we did not ask concerning the Beginning Teacher Preparation Program?
11. Thank everyone for participating.

## **APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS**

- Would you consider that your school is inclusive – please elaborate? What do you think has positioned your school as a school of inclusion excellence? Tell us about some of the elements that are working at your school.
- Given that principals hold overall responsibility for leadership, what do you consider your role in making your school inclusive?
- Are there any aspects of your organizational structure (e.g., leaders have high autonomy VS a more centralized system) that influence your ability to lead an inclusive school? Please elaborate.
- Inclusivity is often a team/collaborative effort - how do you encourage the contribution of your staff, educators and support personnel in your inclusive efforts? How do you support collaboration?
- What steps have you taken to ensure that all students, especially students with diverse backgrounds and those vulnerable to exclusion, feel welcome and valued at your school?
- How do you foster positive and trusting relationships and involve students, parents, and community members in your efforts to create a more inclusive school environment?
- How do you balance a focus on well-being with a commitment to high achievement for all students? • How do you support teachers in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to promote inclusion in their classrooms?
- How do you set high expectations for all learners in your school, and how do you support teachers in meeting these expectations for students with diverse needs and abilities, especially those vulnerable to exclusion?
- Do you face any resistance from staff/students/parents or the community in implementing inclusive practices? How do you address the resistance?
- Can you give examples of specific policies, practices, or programs you have implemented to promote inclusion and equity in your school?
- Do you measure effectiveness of your inclusive education initiatives? If yes, how? What do you do with any data arising from this measurement?
- How do you evaluate classroom practices to ensure high-quality education and wellbeing for all students, and how do you use data to inform these efforts?
- Do you collaborate with other schools or community organizations to support inclusive education in your school and the broader community – please provide some examples.

- We know that school leaders should be empowering all staff to be inclusive. Is there anything you would like to add to our discussion?
- What advice would you provide to other school leaders as they journey toward 'full inclusion'?

## APPENDIX G: INSTRUMENTATION LIKERT-LIKE SCALE SURVEY

What supports do Beginning Teachers identify as helpful in completing educator preparation (EPP) coursework?

**Directions: For the following statements please indicate on a scale of 1 – 5 regarding how the support was helpful to you in completing EPP coursework.**

**1 – Waste of Time    2 – Unimportant    3 – Neutral    4 – Important    5 – Very Important**

1. The Five-Day Orientation in August helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. The Monthly Teacher Talks helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. The 20% Tuition Reimbursement helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. The Beginning Teacher Coordinator helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. The Principal helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. The Mentor in the building helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. The After-hours Childcare helped me complete EPP coursework.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. The Additional Time During the Workday helped me complete EPP coursework.  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
9. The Professional Development offered by the district and school helped me complete EPP coursework.  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
10. The Five Day Course for the Reading Foundations Test helped me complete EPP coursework. (Only answer if you are elementary or special ed teacher.)  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5
11. The End of Semester Check-ins with HR and BT Coordinator Talks helped me complete EPP coursework.  
 1                      2                      3                      4                      5

If you feel that we have missed a support that helped you complete your EPP coursework, please add it here:

Please indicate what school you are assigned:

APK	AES	CES	WBE
WES	BMS	BHS	BEC



