

ABSTRACT

Jennifer Delano-Gemzik, TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ELEMENTS THAT MOST IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, April 2017.

This study captured and obtained a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding the elements that most impact their decision to remain in the profession. This study used the InQuery process to investigate the perceptions of current teachers in northeastern North Carolina. The InQuery methodology allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a deeper understanding of the values, beliefs, and experiences that shaped these teachers' perceptions. The InQuery began with a Q sort and subsequent focus group interviews were conducted with participants from each viewpoint to gain deeper insights. An analysis of the data collected revealed three distinct viewpoints: (1) Leadership Matters, (2) Students Matter, and (3) Education Matters. Findings from the study emphasized the role of administration, creating a student-centered work environment, and a deep belief in the value of education in society combined with the desire to work with children. The findings also generated implications for policy, practice, and further research.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ELEMENTS
THAT MOST IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION

A Dissertation

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The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

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THAT MOST IMPACT TEACHER RETENTION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my maternal grandmother, Eunice Brock Bennett. She was one of thirteen children, and in 1935 she graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class while many of her siblings, including her twin sister, never finished high school. She always wanted to go to college, but her father told her that he would not pay for her to go to college as she was a girl and would just get married anyway. She made sure that all five of her children went to college despite many significant challenges. As the first in my family to receive my doctorate, I know that she would be proud of my accomplishments if she were here today.

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In closing, the journey of completing my dissertation has been a learning experience that has helped me to grow tremendously, and I am grateful all those who have helped me along the way, even with just a few kind words of encouragement. Thank you to each one who has supported me throughout this journey.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

General Introduction and Background

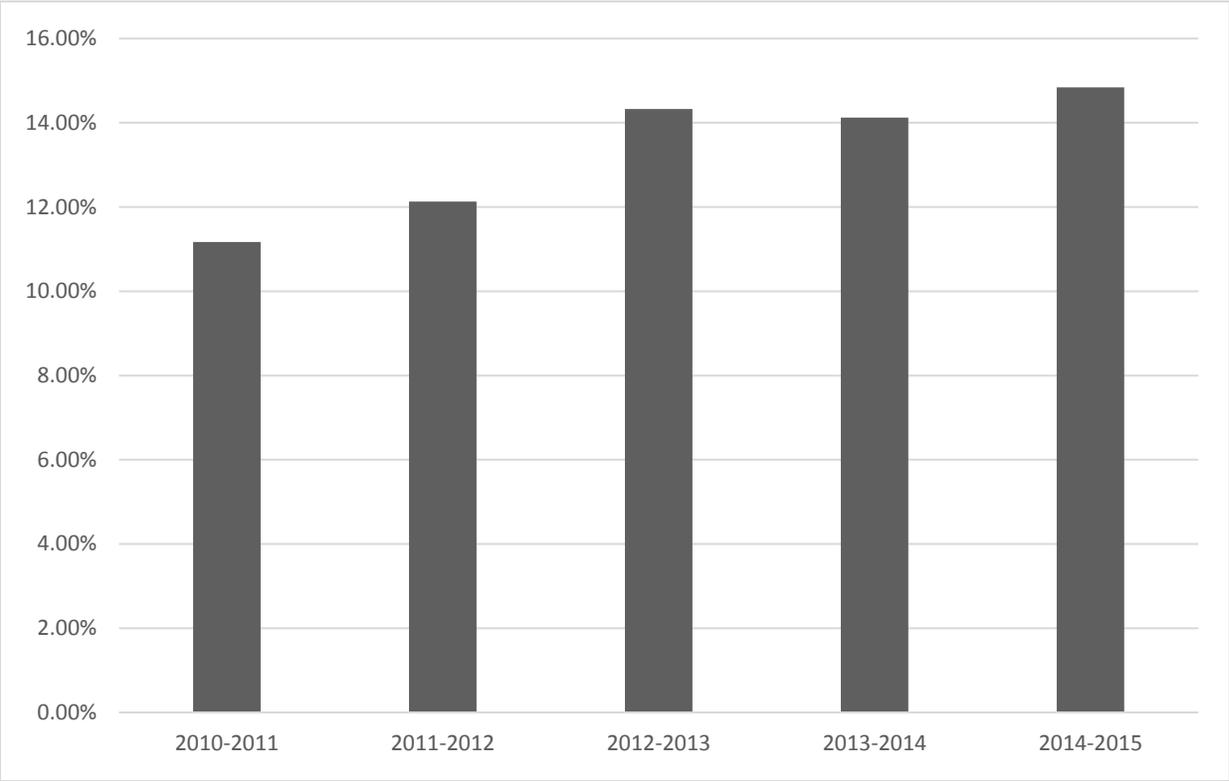
The national state of education has recently been a topic of fierce debate. With the legislature voting to overhaul the legislation that was formerly known as No Child Left Behind, the nation has been discussing what can be done to improve the public education system drawing attention to the issue of teacher retention. According to research by Ingersoll and Merrill the national teacher attrition rate, which reflects the number of teachers who choose to leave the profession each year, has risen from 6.4% in 1988 to 9% in 2008 (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2013). The national rate of teacher turnover, which includes both teachers who leave the profession and teachers who move schools, is currently at 13%, while schools in high poverty, urban, and rural areas have even more alarming rates of 20% (Alliance for Education, 2014). So what is the cause of the rise in teacher turnover rates, and why is this rise alarming?

In North Carolina news headlines have reflected the impact of recent legislative changes on teachers in the state and the desire of professionals to remain in education. Teachers in North Carolina had not received a pay raise in seven years after the legislature voted in 2007 to freeze the teacher pay scale. In 2014 the legislature voted to overhaul the teacher pay scale in an attempt to raise the base salary of beginning teachers. This overhaul resulted in the creation of a tiered pay scale for teachers in which teachers would only receive a pay increase every five years; whereas, the previous pay scale was set to provide raises in teacher salaries annually. While the new pay scale did increase the beginning salary of new teachers to \$33,000, the creation of the five year increase actually meant that more veteran teachers would receive less money than they were being paid under the current pay scale (Bonner & Jarvis, 2015). In 2015, North Carolina lawmakers again chose to increase beginning teachers' salaries to \$35,000. While

no other steps on the pay scale experienced an increase in salary, the state approved a one-time \$750 bonus for teachers (Bonner & Jarvis, 2015). In 2016, the state once again revamped the teacher pay scale, creating yearly salary increases each year until year fifteen. After year fifteen, teacher salaries will only increase every five years with no further pay increase after year twenty-five (Ball, 2016). While state legislatures have increased the pay of first year teachers in an attempt to recruit new teachers, it has done little to make the teaching profession an appealing choice to stay in through the elimination of master's level pay increases, the elimination of teacher tenure, the elimination of longevity pay, and the vast reduction in funding for teacher assistants.

As a result of these changes, teachers are leaving the teaching profession at higher rates than ever, causing teacher turnover rates to rise dramatically over the past five years. According to North Carolina's 2014-2015 Annual Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, teacher turnover rates have risen from 11.10% in the 2010-2011 school year to 14.84% at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Figure 1 illustrates the rise in teacher turnover rates since the 2010-2011 school year.

This report collects data on teachers that leave the profession and groups responses into five main categories: (1) turnover but remained in education, (2) turnover for personal reasons, (3) turnover initiated by LEA, (4) turnover beyond control, and (5) turnover by other reasons. These five categories are then broken down into several sub-categories. Over the past five years, of the five categories cited for teacher turnover, the top reason has typically been "turnover but remain in education." This category includes teachers accepting non-classroom positions as well as teachers that change LEAs. However, in 2014 the top reason cited was "turnover for personal reasons." This category includes teachers who are leaving education altogether. This was a



Note. North Carolina State Board of Education (2015).

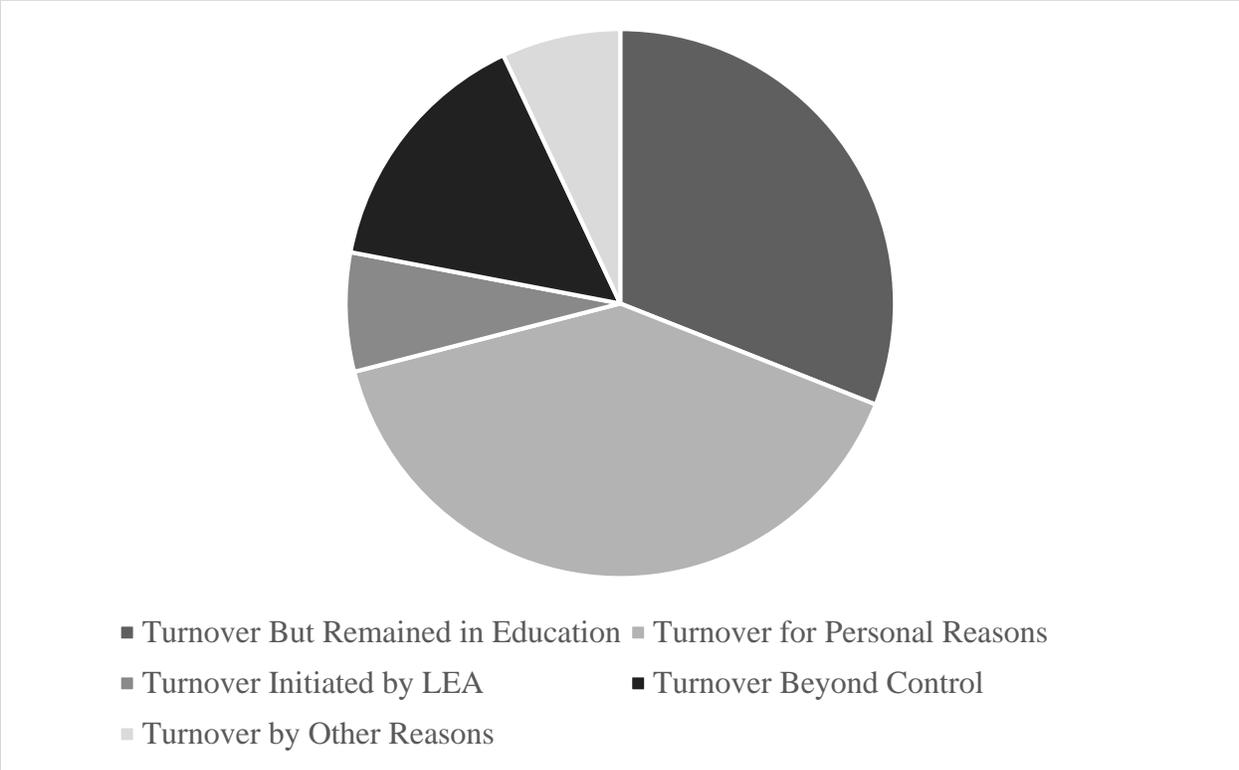
Figure 1. North Carolina five year teacher turnover rates.

significant jump from previous years, with this number almost doubling. Under this category, the top reason cited was “dissatisfied with teaching or career change.” Figure 2 shows the percentages for each category during the 2014-2015 school year.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted in a small rural county located in northeastern North Carolina. Districts in this area are particularly prone to high rates of teacher turnover which can be very costly to the districts. In fact, during the 2014-2015 school year the five districts with the highest rates of teacher turnover in the state were located in Northeastern North Carolina (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2015). These districts have teacher turnover rates significantly higher than the state average of 14.84%. Table 1 shows the turnover rates for each of the top five counties with the highest rates of turnover.

Building-level administrators cannot pay teachers more, but what can a school-level administrator do to create an atmosphere that will make teachers want to stay and commit to a school? The district in which this study will be conducted is a district with very diverse schools located in northeastern North Carolina. Student populations in schools can range from 100 to 1,100 students, and schools are located in various settings. Some schools are very rural and remote while others are located in slightly more urban settings. In general, the districts located in the northeastern part of the state are very rural areas that still rely heavily on agriculture as a source of jobs for the community. Added to that, districts in northeastern North Carolina have difficulty competing with nearby districts that are much larger, such as Wake County, in terms of salary. While the state pays teachers a base salary, each individual school district can use local funds to create a supplement to a teacher’s annual pay, which many districts use as an enticement to recruit teachers. However, local supplements vary by county, and counties with larger tax



Note. North Carolina State Board of Education (2015).

Figure 2. North Carolina turnover reasons by category.

Table 1

Five Districts with Highest Rates of Teacher Turnover

District	Turnover Rate
Northampton County	33.55%
Washington County	30.97%
Bertie County	30.81%
Warren County	30.06%
Halifax County	29.96%

Note. North Carolina State Board of Education (2015).

bases are able to offer much larger supplements than districts with lower tax revenues. While districts in northeastern North Carolina offer supplements that can range from merely a signing bonus of \$2,000 with no additional salary supplement to a 9% local salary supplement (Chambers, 2014), Wake County, only a short drive away from many of these districts, offers supplements to teachers ranging from 17.25% to 24.5% based on teaching area, years of experience, and highest degree obtained, as well as providing financial compensation for any additional duties that teachers assume such as grade level chair (Wake County Public Schools System, 2016).

Each year, districts conduct exit surveys of teachers. However, these surveys typically only collect data that falls into one of the five overall categories and subcategories reported by the state and tell why the teachers are leaving their current position based on one of these five categories. While these surveys provide useful information and data on the general reasons why teachers are leaving, they are conducted once a teacher has already made the decision to leave. Furthermore, they do not include information from the teachers about their perceptions of the elements that most impacted their decision to seek employment in other positions or what the administrators in their buildings or districts could have done to create an atmosphere that could have enticed the teachers to stay where they are.

Purpose of the Study

Why is teacher retention so important? Research has shown the importance of having quality teachers in the classroom and the lasting impact a teacher has on a child. Low teacher turnover rates can increase continuity in instruction and build a sense of community within the school (Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). Turnover can also be very costly to the district in order to continually recruit and train new teachers to replace those who leave (Alliance

for Education, 2005). Over the past five years the district in which the research was conducted has experienced a tumultuous turnover in the upper administration of the school district as well as high turnover rates in school level administrators. The district has also recently been identified by the state as a Low Performing school district causing changes in the structure of support systems within the district. The purpose of this study was to identify what teachers perceive as the elements that most impact their willingness to stay in the profession.

Overview of Methodology

Inquiry design was used to capture teachers' beliefs and perceptions about which elements of the profession, the school environment, and of school leadership are most influential in their decision to remain in education. This study began by reviewing empirical and conceptual literature and conducting interviews with educators to identify the key factors that have been shown to most impact teacher retention in order to generate a set of statements representative of each of the identified factors. Teachers were then asked to sort these statements in a way that represents their beliefs and values around the role that these factors play in their decision to remain a teacher. Factor analysis was then used to analyze the common beliefs and perceptions of these teachers in order to identify common clusters of perspectives. Follow-up interviews were then conducted with participants from each of the identified clusters in order to gain greater insight into the values and beliefs of these individuals. The results of this study were used to examine the implications for research, policy, and practice.

Research Questions

In a rural area with a high teacher turnover rate, this study sought to examine teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the key elements that cause teachers to either remain in or leave the teaching profession. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What has research shown are the key factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in or leave the teaching profession?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave the teaching profession?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of what these elements look like in practice? Why do teachers perceive these elements as most influential on their teacher retention decisions? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?

Definition of Terms

In the discussion of teacher turnover, the terms utilized for this study were: (1) attrition or leavers, which refers to teachers that leave the teaching profession altogether; (2) retention, which refers to teachers that remain in the teaching profession; (3) turnover, which refers to teachers that change schools or districts and includes teachers who choose to leave the profession; and (4) movers, which refers to teachers that transfer schools or districts and does not include teachers who leave the profession.

Significance of the Study

Over the last five years, the district in which the study was conducted has undergone significant changes in the School Board and senior administration at the district level, as well as significant turnover in school-level administrators. During this time period, a new superintendent was named for the school district, and several new principals were installed. Since this time the district underwent a rebranding that resulted in a shift in several senior leadership positions for the district as well as a shift in the vision and focus of the district. The school board also experienced a shift with half of the veteran school board seats being turned over to newly elected board members. Not long after the changes in the school board, the superintendent resigned,

causing tension in the community. An interim superintendent was put in place until a new superintendent could be named. The district, in conjunction with the state, has also gone through a shift in the curricular standards and testing. During this time period the district has experienced a drastic increase in teacher turnover rates (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2015).

This study aimed to identify the perceptions and beliefs of current teachers in northeastern North Carolina. This information can be used at the school and district level to determine the effectiveness of current initiatives and programs in place to recruit and retain teachers and to determine their alignment with the beliefs and perceptions of current teachers.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 provided background information relevant to the topic of this study. The researcher provided an overview of the problem of practice to be studied, identified the purpose of the study, outlined the research questions to be answered, and detailed the significance of the study as well as a brief overview of the methodology to be used.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature on the current statistics for teacher turnover as well as the impact of teacher turnover on the teaching profession. The researcher sought to identify the key factors that most impact teacher turnover decisions. This section further sought to define the essential elements that influence teachers' decisions to either remain in or leave the teaching profession.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed overview of the methodology and research design utilized during the study in order to answer the relevant research questions.

Chapter 4 provided a detailed overview of the data collected for the study as well as a detailed analysis of the data collected.

Chapter 5 provided a summary of the study's findings and connected the study's findings to current literature. This chapter also provided recommendations for policy, practice, and research based on the findings of this study.

Summary of Chapter

In summary recent headlines have shown an increase in teacher turnover rates over the last five years. These trends have been reflected in higher numbers in the state of North Carolina due to recent changes in state legislation impacting education. In smaller districts the effects of these high turnover rates has been felt more acutely. This study aimed to identify the beliefs and perceptions of current teachers that cause teachers to remain in the profession. By identifying these beliefs and perceptions, school districts and administrators will be better able to structure their districts and schools in ways that will lead to higher rates of teacher retention.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Over the past decade much attention has been called to the issue of teacher supply and demand. As large numbers of teachers are reaching retirement age combined with an increasing student population, schools are finding the task of hiring qualified applicants to fill vacancies more difficult. Nationwide an emphasis has been placed on the issue of teacher shortages with state and national legislatures developing programs and incentives in an attempt to make the teaching profession more appealing. Nationwide the teacher attrition rate has risen from 6.4% in 1988 to 9% in 2008 (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2013). This chapter aims to examine current national and state statistics on teacher turnover trends, the financial and academic impact of teacher turnover, the factors that impact teacher turnover decisions, and state initiatives to address teacher turnover through a thorough review of empirical and conceptual literature as well as interviews with current teachers and educational leaders in northeastern North Carolina.

National Statistics for Turnover

In the discussion of teacher turnover common terms used are: (1) attrition or leavers, which refers to teachers that leave the teaching profession altogether; (2) retention, which refers to teachers that remain in teaching; (3) turnover, which refers to teachers that change schools or LEAs and includes teachers who leave the profession; and (4) movers, which refers to teachers that transfer schools or districts and does not include teachers who leave the profession.

However, there has also been an increase in the number of teachers that are leaving the profession pre-retirement to pursue other occupations. According to the Alliance for Education (2008), half a million teachers leave their schools each year, but only 16% of this can be accounted for by retirement. The other 84% of teacher turnover is due to teachers transferring schools or teachers that decide to leave the teaching profession pre-retirement. Currently, the

annual teacher turnover rate stands at 13%, with high poverty schools experiencing this trend at a more alarming rate of 20% (Alliance for Education, 2014). Approximately 50% of teachers leave their initial teaching assignment, but not necessarily teaching itself, with attrition rates highest among teachers within their first four to five years of teaching (Allen, 2005).

Ingersoll and Merrill (2013) make the argument in their research that the issue is not that of a teacher shortage, but that of voluntary teacher turnover. The number of beginning teachers with five years or less of teaching experience in the workforce has increased dramatically from 17% in 1987-88 to 28% in 2007-2008 that cannot be accounted for by student population or teacher retirement numbers. Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) found that nearly one third of new teachers leave the teaching profession within the first three years, and nearly half leave the profession within the first five years. They state, “In the years ahead, the chief problem will not be producing more teachers, as many seem to believe. The main problem is an exodus of new teachers from the profession, with more than 30% leaving within five years” (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003, p. 3). The problem is not that of a lack of qualified teachers but a problem of attrition. Darling-Hammond and Sykes also make the case that alternative licensure programs such as those allowed by the former No Child Left Behind Legislation exacerbate the teacher attrition dilemma as these teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession than those that attend traditional education preparation programs.

State Statistics for Turnover

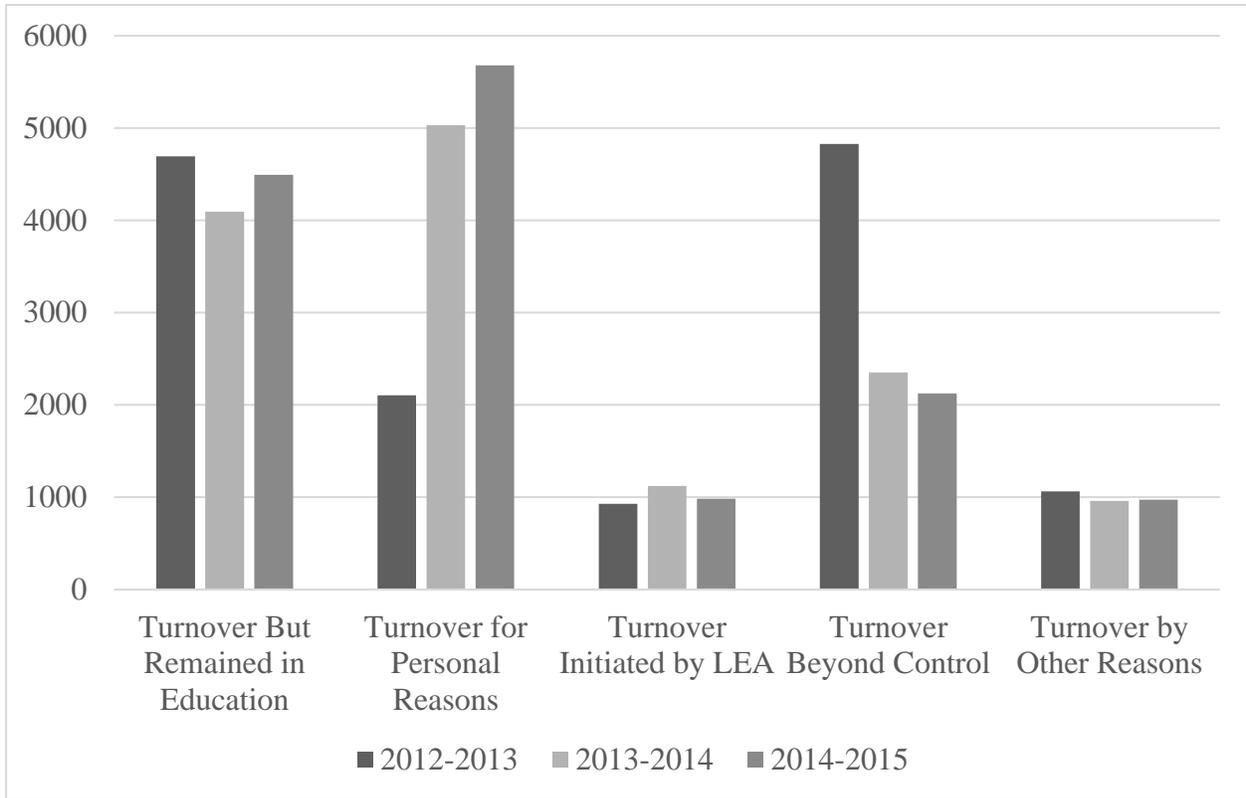
In the state of North Carolina teacher retention rates reflect the same upward trend seen at the national level but at slightly higher numbers. Since the 2109-2011 school year the teacher turnover rate has risen from 11.10% to 14.84% during the 2014-2015 school year. Figure 1 illustrates the rates of teacher turnover in North Carolina over the past five years.

Each year, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction collects and analyzes teacher turnover data that is then presented to the state legislature and the State Board of Education in the annual State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina report. This report collects data on the reasons that teachers report for leaving their current positions as reported by teachers during exit interviews, surveys, or Local Education Authority Human Resource databases (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2015). There are 28 reasons that LEAs use to report teacher turnover data. This data is then classified by the state into five categories: (1) teachers who left the LEA but remained in education; (2) teachers who left the LEA for personal reasons; (3) teachers who were terminated by the LEA; (4) teachers who left the LEA for reasons beyond the LEAs control; and (5) teachers who left the LEA for other reasons not listed above.

Over the past five years, of the five categories cited for teacher turnover, the top reason cited has been “turnover but remain in education.” This category includes teachers that have accepted non-classroom positions as well as teachers that change LEAs. However, in 2014 and 2015 the top reason cited was “turnover for personal reasons” at 37% and 40%, respectively. This category includes teachers who are leaving the education profession altogether. This was a significant jump from previous years with this number almost doubling from 2,105 in 2012-2013 to 5,681 teachers falling into this category in 2014-2015. Under this category the top reason cited was “dissatisfied with teaching or career change.” Figure 3 illustrates the turnover trends by category over a three year period in North Carolina.

Impact of Teacher Turnover

There has been a growing consensus among researchers, legislatures, and the public that experienced teachers are the best predictor of student success, causing concern over the alarming



Note. North Carolina State Board of Education (2015).

Figure 3. Turnover reasons by category five year trend.

rates at which teachers are leaving the profession. Not only are there financial impacts to states and the nation, but there are organizational and student achievement implications as well.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) developed the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) in order to collect descriptive data on the current context of elementary and secondary schools. The survey was given seven times from 1987 to 2011 and was provided to public, private, and charter schools. In 2011 the survey was redone to reflect a focus on the principal and teacher labor market and to gather information on the current context of K-12 school staffs. Topics on the questionnaire covered teacher supply, staff characteristics, working conditions, salary, staff perceptions of school climate and issues, student population characteristics, and district hiring and retention practices.

Many analysts have sought to quantify the actual financial costs of teacher attrition to the districts to have to recruit and train new teachers. Not only is there a cost when teachers leave the profession, but there is a cost to the districts when teachers move schools and districts. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) attempted to quantify the dollar amount by examining state staffing numbers based on the annual Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), state turnover estimates based on an analysis by Ingersoll, state teacher salaries, and estimates from the Department of Labor that attrition costs to employers are approximately 30% of the employee's salary. They estimate the cost of teachers leaving the profession to range from approximately \$3.5 million in North Dakota to \$214 million in Texas. If the cost of teachers that change schools is added to this, the costs jump even higher, with a low of \$8.9 million in North Dakota and a high of \$504 million in Texas. Estimates for the national cost of teacher attrition to include those teachers who stay in the profession but change schools are \$4.8 billion. At a time when many states are experiencing financial cutbacks, states want to ensure that they are making fiscally

sound decisions with budgets. The recruitment costs of teacher turnover are substantial, and many state legislatures are beginning to change their focus from financial incentives to recruit teachers into the profession to include a focus on long term investments in teachers currently in the education field that can entice educators to remain in the profession long term.

Along with the fiscal implications of teacher turnover, the question of organizational and student impact as a result of teacher attrition has arisen. Turnover can be viewed as having a harmful effect on relationships within the organization. Guinn (2004) attempted to examine the impact of teacher turnover on organizational functioning and student achievement by studying elementary schools in a large urban district. Teacher perceptions in these schools revealed that high rates of teacher turnover resulted in an inability within the organization to create a cohesive, on-going atmosphere of expectations within the school and put a strain on the creation of relationships between new and veteran staff members. Guin was able to show corollary effects where schools with higher turnover rates had lower student achievement rates, but he was not able to show direct causal effects of turnover on student achievement. While prior relationships and collaborations are lost and new ones formed in turnover, the quality of relational trust needed to form and maintain relationships is disrupted. Although turnover disrupts the formation and maintenance of relationships within a school both between students and staff and among staff themselves, turnover, however, can also be seen as an opportunity to bring new ideas into the organization (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Many argue that student achievement is harmed by attrition due to the assumption that the best teachers are leaving the profession while the least effective teachers remain in classrooms. Yet, there is little empirical evidence to support this stance or that attrition directly has a negative impact on student achievement. Five main studies have examined the relationship

between teacher retention and student performance to see if schools are truly losing their best teachers to attrition, and an overview of the findings from these studies will be presented below.

All of these studies found that teachers who are able to increase their students' performance each year are more likely to stay in the profession (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, Ronfeldt, & Wyckoff, 2010; Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007; Kreig, 2006; Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff 2011). Boyd et al. (2008) examined data collected on novice teachers in New York City schools from 2000-2005 to determine the relationship between novice elementary teachers' effectiveness in grades four through six and their decisions to either remain in the teaching profession, transfer schools or districts, or to leave the teaching profession. When looking at first year teachers, they found that those who are less effective in their first year are more likely to leave the profession. However, when looking at more effective teachers in their second and third years of teaching, they are more likely to leave low-performing schools and move to higher performing schools. Meaning, the less effective teachers remain at the lower performing schools. When looking at data on more experienced teachers in New York City, Boyd et al. (2010) found that teachers are less likely to request a transfer when their students demonstrate higher levels of achievement growth. Goldhaber, Gross, and Player (2007) came to the same conclusion when looking at teachers in grades four through six in North Carolina employed between the years 1996 to 2002. They found that teachers who were found to be more effective through the use of value-added data were more likely to remain in education and to remain at the school in which they were employed. Contrary to popularly held beliefs, teachers who are more effective are the ones more likely to remain in the teaching profession; whereas, less effective teachers are more likely to leave the

profession. Teachers need to feel successful in order to want to stay in the profession and need adequate supports to reach this goal (Alliance for Education, 2008).

In an attempt to identify direct causal relationships between teacher turnover and student achievement, Ronfeldt et al. (2011) conducted 625,000 observations of fourth and fifth grade students across all elementary schools in New York City combined with an extensive analysis of administrative data from the district and the state over a five year period. They found that these students consistently performed worse in both reading and math in years where there had been high teacher turnover within their school and grade level, with the effect sizes being greater in math than in reading. The negative effect of teacher turnover on student achievement was seen on a larger scale at schools with higher percentages of low-achieving and black students, with effect sizes being two to four times stronger in these schools but no significant effects were found in higher achieving schools with similar turnover rates. Their findings suggest that teacher turnover has disruptive, harmful effects on student achievement even after controls for different indicators of teacher quality. Negative effects on student achievement were found not just on the students with teachers new to the school but in classrooms with teachers who had remained in the school from year to year. The implications of their research were alarming in that they were able to show direct, negative causes of high attrition rates on student achievement, with this effect being significantly amplified at schools with larger at-risk populations. These findings highlight the increased urgency for the nation and states to examine the causes of teacher attrition and strategically plan ways to reduce attrition rates.

Factors That Impact Teacher Turnover Decisions

Often teachers enter the teaching profession for altruistic reasons such as a desire to work with children and a belief in the value of education in society (Loeb, Elfers, Michael, & Plecki,

2004). When looking at the issue of teacher retention and turnover, many studies have been conducted to determine what factors impact a teacher's decision to either leave or remain in the profession. Some of the key factors that have gained attention in the research have been salary, teacher working conditions, administrative support, professional support and training, and relationships.

One factor that has received much attention in the media and from state legislatures is teacher salaries. Many teachers do report that salary is a factor in their decision to leave the teaching profession, but salary is a more important factor to teachers in their first years of teaching. Research has suggested, however, that teacher working conditions can overcome the negative effects of a low salary in some cases (Darling-Hammond, 2003). In 2005, Allen reviewed empirical studies on teacher retention factors to determine which factors had supporting evidence in research and found that teacher attrition rates are highest for those teachers within their first five years of teaching. He found that increases in teacher compensation increased teacher retention rates, and there were some cases in which working conditions were able to trump compensation.

Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) sought to answer the question of whether working conditions matter more than money. The researchers examined data on elementary teachers in Texas to determine any correlations and found that teachers who move between schools or districts typically move to schools or districts with higher achieving students and lower proportions of minority students. In contrast, the study revealed that those teachers who changed schools or districts did not receive statistically significant increases in salary and in some cases even received lower salaries. The researchers concluded that it would take substantial financial

compensations to entice teachers to stay in chronically low performing schools to overcome the working conditions.

Teacher attrition is lower in schools that have higher levels of administrative support and teacher autonomy (Allen, 2005). When given adequate supports such as a high quality mentor, opportunities to plan and network with other teachers, and evaluations that help the teacher to target strengths and weaknesses, teachers are more likely to remain in the profession (Alliance for Education, 2008).

The National Center for Education Statistics has attempted to collect data on schools and staffing through the annual Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS). Ingersoll (2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2003) has analyzed the data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics to identify the organizational characteristics of schools that drive turnover and which factors contribute to the “revolving door” of teachers. There are two types of turnover as defined by the SASS survey: movers and leavers. Movers are defined as those teachers who stay in the profession but move to another school. Leavers are defined as those who are leaving the teaching profession altogether. Through his analysis, Ingersoll (2003) found that teacher turnover numbers are evenly split between the two categories of movers and leavers. He successfully makes the argument that from a systems perspective more emphasis has been given to leavers rather than movers in research, but from an organizational perspective the number of movers impacts a school in the same way that leavers impact the district. Turnover in either form results in a lack of adequately trained and qualified staff in a school and disrupts the quality of the school community and performance. The commonly held belief is that there is a shortage in the supply of new teachers due to an increase in the student population and an increase in retirements. However, Ingersoll (2003) found that the shortage of teachers is actually

due to high numbers of pre-retirement turnover. More and more new teachers are being hired each year to fill vacancies caused by teachers leaving the profession pre-retirement. Each year more teachers are leaving the profession than are hired.

When looking at the reasons why teachers leave the profession, the top two reasons cited are “pursue other jobs” and “job dissatisfaction.” Ingersoll (2003) stated, “In short, recruiting more teachers will not solve the teacher crisis if 40 to 50% of such teachers then leave within five years. The image that comes to mind is a bucket rapidly losing water because of holes in the bottom. Pouring more water into the bucket will not be the answer if the holes are not first patched” (“What Can Schools Do?”, 2002a, para. 1). When looking at the category of job satisfaction, several factors arose related to organizational characteristics and conditions. Teachers cited low salaries, a lack of administrative support for teachers, low student motivation, student discipline problems, and a lack of teacher involvement in decision making at the school as playing key roles in their feelings of dissatisfaction. Principals can do little to change the salaries of teachers in their building, but they can address the issue of involving teachers in the key decision making processes of the school as well as addressing issues of working conditions. When teachers are given a voice in the school, there is significantly less turnover. Ingersoll (2002b) also suggests that by increasing the focus on strong mentoring support for new teachers, the attrition rate can be lowered.

In an attempt to increase the supply of teachers, many states have enacted programs to draw more professionals into the teaching profession such as Troops to Teachers, Teach for America, and other alternative licensure programs that allow professionals with a four year degree to obtain temporary licensure to teach as they simultaneously go through a teacher preparation program. Teacher preparation programs ensure that teachers are adequately prepared

to meet the demands of the education profession. Research has shown that the more training that teachers receive in college preparation programs, the more likely they are to remain in the teaching profession; whereas, those teachers who enter the profession through alternative licensure pathways are less likely to remain in education (Darling-Hammond, 2003). She argues that well-meaning attempts to increase the teacher supply have, inadvertently, contributed to the high attrition rate.

The Role of the Principal

In a secondary analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) as well as the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), Urick (2012) examined the leadership styles of principals that exist in school leadership and the extent to which these typologies in a school can predict teacher retention. Based on an examination of the SASS and TFS, Urick concluded that no matter what type of leadership style a principal has there will always be those within the school with varying perceptions of principal and teacher leadership. Teacher satisfaction with a principal varies dependent on the fit of the teacher with the principal's leadership style. Teachers with "controlling" principals were more likely to leave their position at that school but not necessarily education.

Leadership is multidimensional and as such requires that leaders practice multiple leadership styles dependent upon the situation. However, there does tend to be one overall leadership style that a leader will depend on. Urick (2012) found that there was a correlation between leadership styles and teacher styles that contributes to teacher retention and attrition, and teacher perceptions of leadership are influenced by their satisfaction with the principal and the teacher's view of the teacher's fit within the school. Principals need to be aware of which teachers feel like they don't fit with the principal's leadership style and find ways to incorporate

these teachers into the school's leadership in order for these teachers to feel supported and to want to remain at the school.

In a study conducted by Boyd et al. (2011), they looked at the relationship between school contextual factors and teacher attrition. They examined which aspects of the school context that former teachers reported as being most influential on the teachers' decisions to leave the teaching profession. This research revealed that teachers' perceptions of their administrators had the greatest influence on a teacher's decision to stay or leave. Through interviews with current and prior teachers in New York City, teacher perceptions were more clearly defined. These teachers identified the importance of receiving work-related recognition and support and having administrators that made teachers feel respected and appreciated as professionals. Administrative support was defined by the teachers as having administrators that encouraged teachers to change their teaching methods to meet the needs of students, encouraging and providing opportunities for collaboration among teachers, and asking teachers for active input into solving problems in the school.

In North Carolina the state collects data every two years on teachers' perceptions of the working conditions within their school and district. These results are then reported to the schools, districts, and the state. In their dissertations Lynch (2010) and Tomon (2009) examined Teacher Working Condition Survey results from two different perspectives to analyze the relationship between school administrators and teachers in North Carolina.

Lynch analyzed the Teacher Working Conditions Survey results for Onslow County over a two year period from 2006 to 2008, and then surveyed 142 teachers who had requested a transfer or left the district during this time to determine the factors that had impacted the teachers' decisions as well as surveying administrators at the schools in which the teachers had

been employed. Lynch identified a disconnect between teacher and administrator perceptions of the teachers' involvement in the decision making processes at the school. This variation in teacher and administrator perceptions had directly impacted the teachers' decisions to leave the school or district. While the administrators believed that the teachers had been involved in decision making at the school level, the teachers who had chosen to leave the school felt that they were not involved in the decision making processes that directly impacted the school.

While Lynch examined the impact of teacher involvement in decision making on teacher turnover, Tomon (2009) examined the values and perceptions of beginning and career teachers regarding which aspects of the work environment most impacted teacher retention decisions by analyzing the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey in middle schools. She found that teachers with positive perceptions of their school's working conditions were more likely to remain at their school. Respondents that were planning to remain at their current schools agreed that the leadership of the school was actively working to improve the school by creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, a shared vision, providing feedback for instructional improvement, and addressing teacher concerns. Her analysis identified school leadership as the factor that most impacts a teacher's decision to remain at their school.

When looking at the role of the principal in teacher retention, what do principals with low turnover rates do differently from the principals with higher turnover rates? Brown and Wynn (2009) as well as the Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) interviewed principals with low attrition rates to understand what these principals perceived as strategies they had used to successfully retain teachers. These principals identified several common factors that they felt helped their schools to retain teachers. First, the principals made strategic hiring decisions. When interviewing applicants, they looked for applicants whose personalities would be a good fit to

work with the personalities currently on staff, made intentional staff placement decisions, and nurtured the bonds between new and veteran staff. These principals wanted their teachers to feel supported and felt it was the principal's duty to advocate for their teachers by removing barriers to success, reducing stressors, supporting teachers to the public, and by showing appreciation through small tokens and notes. Shared values and vision were also identified as a key factor. Staff in the school agreed on the values important to them and what these values looked like in practice in the everyday classroom. The best interest of the student was always put first, and teachers were key in outlining negotiables and non-negotiables within the school. The staff viewed the school as a professional learning community for all, and leadership was shared. These principals sought to empower their staff and build leadership capacity in their buildings. Relationships were viewed as vital between staff and administration. The teachers felt that administration knew them personally and viewed administration as being consistent and fair. Administration also maintained an open door policy and provided social opportunities to build a sense of family among the staff.

Recognizing teachers for their individual skills and strengths can promote teacher confidence and job satisfaction as well. Blasse and Kirby (1992) examined the relationship between the use of principal praise and teacher motivation in regards to teacher retention. They found that the strategy of praise can be used to enhance instructional performance as well as building school climate. Work-related praise was found to be the most influential form of praise, and teachers viewed the use of praise by principals as reflective of the character of the principal. Their research found that in order to be effective praise should be sincere and targeted towards work performance and that there should be time set aside to recognize teachers for their performance both to the teachers and to outside sources.

State Initiatives to Address Teacher Turnover

In an attempt to increase the supply of teachers, many states have enacted alternative licensure programs such as Troops to Teachers, Teach for America, and other lateral entry programs. States have also tried to entice professionals into the profession through the use of financial incentives such as signing bonuses, financial assistance with housing, student loan forgiveness, and tuition reimbursement programs (Ingersoll, 2002a). However, these programs attempt to address the wrong problem. Ingersoll's research has shown that the teacher shortage problem is the result of high teacher turnover rates rather than a shortage in supply and believes that efforts to improve the teaching profession should focus on retention and not recruitment.

In a report to the Southern Regional Education Board in 2002, Cornett and Gaines made several recommendations on strategies to incentivize the teaching profession based on an extensive literature review. They found that substantial pay increases could possibly lure some teachers back to the teaching profession as well as making improvements in teacher working conditions. Furthermore, they found that to remain in the workforce veteran teachers need to be supported differently. Incentives for this group of teachers should focus on issues of professional growth such as professional development to increase their effectiveness as teachers.

Cornett and Gaines reported that at the state level many policies have been created in an attempt to incentivize teaching as a profession such as the use of scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to attract potential teachers in which recipients agree to teach for a certain number of years. Some states have even changed their retirement laws to allow retired teachers to re-enter the workforce part time or offered health benefits to part time teachers. In the wake of federal policies such as No Child Left Behind alternative pathways to licensure were developed in an attempt to attract those looking for a career change. Many states also offer financial

incentives such as increases in pay based on the attainment of advanced degrees and National Board certification. Teachers are also able to receive additional compensation in some states through a willingness to serve as a mentor or by teaching in hard to staff subjects and schools. Recently, one particular incentive has gained attention in the media, pay for performance. Under this incentive, teachers are paid bonuses based on student performance which has materialized in several different forms over the years.

Several states have recently gained attention through programs developed by the states to increase teacher retention rates. The District of Columbia, Colorado, South Carolina, and Tennessee have recognized the need to retain qualified teachers by creating opportunities for teachers to grow as professionals and leaders while being compensated for their efforts.

In an attempt to make the teaching profession more lucrative for teachers, the District of Columbia Public Schools (2015) implemented teacher career ladders through their Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT). Through this program teachers are able to move up the teacher career ladder without having to leave their classrooms. There are five stages on the LIFT ladder: (1) teacher, (2) established teacher, (3) advanced teacher, (4) distinguished teacher, and (5) expert teacher. Placement in each of these stages is determined by a teacher's annual evaluation. Teachers can move up the ladder based on their teacher ratings, but they cannot be moved down the ladder once they have achieved a stage. Base salaries increase as teachers advance through the stages, and within each stage teachers have the opportunity to earn annual bonuses based on achieving a "highly effective" rating and/or a willingness to teach in a high poverty school. As teachers advance through the stages, additional leadership opportunities are provided to teachers such as: education policy development, curricular development, school point of contact positions, and coaching and mentoring positions. Additionally, each stage has many

opportunities for growth and advancement both in and out of the classroom. Teachers are also able to earn fellowships, grants, and awards as they move through the stages as well as being eligible for opportunities for sabbaticals, summer school, and travel.

In Denver Public Schools (Barondess, 2014), district leaders recognize that experienced classroom teachers strive for opportunities for growth and leadership. However, in the teaching profession this often means that teachers have to leave their classrooms in order to seek leadership opportunities such as in administration. In an effort to provide opportunities for leadership and growth to experienced teachers, Denver Public Schools is using funds from the federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant to create a “Differentiated Roles” pilot program. This program offers teachers the opportunity to divide their time each day between classroom instruction and coaching other teachers in the school. Teacher leaders are selected by the principal, and they are released from their classroom duties from 25 to 50% of each day in order to fulfill the responsibilities of their roles. Part of their responsibilities include teacher evaluations and feedback as well as planning with and providing feedback to teams of teachers. Teacher leaders receive additional compensation for their roles as well as receiving additional trainings. Each year schools must re-apply for the program, and principals choose whether to retain a teacher leader in the program from year to year. Teachers who serve as team leads believe their roles provide the opportunity for them to advocate for teacher needs while serving as a bridge between teachers and administration (Zubrzycki, 2015). Principals that were part of the pilot program feel that the new roles have helped to build staff relationships while creating ownership among teachers over professional learning. Team leads receive between \$3,000 and \$5,000 each year as compensation for their additional responsibilities. Part of those

responsibilities include evaluating teachers. In order to apply for the team lead position, teachers must have higher scores on the district's teacher evaluation.

Recently, the governor of South Carolina released details of the state's plan to address high rates of teacher turnover in twenty-one districts that have annual turnover rates above 12% (Adcox, 2015). The state plans to recruit teachers to work in these districts through financial incentives. By agreeing to teach in one of these districts, college students can receive up to four years of paid college tuition by agreeing to teach for two years for every year of tuition paid. For those who have already completed college, the state will pay off one year of tuition loans for each year a person teaches in one of these districts. Teachers within their first five years of teaching will be paid on the pay scale as if they already have five additional years of experience. Teachers who have more than five years of experience are eligible for two years of paid graduate school tuition, and highly qualified teachers are eligible to receive up to a \$5,000 annual stipend for mentoring beginning teachers. Those who agree to teach in one of the twenty-one districts with high turnover rates are eligible to receive up to three of these incentives. The state plans to pay for this plan by phasing out annual stipends for teachers with National Board Certification. Legislators argue that there is no evidence that teachers with this certification are any more effective than teachers without this certification, and the vast majority of these teachers do not teach in districts with high turnover rates.

In 2013 the Tennessee Department of Education brought together leadership from six different districts in the state to develop a sustainable and innovative teacher leadership model for the state (Douglas, 2015). Each of the six districts developed and implemented their own strategic models that were then implemented at pilot schools in the districts. The district of Kingsport City Schools implemented what it calls Teachers Leading Change in which identified

teacher leaders maintain their classroom positions but take on additional responsibilities for which these teacher leaders are compensated. In a similar model the Metro School District piloted their teacher leader program at Bailey Middle Prep in which lead teachers are responsible for overseeing a team of fellow teachers while maintaining their own classroom. The lead teacher at this school, Whitney Bradley, argues that positions such as this one allow teachers to have the opportunity to serve in a leadership position without having to leave the classroom behind (Farmer, 2015). Based on the success of this program at Bailey Middle Prep, the district is planning to expand the model to other schools as part of the district's teacher retention strategies (Gonzales, 2015).

North Carolina's Teacher Retention Initiatives

In North Carolina news headlines have reflected the impact of recent legislative changes on teachers in the state and the desire of professionals to remain in education. Currently, North Carolina ranks forty-first in the nation for average teacher pay (National Education Association, 2016). Teachers in North Carolina had not received a pay raise in seven years until the legislature voted in 2014 to overhaul the teacher pay scale. This overhaul resulted in the creation of a tiered pay scale for teachers in which teachers will only receive a pay increase every five years. However, the new pay scale did increase the beginning salary of new teachers to \$33,000. In 2015 North Carolina lawmakers again chose to increase beginning teachers' salaries to \$35,000. While no other steps on the pay scale experienced an increase in salary, the state approved a one-time \$750 bonus for teachers (Bonner & Jarvis, 2015). While state legislatures have increased the pay of first year teachers in an attempt to recruit new teachers, it has done little to make the teaching profession an appealing choice to stay in through the elimination of master's level pay increases, the elimination of teacher tenure, the elimination of longevity pay,

and the vast reduction in funding for teacher assistants. In 2016 lawmakers again voted to revise the teacher pay scale (Ball, 2016). Under the revised pay scale the base salary for a beginning teacher remains at \$35,000. Revisions in the pay scale in 2013 and 2014 originally implemented a tiered pay scale in which teachers would receive a pay raise only every five years. Under the new revisions, teachers would receive a yearly pay increase each year up until year fifteen. After year fifteen, teachers would only receive another pay raise at year twenty and year twenty-five with no further pay increases after year twenty-five. While base salaries for beginning teachers have been raised, salaries for the most veteran teachers have actually decreased with the implementation of the new pay scales over the past few years. Teachers can receive higher salaries for National Board Certification and a Master's degree. However, Master's level pay increases are being phased out.

In accordance with the United States Department of Education's requirements, the North Carolina State Board of Education (2015) developed North Carolina's State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators to ensure that low socio-economic and minority students are not being disproportionately taught by inexperienced or unqualified teachers. In this plan the state lays out seventeen strategies that will be used to ensure that all students have equitable access to quality teachers. Some of these strategies include creating alternative pathways to licensure such as Troops to Teachers and establishing the North Carolina Teacher Corps (NCTC) in 2012. NCTC cohorts undergo a three phase induction program modeled after Teach for America to provide support to teachers who then receive a full teaching license at the conclusion of the three years. In 2013 the North Carolina General Assembly voted to provide funding to Teach for America (TFA) in order for TFA to assume responsibility for future NCTC cohorts.

North Carolina also recognizes the need to address the issue of high rates of turnover with beginning teachers. As such the state adopted new “Mentor and Beginning Teacher Standards” to provide stronger mentoring support and induction programs to beginning teachers. Additionally, North Carolina revamped its teacher and principal evaluation systems to focus on professional growth and student outcomes. The state has also created more opportunities for professional development through resources created by NCDPI, school leadership support, the creation of the Governor’s Teacher Network, summer institutes, and the creation of multi-tiered systems of support.

Summary

The issue of teacher recruitment and retention has been an issue of growing concern, not only at the national level, but at the state and local levels as well. Each year the number of teachers leaving the profession pre-retirement has risen. Combined with historically low enrollments to Colleges of Education across the state, the issue of increasing teacher retention has become imperative.

From 2010 to 2014 colleges of education across the state of North Carolina have seen drastic declines in student enrollment numbers. Over this time period enrollments for undergraduate and graduate level education programs have dropped by 27% (Ovaska-Few, 2015). Many attribute this to a national decline in interest in teaching as a profession combined with recent legislative changes in North Carolina that eliminated the Teaching Fellows program, eliminated Master’s degree pay bumps, eliminated teacher tenure, and implemented a new teacher pay scale that only provides pay bumps every five years once a teacher reaches year fifteen (Osaka-Few, 2015). Additionally, the implementation of the A-F school grading system,

the amount of standardized testing put on teachers, and low salaries have furthered the current negative public narrative about teaching (Clark, 2016).

Recognizing that teachers are leaving the profession pre-retirement at historically high rates combined with a smaller pool of potential teacher applicants, further emphasizes the importance of understanding why teachers are leaving the profession and what can be done to retain teachers at a higher rate. A review of the literature identified several key factors that play into a teacher's decision to either leave their school or district or to leave the teaching profession altogether. These factors tended to fall into one of four categories as identified by the researcher: (1) external motivating factors, (2) internal motivating factors, (3) teacher working conditions, and (4) leadership. Table 2 identifies the key factors identified in each category.

State and local lawmakers have recognized the importance of retaining teachers and have implemented several strategies aimed at raising teacher retention rates. The counties located in rural northeastern North Carolina certainly understand the importance of being able to recruit and retain quality teachers as well. For many of these districts the school system is the largest source of jobs for the county's residents. However, due to their remote, rural location, many of these districts have difficulty recruiting and retaining high quality teachers, particularly in high needs schools and in hard to staff subject areas. These districts have seen a dramatic rise in teacher turnover rates over the past five years, and the top five school districts with the highest rates of teacher turnover are located in the northeastern part of the state (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2015). Recognizing that salary can be a crucial factor in retaining teachers, these districts utilize local funds to provide a local supplement to teacher salaries. However, many of these counties are simply not able to afford a large enough supplement to be able to

Table 2

Teacher Retention Factors

Category	Elements
External Motivating Factors	Salary National/state/district policies and procedures
Internal Motivating Factors	Desire to work with children Belief in the value of education in society Teacher Effectiveness Academic performance of students
Teacher Working Conditions	High levels of teacher autonomy Access to a high quality mentor Opportunities to collaborate or network with other teachers Student Motivation Teacher involvement in decision making Student Discipline Receiving work related recognition Teacher input in problem solving Atmosphere of trust Meaningful relationships with other staff
Leadership	High levels of administrative support Teacher involvement in decision making at the school Administrative evaluations Respect from administrators Being treated as a professional Shared vision Administration actively works toward school improvement Having a fair and consistent administrator

compete with the supplement that nearby Wake County offers that ranges from 17.25% to 24.50% (Wake County Public Schools System, 2016).

Each year these districts collect data from teachers on the reasons that teachers leave the district, and this data is then reported to the state. However, the data is collected based on teacher responses on resignation forms that indicate the reasons for resignation from the district. These forms only report data as falling into one of the five overall categories and subcategories reported by the state and tell why the teachers are leaving their current position based on one of these five categories. While these forms provide useful information and data on the general reasons why teachers are leaving, they are conducted once a teacher has already made the decision to leave. Furthermore, they do not include information from the teachers about their perceptions of the elements that most impacted their decision to seek employment in other positions or what the administrators in their buildings or their district could have done to create an atmosphere that would have enticed the teachers to stay where they were.

Districts need a way to identify the values and beliefs of the teachers in their districts about the factors that most impact the teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching profession as well as to remain in the teachers' current districts and schools. A review of the literature has shown significant negative financial impacts to school districts and the state as well as a negative impact on student achievement when there are high levels of teacher turnover. This study identified the perceptions and beliefs of the teachers currently working in counties in the northeastern part of the state. This information can then be used to determine the effectiveness of initiatives and programs currently in place to recruit and retain teachers to determine the alignment of these programs and initiatives with the beliefs and perceptions of current teachers.

As a practitioner this information could also be used at the school level to determine the alignment of teachers' perceptions with that of building level programs, policies, and procedures.

A thorough literature review has helped to identify the key factors that impact teacher attrition and retention as well as identifying key strategies that have been used to increase teacher retention rates both nationally and locally. A table of all of the literature reviewed for this chapter can be found in Appendix A. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What has research shown are the key factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in or leave the teaching profession?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave the teaching profession?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of what these elements look like in practice? Why do teachers perceive these elements as most influential on their teacher retention decisions? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?

This chapter has reviewed the literature around the topic of teacher retention in order to answer the first question. The following chapter, Chapter 3, provides a detailed outline of the methodology that was used to answer research questions 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This research study seeks to identify teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either leave or remain in the teaching profession and to either leave or remain in a particular school or district. This study also seeks to identify teachers' perceptions of what these elements look like in practice. The InQuiry process will be utilized to study the beliefs and viewpoints of teachers regarding the factors that impact teacher decisions to remain in the education profession and to remain in a school or district. This chapter will provide an overview of InQuiry and Q methodology and will describe the procedures, processes, and protocols of the research design. Table 3 presents a graphic representation of how the research questions fit into the data collection process.

Overview of InQuiry

InQuiry combines Q methodology with a qualitative participatory approach that seeks to generate quantitative data about participants' beliefs about a given topic and seeks to understand why participants hold those beliefs (Militello, Janson, & Tonissen, 2016). InQuiry seeks the input of participants throughout the research process before, during, and after the collection of data. This process seeks to identify the range of beliefs that exist in an organization, why these beliefs exist, and how these beliefs impact the organization through the use of factor analysis in Q methodology and participant input and collaboration to interpret perspectives.

William Stephenson, who worked as an assistant to Charles Spearman and Cyril Burt, who were both British psychologists at University College London, developed Q methodology in 1935 (Watts & Stenner, 2013). Stephenson developed an adaptation on the statistical method of factor analysis that was originally developed by Spearman. This adaptation is known as Q methodology. The factor analysis developed by Spearman is concerned with identifying patterns

Table 3

Research Questions and Data Collection

Research Question	Data Collection	Timeline
What has research shown are the key factors influencing teachers' decisions to stay in or leave a specific district/school or the teaching profession?	Empirical and conceptual literature review Educator interviews Q Statement development, including pilot study	2015 – present
What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave a specific school/district or the teaching profession?	Q sort Post sort questionnaire Factor Analysis	January – February 2017
What are teachers' perceptions of what these elements look like in practice? Why do teachers perceive these elements as most influential on their teacher retention decisions? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?	Focus group interviews with sample from each factor.	February – March 2017

of association between variables in a data set. Q methodology allows the researcher to conduct a factor analysis by person as well as by variable. In this type of methodology the focus is on the rows in a data set instead of on the columns as in a traditional factor analysis. People are the variables, and the traits/tests/etc. are treated as the sample or population while looking for correlations among people rather than between tests or variables.

Participants in an InQuiry study are presented with a heterogeneous set of stimuli, or Q set. Typically, the stimuli consist of a set of statements about a particular topic or issue. Data is collected using a forced choice frequency distribution. Each item in the Q set is distributed and given a ranking value, which can range in value from +6 to -6, depending upon the number of items in the set. Items with a positive value are considered most important to the individual, whereas items with a negative value are considered least important to the individual. Each participant is given a heterogeneous set of stimulus items that must be sorted and assigned a value within the forced choice frequency distribution. Correlation statistics are then used to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement between the sets of rankings produced by each individual participant. Factor analysis is then applied to the correlation matrix in order to identify groups of individuals who share similar perspectives, viewpoints, or attitudes.

InQuiry seeks to understand the beliefs and values of the individuals participating in the study around a particular topic through how each individual sorts the statements causing the statements to become self-referent. The set of statements generated in a Q sample seeks to capture the universe of thoughts around a topic which is known as the *concourse*. Q methodology seeks to capture the viewpoints of individuals around a topic through the way that the statements within the *concourse* are sorted (Watts & Stenner, 2013).

The InQuiry process adds an additional step to this process. Once factor analysis has identified groups of individuals with similar beliefs, these individuals are brought together to collectively analyze their beliefs, why these beliefs exist, how these beliefs are similar and different, and how these beliefs impact personal actions and organizations (Militello et al., 2016).

There are six steps in the InQuiry process: (1) developing the concourse, (2) creating the Q sample or Q set by identifying representative statements from the concourse, (3) selecting participants for the study known as the P sample or P set, (4) facilitating the Q sort whereby participants in the study sort the statements from the Q set utilizing a forced choice distribution, (5) conducting factor analysis to analyze and interpret Q sorts to identify groups of individuals that hold similar beliefs, and (6) grouping participants into “families” to conduct post sort focus groups (Militello et al., 2016).

As local school districts are experiencing increasing rates of teacher turnover, school and district leadership need to understand the values and perceptions of current teachers regarding the factors that contribute to teachers leaving their schools, their districts, or even the profession. Through this understanding, district and school leaders will be better equipped to design effective strategies and comprehensive plans for increasing teacher retention rates. This study sought to understand the values and beliefs of current teachers around the factors that most impact teachers’ decisions to remain in the profession. In order to answer the questions for this study, a methodology was needed that could examine the values and beliefs of teachers around the topic of teacher retention and attrition. Therefore, the InQuiry process was selected as the methodology for this study in order to accurately capture the values, beliefs, and perceptions of teachers.

Development of the Q Sample

The concourse in InQuiry seeks to capture the universe of thoughts around a topic. Once the shared knowledge and meaning around a particular topic is identified, a collection of self-referent statements known as the Q sample or Q set are generated. The nature of a concourse is clarified based on the research questions to be answered in a study (Watts & Stenner, 2013). The statements in the concourse can be drawn from a multitude of sources on the topic such as books, journals, newspapers, editorials, dissertations, and interviews. The statements in the Q sample for this study were developed based on an extensive review of the conceptual and empirical literature around the topic of teacher retention and attrition as well as from interviews with district leaders, school administrators, and teachers. Sixty teachers as well as thirty school administrators and district leaders were invited to provide insight through an electronic survey on the perceived elements that impact teacher retention and attrition. Of those invited to participate, forty-one teachers as well as twenty school administrators and district leaders responded to the survey. Teachers were asked four questions: (1) how long have you been teaching, (2) have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession, and if so, what were the reasons, (3) have you ever considered leaving a school or district, and if so, what were the reasons, and (4) what keeps you in the teaching profession. Based on experience, school administrators and district leaders were asked to identify their perceptions of the top three reasons that teachers leave the profession, their school, or their district. Through these interviews and a thorough review of the conceptual and empirical literature, the statements that encompass the Q sample were derived.

Once the original Q sample of fifty statements was derived, the statements were piloted with a group of ten teachers who were asked to sort the statements and to review the statements for clarity and feedback. In addition to using the feedback from the pilot group to edit the Q

sample, the researcher asked three additional InQuiry process researchers and educational leaders for feedback. All participants in this process were provided with a set of the statements with each statement printed on an individual card. Participants were first asked to sort the cards utilizing the Q sort protocol found in Appendix B. They were then asked to sort the statements by perceived theme. After sorting the statements, participants were asked to provide feedback based on the following questions:

1. Are the statements worded clearly and are they understandable? If not, what changes would you suggest?
2. Are there any statements that are similar in nature and should be combined?
3. Are there any statements that you would remove from the list?
4. Are there any additional statements you would add to the list?

Based on the feedback of the participants in the pilot study, the statements were culled to forty-four statements and edited for clarity and conciseness. Each edit to their responses is detailed below:

- Statement 2 was originally three separate statements that read: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the peer mentoring that a teacher receives,” “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the presence of a strong peer mentor,” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor,” respectively. The participants in the pilot study felt that the statements were redundant and could be combined into one statement which now reads: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.”

- Statement 3 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to network with other teachers.” Participants felt that this statement needed clarity to capture the true meaning of the statement. They emphasized the importance of teachers being able to collaborate with and form both professional and personal relationships with other teachers in the district outside of the school in which the teachers worked. Based on their feedback the statement now reads as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.”
- Statement 4 originally read: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student discipline problems a teacher has.” Participants felt that this statement needed to be reworded for clarity of thought and now reads as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.”
- Statement 6 was originally two separate statements that read: “My decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by how involved I am able to be in the decision making processes of the school” and “My decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by my having input into solving problems at my school.” Based on recommendations, these statements were combined into one statement to now read: “My decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by my involvement in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.”
- Statement 12 has remained the same. However, an additional statement on the original Q sample read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the administrator respecting the teacher.” The participants in the pilot study felt that the additional

statement was too vague and that statement 12 was capturing the same idea in more specific wording. Therefore, the additional statement was removed from the final Q sample.

- Statement 13 originally read as two separate statements: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by administrative evaluations that help to target strengths and weaknesses” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that encourages a teacher to change their teaching methods to better meet the needs of their students.” Participants felt that these two statements were very similar in meaning and suggested combining the statements to provide clarity in meaning to now read as statement 13: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.”
- Statements 14 and 15 originally read as three separate statements: “My decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to plan with other teachers,” “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers,” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities a teacher has in a day to collaborate with peers.” Teachers in the pilot group felt that these statements all said the same thing and needed to be combined and reworded for clarity. These statements have been combined into two statements to now read as statements 14 and 15: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate and plan with other teachers about curriculum” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.”

- Statement 20 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a school where students are always put first.” Participants felt the wording was a bit awkward and needed to be reworded to better capture the intent of the statement. Based on their feedback, statement 20 was changed to now read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.”
- Statement 21 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is fair and consistent.” The pilot group felt this statement was too vague and did not accurately capture the intent of the statement. The wording was changed based on their suggestions to now read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.”
- Statement 23 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher’s effectiveness.” Participants felt that this statement was too vague and needed to be reworded for clarity of meaning. The statement now reads as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.”
- Statement 24 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students’ academic performance each year.” Participants suggested the word “performance” be changed to “success” and to remove “each year” for clarity. The statement now reads as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students’ academic success.”
- Statement 25 was added based on feedback from the pilot study. Participants felt that a statement needed to be added to encompass the impact that teachers have on students’

lives and the ability to see the outcomes of this impact on students' lives. To capture their feedback statement 25 now reads as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives."

- Statements 26 and 27 originally read as one statement: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures." Teachers in the pilot group recommended that an additional statement be added to include the word "state," so an additional statement, statement 26, was created from their feedback which reads: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures." Statement 27 remained the same.
- Participants in the pilot study felt that a statement was missing from the Q sample to capture the feeling of satisfaction that teachers feel in their jobs that keeps them in the teaching profession. Based on their feedback, statement 29 was created and added to the Q sample which reads as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job."
- Statement 31 originally read as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher feeling valued in their job." The statement was revised for clarity and depth of meaning based on feedback to now read as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community."
- Statement 35 originally read as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the high level of safety a teacher feels at their job." The statement was reworded for clarity and brevity to now read as: "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work."

- Statement 37 originally read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having teaching support.” The pilot group participants felt the statement was too vague and needed to be reworded for clarity of meaning to now read as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.”
- Statement 38 originally read as two separate statements: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the support a teacher receives to maintain a work-life balance” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the hours that a teacher works in their job.” The pilot group recommended that the words “the support a teacher receives” be removed from the statement in order to better reflect the intent of the statement as well as removing the second statement altogether from the Q sample. Statement 38 now reads as: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work life balance,” and the second statement was removed from the final Q sample.
- The original Q sample contained the following additional statements that were removed based on feedback from the pilot study: “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the location of the school at which the teacher works and how close the school is to where the teacher lives,” “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher’s perception of the administrator,” and “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the demands of the job from the state/district/school.” The pilot group felt that the first statement was irrelevant and that the meaning of the second and third statements had been captured in other statements within the Q sample.

Table 4 shows the statements comprising the final Q sample which were utilized during the Q sorting process.

Table 4

Q Sample Statements

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	Allen, 2005 Darling-Hammond, 2003 Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004 Administrator Survey Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14,15, 16, 17, 19, 20 Teacher Survey Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20	External Factors
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	Allen, 2005 Ingersoll, 2002a Ingersoll, 2002b Pamu, 2010	Teacher Working Conditions
3	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.	Allen, 2005	Teacher Working Conditions
4	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	Ingersoll, 2003 Administrator Survey Participant 13, 16, 19, 20	Teacher Working Conditions
5	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	Ingersoll, 2003 Administrator Survey Participant 7	Teacher Working Conditions
6	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	Boyd et al., 2011 Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Ingersoll, 2003 Lynch, 2010	Teacher Working Conditions
7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	Loeb, Elfers, Michael, & Plecki, 2004 Teacher Survey Participant 23, 28, 32, 37, 41	Internal Factors

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	Loeb, Elfers, Michael, & Plecki, 2004 Teacher Survey Participant 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 36, 36, 40, 41	Internal Factors
9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	Allen, 2005 Boyd et al., 2011 Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Administrator Survey Participant 1, 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	Leadership
10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Urick, 2012	Teacher Working Conditions
11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	Boyd et al., 2011 Blasse & Kirby, 1992 Boyd et al., 2011 Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Teacher Survey Participant 33	Internal Factors
12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	Boyd et al., 2011	Leadership
13	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.	Boyd et al., 2011 Tomon, 2009	Leadership

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	Allen, 2005 Boyd et al., 2011 Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004	Teacher Working Conditions
15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	Allen, 2005 Boyd et al., 2011 Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004	Teacher Working Conditions
16	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	Tomon, 2009	Teacher Working Conditions
17	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	Tomon, 2009	Leadership
18	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Tomon, 2009 Administrator Survey Participant 17	Leadership
19	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004 Teacher Survey Participants 27, 35, 38, 39, 40, 41	Teacher Working Conditions
20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004	Teacher Working Conditions
21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004	Leadership

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
22	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	Brown & Wynn, 2009 Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004	Teacher Working Conditions
23	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.	Boyd et al., 2008 Boyd et al., 2010 Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007 Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011	Internal Factors
24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	Boyd et al., 2008 Boyd et al., 2010 Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007 Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011	External Factors
25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	Pilot group teacher feedback	Internal Factors
26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	Pogodzinski, Young, Frank, & Belman, 2012	External Factors
27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	Pogodzinski, Young, Frank, & Belman, 2012	External Factors
28	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	Pamu, 2010	External Factors
29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	Pilot Study Group Feedback	Internal Factors
30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	Pamu, 2010	External Factors

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	Maples, 2016	Internal Factors
32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	Grossman & Thompson, 2004 Hallum, Chou, Hite, & Hite 2012 McCollum, 2014	Teacher Working Conditions
33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	Ingersoll & Smith, 2004 Ingersoll & Smith, 2011 Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012 Weibke & Bardin, 2009	Teacher Working Conditions
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	Ingersoll & Smith, 2004 Ingersoll & Smith, 2011 Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012 Weibke & Bardin, 2009 Teacher Survey Participant 39	External Factors
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	Stockard & Lehman, 2004	Teacher Working Conditions
36	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	Stockard & Lehman, 2005	Teacher Working Conditions
37	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	Grossman & Thompson, 2004 Teacher Survey Participant 32	Teacher Working Conditions
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	Teacher Survey Participant 8, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 28	Teacher Working Conditions
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	Teacher Survey Participant 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 39, 41	External Factors

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Statement	Source	Factor
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	Teacher Survey Participant 22, 24, 31, 34, 35, 37	External Factors
41	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	Ingersoll, 2002b Teacher Survey Participant 4	Teacher Working Conditions
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	Ingersoll, 2002a Administrator Survey Participant 1, 3, 8, 12, 14 Teacher Survey Participant 4, 11	External Factors
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	Pilot Study Group Feedback	Internal Factors
44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	Pilot Study Group Feedback	Leadership

P Sample

When conducting a study using InQuiry, the participants in the study are referred to as the P sample or P set. In contrast to studies using R methodological analyses, the number of participants in InQuiry studies utilizing Q methodology is relatively small. A study utilizing Q methodology can use as little as one participant, but typically a good number is forty to sixty participants. However, the participant group should be balanced in order to ensure that data is collected from as many relevant participant groups as possible. Q methodology aims to understand the existence of viewpoints and to draw generalizations based on concepts, categories, theoretical propositions, and models of practice (Watts & Stenner, 2013). InQuiry builds on this understanding by having the participants in the P sample analyze their beliefs and perceptions further through focus groups once the participants have sorted the statements in the Q sample (Militello et al., 2016). Establishing the existence of viewpoints around a topic can be a powerful tool for examining established preconceptions and practices related to these viewpoints. While R methodology attempts to draw conclusions or generalizations based on large sets of aggregate data, Q methodology aims to understand the differences and possible false generalizations that can be the result of analyzing aggregate data sets.

The district in which this study was conducted is a district with very diverse schools located in northeastern North Carolina. Student populations in schools can range from 100 to 1,100 students, and schools are located in various settings. Some schools are very rural and remote while others are located in slightly more urban settings. In general, the districts located in the northeastern part of the state are very rural areas that still rely heavily on agriculture as a source of jobs for the community. Added to that, districts in northeastern North Carolina have difficulty competing with nearby districts that are much larger, such as Wake County, in terms of

teacher salary supplements. For this study the P sample will consist of 30 to 40 teachers currently teaching in northeastern North Carolina. The researcher works at a school located in a rural district in northeastern North Carolina with a staff of approximately 45 certified teachers. Each month the school has a staff meeting for all certified teachers, and the Q sorting activity will be conducted at one of these staff meetings. The school has experienced high rates of turnover in the staff, and the leadership at the school wants to better understand what they can do to increase teacher retention rates.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected in two phases. Phase I consisted of participants completing a card sorting activity utilizing a forced choice distribution grid and a post-sort questionnaire designed to gain deeper insight into the reasons the participants sorted the cards the way they did and why the participants placed certain statements as “Strongly Agree” or “Strongly Disagree.” Phase II consisted of a post-sort focus group. Based on a factor analysis of the Q sorts, groups of individuals with statistically similar beliefs and perceptions were identified, and focus groups were conducted with each of these groups. Each participant was assigned a participant identifier number that was placed on the Q sort distribution grid score sheets. A confidential master list of the participants and identifier numbers was maintained by the researcher in a secure location, and this list was destroyed upon completion of the study.

For the purposes of this study, the values and perceptions of teachers regarding issues of teacher retention and attrition factors were captured through a card sorting activity. Participants were given a set of cards with each card containing one of the statements from Table 4. Participants were then asked to sort the statements on the cards utilizing a forced choice distribution as seen in Figure 4. Each item in the Q-sample was then placed on the distribution

grid and given a ranking value ranging in value from Strongly Agree (+4) on the far right to Strongly Disagree (-4) on the far left. Items with a positive value are considered most important to the individual whereas items with a negative value are considered least important to the individual (Watts & Stenner, 2013).

Prior to conducting the sorting activity, the researcher provided an overview of the study and the purpose of the sort and explained to participants how to complete the sorting activity and the post-sort questionnaire. See Appendix B to view the Q sort protocols that were given to the participants for the sorting activity and the post-sort questionnaire. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary, and participants could change their mind about participation at any time. Participants were given a consent form for participation in the sorting activity and the post-sort questionnaire that can be seen Appendix D.

Each participant was given a unique identifier pre-labeled on the Q sort distribution grid score sheet. The researcher maintained a master list of participant identifiers that was kept in a confidential location that no one else had access to. At the conclusion of the study, this list was destroyed.

To conduct the sort each participant was given a set of cards with each statement from Table 4 printed on the cards. Each card had a randomly assigned number that would allow the researcher to match each participant's completed grids to the actual statements. Participants were asked to begin by laying out the nine scale score cards across the top of the table with (-4) on the far left and (+4) on the far right. Each participant was then asked to place each statement under the corresponding value the participant felt the statement should be assigned until all of the cards had been placed. Upon completion of the sort, participants were asked to complete a written

post-sort questionnaire to provide insight into why participants ranked statements in a particular manner.

Following completion of the sorting process, follow-up focus groups were conducted with participants that had statistically similar card sorts. This provided deeper insight into the values, perceptions, and beliefs that caused the participants to sort the cards in a particular manner. See Appendix C for the specific protocols that were utilized during the focus groups. Participants were asked to discuss the following questions in the focus group interviews: (1) Who is in your group? Describe any similarities and/or differences (e.g., demographics, job, etc.); (2) Which statements best represent your shared perspective?; (3) What has had the greatest impact on how you sorted your cards the way you did? (Examples- past experience, courses, current knowledge, etc.). Please explain your answers; and (4) What name would you assign that represents the perspective illustrated by this model sort? Explain why and the meaning associated with that name—use card statements to provide justification for your name. The researcher took notes during the focus group interviews, looking for common themes or perspectives.

The purpose of the focus group interviews is to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons that participants hold certain perspectives and beliefs and to engage in conversations to better understand the underlying facts and opinions (Yin, 1994). The main purpose of this study was to not just understand teachers' perceptions, but to gain a deeper understanding of the motivations and experiences of participants that are the foundation for their beliefs, perceptions, and values.

Data Analysis

This study relied on the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data based on the collection of data from the Q sorts, post sort written responses, focus group interview responses, and researcher observations. Once the Q sorts were completed, quantitative data from the sorts was entered into the statistical analysis program PQMethod in order to conduct a by-person factor analysis. Unlike a study that utilizes R methodology, in Q methodology the participants become the factors to be analyzed. The response patterns in the individual Q sorts, once analyzed, were used to create a correlation matrix that helped to identify groups of participants with statistically similar sorts, referred to as “families” for the purposes of the post sort interviews. In Q methodology the Q sort patterns of individuals are analyzed rather than the individual statements (Militello et al., 2016).

Emergent factors were rotated through the Varimax method to determine their potential strength based on their eigenvalues (Watts & Stenner, 2013). The Z scores for individual statements were then analyzed to determine which statements that participants valued most highly. Factor arrays were used to create model sorts for each factor that represented the perspective of that factor (Watts & Stenner, 2012).

Qualitative data was collected and analyzed during the post-sort focus groups. The aim of these focus groups was to answer research question three: What are teachers’ perceptions of what these elements look like in practice? Why do teachers perceive these elements as most influential on their teacher retention decisions? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions? Groups with statistically similar response patterns, or families, as identified based on the factor analysis were asked to analyze the model sorts representing the perspective of their “family” during these interviews.

The post sort focus group interviews were analyzed to identify any major themes or commonalities that could be identified among participant responses. The researcher sought to capture a better understanding of the underlying values and beliefs of participants regarding teacher retention through the focus group interviews. These focus groups were conducted “with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). The main themes of the focus group protocols included: (a) contextual and demographic similarities and differences among interviewees, (b) the identification and representation of a shared perspective among interviewees, and (c) the identification of interviewees’ own experiences and perceptions as related to teacher retention. Each of the focus group interviews was identically structured (see Appendix C) allowing for consistency of the information obtained (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). The semi-structured format of the focus groups allowed for additional participant responses and follow-up questions from the researcher (Merriam, 1988; Patton 1990). During the focus group interviews, the researcher took explicit notes on participant responses. The researcher sought to analyze and understand the conditions, contexts, phenomena, and consequences (Creswell, 1998) through the analysis of qualitative data gathered from both the Q sorts and the focus group interviews to look for common themes or patterns in participant responses.

Subjectivity Statement

The background and experiences of any researcher can potentially influence how the researcher interprets and makes meaning out of the data collected in the study. The purpose of this subjectivity statement is to give the reader information about the experiences and views of the researcher conducting this study.

I began working in the field of education sixteen years ago. My first experiences in teaching were when I joined the Peace Corps and was assigned to teach English for one year at a public school in Ryazan, Russia for students in third through the eleventh grades. In the evenings I taught classes for the teachers at the school and for education majors at the local teachers' university on American English and American instructional practices.

Upon my return to the States, I began a lateral entry position teaching fifth grade at an urban, high poverty, high minority population elementary school in the city in which I had grown up and still currently reside with my own children. Having grown up in a poor, single parent household, my mother constantly emphasized the importance of education. I came to view education as an opportunity to travel the world and to see that there were places and ideas beyond the city I lived in. I felt that I could relate to the students in my classroom, and I wanted to show them that there were opportunities beyond what they saw in front of them every day that they could obtain through an education. To me, education was the opportunity to take control of my life and where my life went, and education provided the opportunity to leave the city I lived in.

After teaching fifth grade I began teaching English as a Second Language at an elementary school in my district with a student population where 40% of the students spoke a language other than English at home. At night I also taught classes at the community college for adults wanting to learn English as a Second Language. Eventually, I transitioned into a role as an elementary instructional coach and later as an assistant principal. I loved teaching and the impact that I was able to make in children's lives, and in these leadership roles I wanted to be able to help others to love the teaching profession as much as I did and for teachers to see the lasting impact they can have on a child's life through their role. In these roles I have come to see first-

hand the problem of teacher turnover. In the district in which I work, teacher recruitment can be very difficult, and many schools often begin the school year with long term subs in classrooms due to an inability to fill teaching vacancies. In my current role as an elementary literacy coach, I work with teachers to help them learn to utilize instructional strategies that can increase their effectiveness as literacy teachers. Through this study, I hope to better understand what the teachers currently in the district value and their perceptions of what they need in order to remain teaching in their current schools.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter an overview of the InQuiry process was provided as well as an overview of Q methodology. The steps of the InQuiry process for this study were described in detail to include the compilation of the Q sort statements, the P sample, the completion of the Q sort, conducting focus group interviews, and how data is to be collected and analyzed. The following chapter will detail the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this InQuiry study was to identify and understand the elements of the teaching profession that teachers perceive to be most impactful on their decision to remain in the teaching profession. The study also sought to understand the perspectives, beliefs, and values of current teachers on why these elements are so critical to teacher retention decisions and to understand what these teachers believe district and school level administrators could do to ensure that these elements are in place.

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What has research shown are the key factors influencing teachers' decision to stay in or leave the teaching profession?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave the teaching profession?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of what these elements look like in practice? Why do teachers perceive these elements as most influential on their teacher retention decisions? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?

The InQuiry process was selected as the research design to answer the research questions as the research design seeks to understand and quantify the perspectives of participants. The first research question was answered through a thorough review of the literature. The Q-sorts of current teachers were used to answer question two, and focus groups with these teachers were used to answer question three. The perceptions that one holds are influenced by the unique experiences, beliefs, and values of an individual. As teacher turnover rates are rising, the perspectives of current teachers provide valuable insight into why teachers are considering leaving the profession and what can be done to increase teacher retention rates. The purpose of

the InQuiry process as the research design was to quantify these perspectives, to identify commonalities, and to understand why teachers hold these perspectives.

The statistical software program PQMethod was used to analyze the Q sorts of the thirty teachers that participated in the study. PQMethod provided a quantitative analysis of the Q sorts to identify statistically significant variances, factors, and relationships among the sorts of the teachers participating in the study. The program sorted all participants into one of three statistically significant factors. Post-sort focus groups were conducted with teachers from each identified factor to gain a deeper understanding and to provide deeper insight into why teachers sorted the elements in a particular manner.

Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive overview of the study's findings. The statistical findings produced by PQMethod are discussed in detail as well as a detailed analysis of each statistically identified factor. In focus groups participants were asked to name and describe each identified factor to provide deeper insight into the perspectives of each factor, and a discussion of these insights is provided in this chapter as well. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study's findings.

Correlation Matrix

Once the data from each of the Q sorts has been loaded into PQMethod, the program produces a correlation matrix which analyzes the level of statistical similarity between each sort. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), the correlation matrix “provides a measure of the nature and extent of the relationship between any two Q sorts” (p. 97). The correlation matrix shows how statistically similar or dissimilar each sort is to every other sort in the study.

For this study, the correlation matrix measured 30x30 based on the number of participants in the study (n=30). The correlation coefficients ranged from +1 to -1 where +1

represents an identical match with another participant in the study with each card sorted in an identical column. A correlation of -1 indicates opposing sorts with all cards sorted in directly opposing columns from another sort in the study. For example, Participant 29 and Participant 2 had a correlation value of .43 indicating a high level similarity between the sorts of the two participants, and both of these participants loaded onto the same factor, Factor Three. However, Participant 30 and Participant 1 had a correlation value of -.04 indicating very little similarity between the sorts of the two participants, and subsequently, both participants loaded onto different factors with Participant 30 loading on Factor Two and Participant 1 loading on Factor Three. Table 5 shows an abbreviated correlation matrix for all sorts in the study.

Factor Analysis

In the InQuiry process, the first step of data analysis is factor analysis. During factor analysis, PQMethod tries to cluster all data into eight factors and tries to determine how the sorts of participants are similar. The purpose of factor analysis is to account for and explain the relationships that exist among the sorts in the study and to identify any patterns of common viewpoints that exist in the data (Watts & Stenner, 2012). These identified commonalities are referred to as factors with each factor representing distinct viewpoints that are shared by groups of participants in the study.

PQMethod automatically clusters the data from the sorts into eight unrotated factors. Each factor potentially identifies groups of participants that hold shared perspectives. These unrotated factors were then analyzed, and a scree plot of Eigenvalues was created as shown in Figure 5. The Eigenvalue of each factor indicates the relative strength and potential explanatory value of each factor. Eigenvalues of less than 1.00 are typically not included. For the eight unrotated factors in this study, the Eigenvalues for each factor were above 1.00. The Eigenvalues

Table 5

Correlation Matrix Between Sorts (Truncated)

Participant	P1	P2	P3	...	P28	P29	P30
P1	1.0	.05	.18	...	.26	.28	-.04
P2	.05	1.0	.34	...	.22	.43	.30
P3	.18	.34	1.0	...	.30	.33	.29
...
P28	.26	.22	.30	...	1.0	.06	.20
P29	.28	.43	.33	...	.06	1.0	.30
P30	-.04	.30	.29	...	.20	.30	1.0

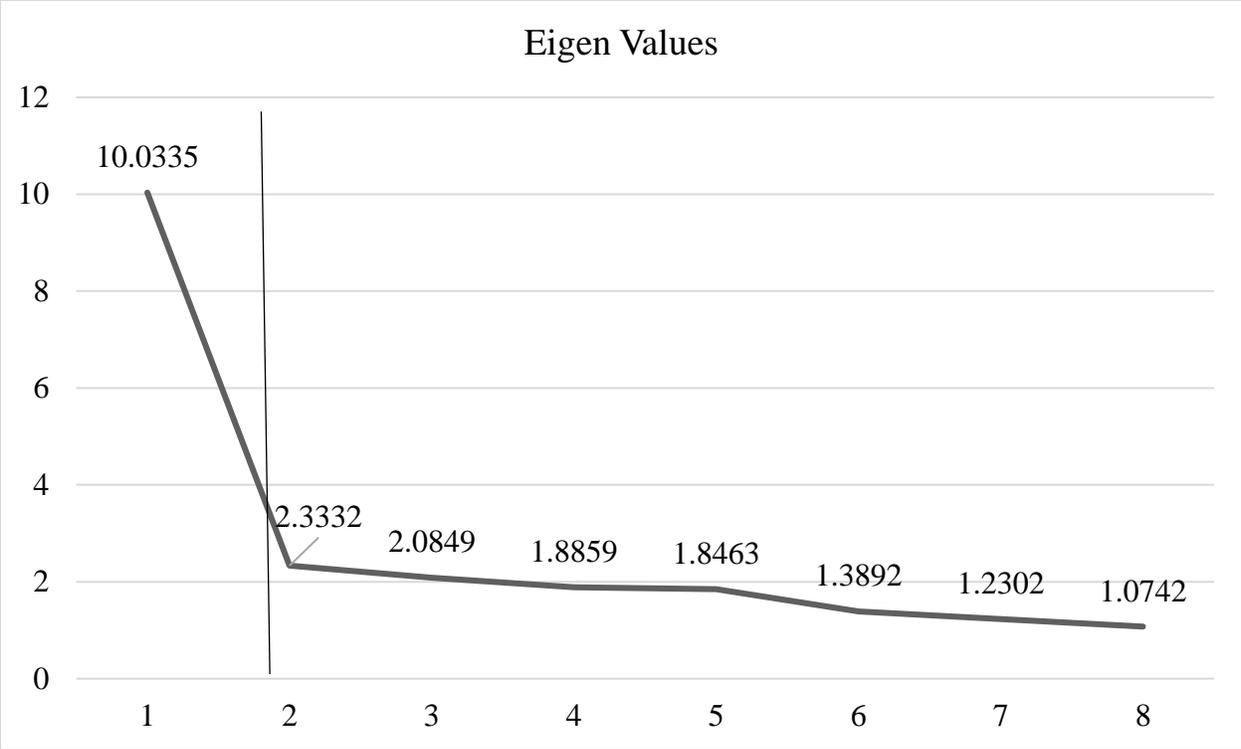


Figure 5. Scree plot of Eigen values.

of the eight factors as shown in Figure 5 were as follows: factor one had an Eigenvalue of 10.0335; factor two had an Eigenvalue of 2.3332; factor three had an Eigenvalue of 2.0849; factor four had an Eigenvalue of 1.8859; factor five had an Eigenvalue of 1.8463; factor six had an Eigenvalue of 1.3892; factor seven had an Eigenvalue of 1.2302; factor eight had an Eigenvalue of 1.0742. A distinct “elbow” can be seen on the scree plot of Eigenvalues after factor one. However, a one factor solution is not robust enough, and additional factors are needed for a stronger analysis of viewpoints. The purpose of Q methodology is to extract multiple distinct viewpoints. Therefore, a three factor solution was selected for the purposes of this study, and Table 6 shows a summary of the data for each factor that was used to decide on a three factor solution. Table 6 shows the information that was used to select a three factor solution for factor rotation. Table 6 was created to show the Eigenvalues included for each factor solution, the percent of explained variance accounted for by each solution, the number of participants to load significantly on a factor for that number of solutions, and the correlation among factors for that solution. When looking at factor rotation solutions above two, many participants loading on a factor were confounded, meaning that there were participants loading high on more than one factor. For a three factor solution two of the thirty participants, Participant 8 and Participant 19, loaded on two factors. For a three factor solution, these participants are then loaded onto the higher of the two factors. Participant 8 loaded onto Factor One and Factor Two, but in the final factor rotation this participant was loaded onto Factor Two. Participant 19 loaded onto Factor One and Factor Three, but in the final three factor solution this participant was loaded onto Factor Three. While a four factor solution accounted for 54% of the explained variance, five participants did not load significantly onto a factor. For a five factor solution 61% of the variability is accounted for, however, six participants did not load significantly onto a factor.

Table 6

Information Used to Determine the Factor Rotation

Factor Rotation Solution	Eigen Value Included	Explained Variance	Number of Participants Loaded	Correlation Among Factors
2	10.1 & 2.3	41%	29	0.63
3	10.1, 2.3, & 2.1	48%	30	0.55 0.53 0.58
4	10.1, 2.3, 2.1, & 1.9	54%	25	0.48 0.01 0.60 0.006 0.46 -0.04
5	10.1, 2.3, 2.1, 1.9, & 1.8	61%	24	0.58 -0.09 0.56 0.30 0.01 0.43 0.27 -0.05 0.05 0.30

While a three factor solution accounted for 48% of the explained variance among factors, all thirty participants loaded onto one of the three factors ensuring that the viewpoints of all study participants were represented, and there was a high correlation among the three factors.

Therefore, a three factor solution was used for the factor rotation. The correlations among each of the three factors can be seen in Table 7.

Humphrey's Rule

Humphrey's rule states that "a factor is significant if the cross-product of its two highest loadings (ignoring the sign) exceeds twice the standard error" (Brown, 1980, p. 223). The standard error is calculated by calculating $1 \div \sqrt{\text{no. of items in the Q sample}}$. For this study the standard error would be $1 \div \sqrt{44}$ which is .1508. The two highest factor loadings for each factor are then multiplied to find the product. The product of the two highest factor loadings is then compared to the standard error times two (.3016) to ensure the product is larger. If the product is smaller than the standard error times two, then the factor should not be rotated as a solution. For this study, all three factors were larger than .3016 indicating that a three factor solution should be utilized for factor rotation as can be seen in Table 8.

Factor Rotation and Factor Loadings

Once a three factor solution was selected, a three factor Varimax rotation was conducted in order to gain a deeper understanding on each factor and the viewpoints represented by each factor. A Varimax rotation isolates the number of selected factors, for this study the number of isolated factors is three, in a mathematical way to ensure that each Q osrt is representative of only one of the three factors. According to Watts and Stenner (2012), through a Varimax rotation, "the factors are positioned so that the overall solution maximizes the amount of study variance explained (p. 125)." Once a three factor solution has been selected, a Varimax rotation

Table 7

Correlations Among Factor Scores

Factor	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Factor 1	1.0000	0.55	0.53
Factor 2	0.55	1.0000	0.58
Factor 3	0.53	0.58	1.0000

Table 8

Humphrey's Rule

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Cross Product of Two Highest Loadings	.416	.5239	.5619
Standard Error	.1508	.1508	.1508
Difference	.1144	.2223	.2603
Standard Error x 2	.3016	.3016	.3016

is conducted in which each Q sort is loaded onto a factor and given a correlation score for each factor. The correlation score represents how closely the individual Q sort is associated with each factor. The significance for each participant was .30 ($p < .05$ level). The significance level for each participant is derived by multiplying the standard error of .1508 by 1.96. The correlation scores for each participant in relation to each factor can be seen in Table 9. Asterisks represent a participant that loaded on that particular factor. The rotated factors represent 48% of the explained variance. Factor One represents 12% of the explained variance and had six participants who loaded significantly on this factor. Factor Two represents 17% of the explained variance, and eleven participants loaded significantly on this factor. Factor Three represents 19% of the explained variance, and thirteen participants loaded significantly on this factor. All participants in the study loaded significantly on one of the three factors.

Once participants have been loaded onto a factor, a model sort for each factor is created. Table 10 shows the placement of each statement in the model sort continuum for each factor ranging from +4 to -4.

Factor One: Leadership Matters

Factor One consists of six participants out of the thirty total participants and accounts for 12% of the explained variance in the study. Table 11 provides an overview of the demographics of the participants that loaded significantly on Factor One. Of the six participants, four were Caucasian and two were African-American. Two participants fell in the 21-30 age range while four participants fell in the 31-40 age range. Four of the participants had five or less years of experience, three of whom were in their first year of teaching, one participant fell in the 6-10 years of experience range, and one participant fell in the 16-20 years of experience range. Of note, the participant with 6-10 years of experience is currently in their sixth year of teaching

Table 9

Factor Matrix Using Participants' Q Sorts (Loadings)

Participants	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
P1	0.1653	0.0740	0.3268*
P2	0.1665	0.2388	0.4616*
P3	0.6243*	0.2762	0.3673
P4	0.1103	0.5825*	0.4716
P5	0.1251	0.5044*	-0.2752
P6	0.1433	0.0619	0.7453*
P7	0.3725	-0.1074	0.4347*
P8	0.5270	0.5304*	0.2440
P9	0.3691	0.5269*	0.3178
P10	0.1388	0.0719	0.6562*
P11	0.1618	0.7490*	0.1503
P12	0.5955*	0.2349	0.3694
P13	0.4660	0.1601	0.5953*
P14	0.5486	0.1828	0.5812*
P15	0.1358	0.1625	0.7540*
P16	0.5439*	0.4017	0.3568
P17	0.2184	0.2417	0.6890*
P18	0.5998*	0.3591	0.2792

Table 9 (continued)

Participants	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
P19	0.3679	0.2751	0.4177*
P20	0.6664*	-0.2322	-0.2378
P21	0.1330	0.6345*	0.1447
P22	0.0295	0.1565	0.4185*
P23	0.0554	0.2060	0.6278*
P24	0.2242	0.3912*	0.1459
P25	-0.1437	0.6774*	0.3988
P26	0.2354	0.6995*	0.1243
P27	-0.0059	0.5465*	0.2027
P28	0.4867*	0.4080	-0.0211
P29	-0.1783	0.3910	0.7074*
P30	0.0489	0.5110*	0.2359
# of Participants Loaded	6/30	11/30	13/30
% Explained Variance	12	17	19

Note. $p < .05$. * indicates participants that loaded high on that factor.

Table 10

Factor Q Sort Values for Statements

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
1 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	0	-4	0
2 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	0	-2	-4
3 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.	-1	0	-1
4 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	1	-2	2
5 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	-2	2	2
6 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	0	0	0
7 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	1	1	3
8 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	4	4	4
9 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	3	3	1
10 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	-3	-1	-3
11 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	-3	-4	-2

Table 10 (continued)

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
12 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	4	3	2
13 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.	1	1	-2
14 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	2	3	-1
15 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	-1	0	-3
16 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	2	2	1
17 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	4	2	1
18 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	1	0	-1
19 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	0	0	0
20 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	0	3	1
21 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	3	1	2
22 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	-2	1	-1

Table 10 (continued)

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
23 The decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.	2	2	3
24 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	0	2	3
25 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	2	4	4
26 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	-2	-2	-3
27 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	0	-3	-2
28 The decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	0	1	0
29 The decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	3	4	3
30 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	-2	-3	-1
31 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	-1	-4	0
32 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	-3	0	-3
33 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	-4	-2	-4
34 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	2	-3	1
35 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	3	-1	0

Table 10 (continued)

Statements	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
36 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	-1	0	0
37 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	-1	1	0
38 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	1	0	4
39 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-4	-3	1
40 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-1	-2	2
41 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	-2	-1	-1
42 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	1	-1	4
43 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-4	-1	-2
44 The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	-3	-1	-2

Table 11

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor One

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Age Range	Years Experience	Teacher Preparation Program	Area(s) of Licensure	Current Grade Taught
P3	female	African-American	20-30	6-10	Traditional	Elementary	5 th
P12	female	Caucasian	31-40	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	1 st
P16	female	Caucasian	31-40	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	K
P18	female	Caucasian	31-40	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	2 nd
P20	female	African-American	31-40	16-20	Lateral Entry	Elementary, Principal	3 rd
P28	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Lateral Entry	Elementary	2 nd

meaning that 5 of the six participants, or 83% of the participants on Factor One, have six or less years of experience. While two of the participants were lateral entry teachers, the other four participants participated in a traditional four-year university teacher preparation program. The participants were all regular classroom teachers representing an array of grades taught ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade. All participants have elementary licensure with one participant having additional licensure as a principal.

After factor rotation, a statistical analysis of the placement of each statement for the sort produces a Z-score which represents how closely that statement correlates to the distribution mean for that factor. Table 12 shows the Z-scores and mean placement of each statement for Factor One. With a Z-score of 1.918 Statement 8, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children,” represents the statement with the highest level of agreement among participants who loaded on Factor One. Since this statement has the highest level of agreement among the participants for this factor, this statement is placed as the first statement in the +4 column. The statements then continue in descending order to the statement with the lowest Z-score of -2.120 with Statement 43, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally,” falling into the -4 column.

Figure 6 is a model factor array for Factor One. A model sort is configured based on the Z-scores of each statement after factor extraction and rotation. The model sort represents the viewpoint as a whole of the participants around the topic of teacher retention factors based on a statistical analysis of the Q sorts of participants loading onto Factor One. Statements in the +4 column correspond to the three statements with the highest Z-scores from Table 12. The three statements with the lowest Z-scores were placed in the -4 column. The model array is the basis for data interpretation and served as a springboard for discussion during post-sort focus groups.

Table 12

Factor One, Normalized Factor Scores

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	1.918	+4
12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	1.838	+4
17	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	1.717	+4
21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	1.353	+3
9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	1.319	+3
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	1.300	+3
29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	1.228	+3
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	1.009	+2
16	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	.952	+2
25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	.891	+2
23	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.	.798	+2
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	.687	+2
13	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.	.561	+1

Table 12 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	.497	+1
18	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	.336	+1
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	0.334	+1
4	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	0.267	+1
7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	0.247	+1
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	0.178	0
28	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	0.174	0
1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	0.126	0
20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	0.084	0
6	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	-0.119	0
19	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	-0.128	0
27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	-0.149	0
24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	-0.241	0

Table 12 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	-0.313	-1
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-0.395	-1
3	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.	-0.444	-1
15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	-0.498	-1
36	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	-0.568	-1
37	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	-0.615	-1
30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	-0.783	-2
26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	-0.784	-2
22	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	-0.796	-2
5	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	-0.820	-2
41	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	-0.837	-2
10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	-0.971	-3
32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	-1.022	-3

Table 12 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	-1.057	-3
44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	-1.530	-3
33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	-1.543	-4
39	The decision to remain as a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-2.081	-4
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-2.120	-4

Least Important		Little/Neutral Importance					Most Important	
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
33	10	30	31	2	13	34	21	8
39	32	26	40	28	42	16	9	12
43	11	22	3	1	18	25	35	17
	44	5	15	20	38	23	29	
		41	36	6	4	14		
			37	19	7			
				27				
				24				

Figure 6. Factor one model sort.

Table 13 highlights the statements with the highest and lowest Z-scores for Factor One. These statements were all placed into the +4, +3, -3, and -4 columns on the model factor array. Statements in the +4 and +3 column are most representative of the shared viewpoints of the participants loaded on Factor One. These statements represent the factors that are most important to the participants on Factor One in regards to their teacher retention decisions.

When looking at the statements with the highest Z-scores and analyzing participant responses during the focus group interviews and post-sort questionnaires, a few common themes emerged: a desire to work with children, the importance of school level administration, job satisfaction, and wanting to feel safe at work. For Factor One, the role of administration emerged as one of the most important elements to the participants on this factor with four of the top seven statements in the +4 and +3 columns model sort revolving around the impact that administration has on teacher retention decisions for these participants. The participants loading on this factor emphasized the importance of having an administrator that treats teachers as professionals, is actively working to improve the school, is fair and consistent, and is supportive. Participant 12 noted, “I would want to work with an administrator that I can see working hard to improve our school” (personal communication, December 16, 2016). Factor One rated Statement 17, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school” significantly higher than participants on Factor Two or Factor Three with this statement falling in the +4 column in the model sort.

These participants feel that they are working hard to improve the lives of students, and as such, expect the same goal of improvement from administration. The key to improvement for this factor is having a fair and consistent administrator who establishes and maintains consistent expectations of everyone. Students, staff, parents, and the community are all held to the same

Table 13

Factor One, High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Cards	Statements
+4	8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.
+4	12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.
+4	17	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.
+3	21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.
+3	9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.
+3	35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.
+3	29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.
-3	10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.
-3	32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.
-3	11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.
-3	44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.
-4	33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.
-4	39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).
-4	43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.

expectations creating consistency and a shared goal of improvement that everyone is working towards. Participant 20 commented, “Make sure everyone in the school is following the rules and procedures, and there is true consistency. When these things aren’t in place, that’s when scores fall off because no one is on the same page. They should meet and come up with the rules and procedures making sure there is consistency, and whatever is agreed to, stick to it” (personal communication, December 16, 2016). Without clarity of expectations, confusion ensues with each person going their own way.

Participants on this factor viewed their administrator as a role model just as they strive to be role models for their students. Participant 12 elaborated, “As a newer teacher, I need a lot of support. I want to be able to go to my administrator and ask to make sure I’m doing things the right way. I need to know what to expect from my administrator, and I want them to know what they’re doing” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). To these participants administrative support was key in their decision to remain a teacher. To them support is knowing that administration trusts that the teacher has made the right decisions in their classroom and is also willing to provide constructive criticism to help the teacher to improve instructionally. Participant 20 remarked, “I need to know that my administrator has my back when it comes to making decisions in my classroom. When I’ve followed all the established procedures for addressing student discipline, I need my administrator to say ‘You’ve done everything you can, and now it’s time for administration to step in and address the situation.’ I want to feel like they have my back. I also want constructive criticism and for my administrator to give me suggestions on areas I can improve and tell me how I can improve on them. Usually my observations are really quick, and there isn’t really any discussion on ways for me to get better” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

The teachers loading on this factor rated the desire to work with children as the number one element that most impacts their decision to remain in education combined with feeling high levels of job satisfaction. Several participants elaborated on this point further with Participant 28 noting, “Both of these to me are the main reason to teach. If you have a problem with either one or don’t feel strongly about them, then I believe the teacher needs to find a new career” (personal communication, December 16, 2016). Participant 16 elaborated, “You cannot teach children and not like children. If you are not happy in what you are teaching, then you will not want to continue” (personal communication, December 16, 2016). For these teachers, simply working with children equates to high levels of job satisfaction, especially when they feel that they are able to make a difference in the lives of the children that they teach. Participant 12 commented on this point by saying, “A job must be satisfying to want to get up every day and come to it. I need to feel like I am making a difference” (personal communication, December 15, 2016), and Participant 3 added, “...I hope to make a major difference in making their life more positive. You have to have a love for children to want to be a teacher” (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Another distinguishing element for this factor was that of safety. The participants for Factor One rated Statement 35 in the +3 column, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work”, whereas this statement was placed in the -1 and 0 columns for Factors Two and Three, respectively. Participant 12 stated, “Who wants to go to work when you don’t feel safe? I had a parent try to physically intimidate me last year, and he sent me multiple threatening emails. There were days when I was afraid to come to work or found myself wondering if I needed to bring my husband with me to work” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

Of the six participants that loaded onto Factor One, three agreed to participate in a post-sort focus group. During this focus group, all three participants shared incidents that had occurred at work in which they felt their safety had been threatened by a student or parent. Participant 20 shared one such incident, “I had a student in my class that was very violent and disruptive. He had frequent outbursts in which he would flip chairs and desks over in the classroom, and he would often verbally threaten other students in the class. Several students and parents complained to administration because the students were afraid. Some became so afraid that they would not come to school. In a meeting with administration, the child, and the parent, the child came across the table and began hitting me. I asked my administrator ‘Aren’t you going to do anything?’, but she sent me out of the meeting. It was very hard to go to work after that” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). These teachers want to be sure that they are safe at work and that their administrator is going to make sure that this happens.

Not only do these teachers want to feel safe in their classrooms, but they want to feel safe on campus when students are not on campus. They often stay late each night to ensure that lesson plans are done, and classrooms are ready for students. Participant 18 elaborated on this, “I often stay late at night, and I want to be sure that when I leave or when I’m here working late in the building that I’m safe. We are surrounded by housing developments, and we are a majority female staff. The school is very open and not closed in meaning that anyone could walk onto campus from any direction without someone knowing. Some nights it can be very dark walking out to my car, and I want to know that I am safe” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). For the participants loading onto Factor One, the elements of the teaching profession that have the least impact on their teacher retention decisions were opportunities for leadership, professional development, work-related recognition, personal relationships with colleagues and

administration, their induction programs, and the breaks received throughout the year. For these participants, their sense of job satisfaction comes from what they are able to do in their classrooms each day with students rather than from externally motivating factors such as rewards and advancement. As Participant 12 clarified, “I do not teach in hopes of awards; I teach to make a difference” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 3 provided more insight by commenting, “It’s good to have a relationship with colleagues, but them knowing me personally has nothing to do with my teaching ability” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Being know personally by colleagues was placed in the -4 column in the model sort for this factor. These participants are driven by their perceived ability to impact the lives of students in a positive manner and thereby making a difference in the life of a child. Participant 3 remarked, “...academics at times wasn’t my main concern, helping them to achieve life lessons and how to move on was” (personal communication, December 15, 216).

Factor Two: Students Matter

Eleven of the thirty participants in the study loaded onto Factor Two which represents 17% of the explained variance. Table 14 presents the demographics of the participants that loaded significantly on Factor Two. This factor’s participants consisted of nine Caucasian participants and two African-American participants. The ages of participants for this factor ranged from four participants in the 20-30 age range, three participants in the 31-40 age range, and four participants in the 51+ age range. The years of experience for participants that loaded significantly on this factor ranged widely. Three participants had 0-5 years of experience, one participant had 6-10 years of experience, three participants had 11-15 years of experience, one participant had 16-20 years of experience, one participant had 21-25 years of experience, and two participants had 26+ years of experience. Nine of the participants entered teaching through a

Table 14

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor Two

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Age Range	Years Experience	Teacher Preparation Program	Area(s) of Licensure	Current Grade Taught
P4	female	African-American	31-40	11-15	Traditional	Elementary, Special Ed	4 th
P5	female	Caucasian	31-40	11-15	Traditional	Elementary	4 th
P8	female	Caucasian	20-30	6-10	Traditional	Elementary, Music	K-5
P9	female	Caucasian	51+	26+	Traditional	Art	K-5
P11	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Traditional	Elementary, Reading	1 st
P21	female	Caucasian	51+	21-25	Traditional	Elementary, Reading	3 rd
P24	female	African-American	51+	11-15	Lateral Entry	Special Ed	K-5
P25	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Traditional	Special Ed, Reading, Elementary	3-5
P26	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	K
P27	female	Caucasian	51+	26+	Traditional	Special Ed	3-5
P30	female	Caucasian	31-40	16-20	Lateral Entry	K-12 ESL, Principal	K-3

traditional four-year teacher preparation program while two participants came to teaching through lateral entry. Seven of the participants had elementary licensure, four participants had special education licensure, three participants had additional licensure in reading, one participant had art licensure, one participant had music licensure, and one participant had both ESL and principal licensure. Interestingly, of the three teachers who would be considered special area or enhancement teachers at the elementary level participating in this study (i.e. art, music, PE), two of these three loaded onto Factor Two. Also of note, four of the six teachers with special education licensure loaded significantly on this factor as well as the participant with ESL licensure. Typically, the enhancement, special education, and ESL teachers routinely teach all grade levels K-5 in an elementary school.

Table 15 shows the Z-scores and mean placement of each statement for Factor Two. With a Z-score of 2.111 Statement 25, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students’ lives,” represents the statement with the highest level of agreement among participants who loaded on Factor Two. Since this statement has the highest level of agreement among the participants for this factor, this statement is placed as the first statement in the +4 column. The statements then continue in descending order to the statement with the lowest Z-score of -2.147 with Statement 1, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary,” falling into the -4 column.

Figure 7 is a model factor array for Factor Two. A model sort is configured based on the Z-scores of each statement after factor extraction and rotation. The model sort represents the viewpoint as a whole of the participants around the topic of teacher retention factors based on a statistical analysis of the Q sorts of participants loading onto Factor Two. Statements in the +4 column correspond to the three statements with the highest Z-scores from Table 15. The three

Table 15

Factor Two, Normalized Factor Scores

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	2.111	+4
8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	1.927	+4
29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	1.651	+4
12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	1.403	+3
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	1.353	+3
20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	1.230	+3
9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	1.193	+3
23	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.	1.134	+2
5	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	.992	+2
24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	.976	+2
17	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	.785	+2
16	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	.783	+2
21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	.692	+1

Table 15 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
13	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.	.603	+1
28	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	.532	+1
22	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	0.413	+1
7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	0.307	+1
37	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	0.156	+1
6	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	-0.003	0
19	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	-0.026	0
36	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	-0.047	0
15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	-0.059	0
3	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.	-0.133	0
32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	-0.138	0
18	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	-0.277	0
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	-0.329	0

Table 15 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	-0.421	-1
10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	-0.470	-1
44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	-0.608	-1
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-0.632	-1
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	-0.648	-1
41	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	-0.744	-1
33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	-0.782	-2
26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	-0.793	-2
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	-0.898	-2
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-0.914	-2
4	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	-0.938	-2
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-1.067	-3
30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	-1.155	-3

Table 15 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	-1.179	-3
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	-1.199	-3
11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	-1.301	-4
31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	-1.330	-4
1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	-2.147	-4

Least Important		Little/Neutral Importance					Most Important	
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
11	39	33	42	6	21	23	12	25
31	30	26	10	19	13	5	14	8
1	27	2	44	36	28	24	20	29
	34	40	43	15	22	17	9	
		4	35	3	7	16		
			41	32	37			
				18				
				38				

Figure 7. Factor two model sort.

statements with the lowest Z-scores were placed in the -4 column. The model array is the basis for data interpretation and served as a springboard for discussion during post-sort focus groups.

Table 16 highlights the statements with the highest and lowest Z-scores for Factor Two. These statements were all placed into the +4, +3, -3, and -4 columns on the model factor array. Statements in the +4 and +3 column are most representative of the shared viewpoints of the participants loading onto Factor Two. These statements represent the factors that are most important to the participants on Factor Two in regards to their teacher retention decisions.

For the participants loading onto this factor, students are the key to their teacher retention decisions. Six of the top ten rated statements for this factor revolve around the impact a teacher has on students, and this impact is what makes the job satisfying and drives these teachers to remain in the teaching profession. This was captured by several of the participants' post sort written responses. Participant 4 wrote, "My motivation to teach is for students to get that 'ah-ha!' moment and to make a difference in their lives" (personal communication, December 15, 2016). This was echoed by Participant 25 who wrote, "Student success is most important because that means they are growing into functional people. Making a difference is important because you may be the only one who does" (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 26 added, "Even on my worst day, I can look at each of my students and see growth/change. It is an awesome feeling!" (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Another key to their teacher retention decisions is the opportunity to work with and collaborate with a strong team of teachers each day. The teachers placed Statement 14 "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers around curriculum" in the +3 column. Factor One placed this statement in the +2 column, but Factor Three placed this statement in the -1 column. Teachers want to feel support

Table 16

Factor Two, High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card	Statement
+4	25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.
+4	8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.
+4	29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.
+3	12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.
+3	14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.
+3	20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.
+3	9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.
-3	39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).
-3	30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.
-3	27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.
-3	34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.
-4	11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.
-4	31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.
-4	1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.

from their teammates and see their grade level team as the ones that can truly understand what they experience each day in the classroom. Participant 11 stated, “I wouldn’t be where I am without my team. I would be lost. It would be miserable for me to come to work every day and not get along with my team” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). Participant 4 related a personal experience that she felt had made this element so important to her when she said, “My team gives me ideas and suggestions, and they understand what I do. My husband isn’t a teacher, so I can’t talk to him about what I do. He doesn’t understand where I’m coming from, but my team does. When I first started teaching, I had a strong teacher in my grade level who took me under her wing and mentored me to make sure that I was successful in what I was doing. Without my team, I wouldn’t be where I am today” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

Being treated as a knowledgeable professional by administration is also important. An administrator should serve as a role model to teachers and show teachers that administration supports the decisions that teachers make in their classrooms each day. Participant 26 said, “We need lots of positive feedback as well. It’s so easy to dwell on the negative and to get caught up in the negative. Everybody wants a pat on the back every now and then- it makes you feel good. We are constantly told by administration that we need to focus on the positive. Just like a parent doesn’t want to hear all of the negatives about their child and needs to hear some positives, teachers need to hear that we are doing a good job and to be commended on the things we are doing well” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

To these teachers, teaching is a calling for them, and everything they do in a classroom is for the betterment of children. One of the distinguishing statements for this factor was statement 20, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.” Factor Two placed this statement in the +3 column in the model factor array,

whereas this statement was placed in the 0 and +1 columns for Factor One and Factor Three, respectively. Participant 26 stated, “I feel that teaching is a job that you have to have a passion for. This is something that I love, and I feel that this makes a difference in teachers” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 4 elaborated on the definition of “student-centered” by adding, “Student-centered means that I am trying to meet the needs of ALL of my students and not just one group. Everyone deserves to grow, and I worry that I don’t do enough for my higher students sometimes” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). Participant 11 added, “It also means being culturally aware of what is important to your students and trying to make connections to what they like and are interested in when learning” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

Each day these teachers look for what they can do to make a student’s life better. They are constantly examining the practices they use to find ways to reach every student that they work with, and they seek advice from their colleagues and in research to find new strategies to use with students. To provide more insight, Participant 26 stated, “While I know that some students learn differently than others, it still bothers me when students do not grow. It does not make me not like teaching; however, it does bother me. I worry that I could have done something different” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). They feel that they take their students home with them every day, often wondering and worrying about what they can do better or differently to reach a child in their classroom. Participant 26 added, “I take my students home with me every day. On the weekends I sometimes feel like I can’t even enjoy my weekends because I’m constantly thinking about my students and thinking about and researching ways to reach my students” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

The key to understanding the values of Factor Two can be further explained by the statements placed in the -4 column in the model factor array. Statement 1 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary” was placed in the -4 column in the model factor array and served as a distinguishing statement for this factor as Factor One and Factor Three both placed this statement in the 0 column. These teachers do not teach for the money or for recognition. They are driven to teach for the difference they can make in students’ lives. Participant 25 provided insight by saying, “Recognition is not important; student success is. If I was in it for the salary, I would have another job. I simply love kids and watching them learn” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). This view was shared by Participant 26 who added, “This job is something you have to be passionate about. I am in this because I love children. I do not want any recognition. It makes me feel good to know the difference I am making” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 27 summed up this viewpoint best when she wrote, “I love my job and would continue teaching as long as it paid just enough to cover the bills” (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Teaching is a highly rewarding and satisfying profession, but for the teachers on Factor Two, the rewards are not tangible. Seeing the impact that they have on students is what keeps them teaching each day. Participant 4 highlighted this through sharing a personal experience, “I love when students come back and share that I did something to change their life for the better. I recently saw one of my former students. He shared with me that he was going into the military and that the impact I had on him had turned his life around from where it was previously headed. You can’t buy that feeling! These are the rewards that keep me in teaching, and it makes me feel like I did something right” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

Factor Three: Education Matters

Thirteen of the study's thirty participants loaded significantly onto Factor Three accounting for 19% of the explained variation. Table 17 provides an overview of the demographics for the participants that loaded onto Factor Three. Twelve of the participants were female, and one participant was male. Ten participants were Caucasian, and three participants were African-American. Two participants were in the 20-30 age range, one participant was in the 31-40 age range, six participants were in the 41-50 age range, and four participants were in the 51+ age range. Of note, there were fourteen participants total that were aged 41+ in the study. Of the fourteen, ten, or 71%, of these participants loaded onto Factor Three. When looking at experience, there were two participants with 0-5 years of experience, three participants with 11-15 years of experience, four participants with 16-20 years of experience, three participants with 21-25 years of experience, and one participant with 26+ years of experience. Of note, there were twelve total participants in the study with sixteen or more years of experience. Eight participants, or 67%, loaded onto Factor Three meaning that the participants with more experience tended to load onto this factor.

Table 18 shows the Z-scores and mean placement of each statement for Factor One. With a Z-score of 2.1228 Statement 25, "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives," represents the statement with the highest level of agreement among participants who loaded on Factor Three. Since this statement has the highest level of agreement among the participants for this factor, this statement is placed as the first statement in the +4 column. The statements then continue in descending order to the statement with the lowest Z-score of -1.713 with Statement 33, "The decision to remain a teacher is most

Table 17

Participants Loading Significantly on Factor Three

Participant	Gender	Ethnicity	Age Range	Years Experience	Teacher Preparation Program	Area(s) of Licensure	Current Grade Taught
P1	female	African-American	41-50	16-20	Traditional	Elementary	5 th
P2	female	Caucasian	41-50	26+	Traditional	Reading, Principal	5 th
P6	female	African-American	51+	21-25	Traditional	Principal	4 th
P7	female	Caucasian	41-50	16-20	Traditional	K-12 PE	K-5
P10	female	Caucasian	51+	16-20	Traditional	Speech	K-5
P13	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	1 st
P14	female	African-American	31-40	11-15	Lateral Entry	Elementary, Special Ed	1 st
P15	female	Caucasian	20-30	0-5	Traditional	Elementary	1 st
P17	female	Caucasian	41-50	11-15	Lateral Entry	Elementary	2 nd
P19	female	Caucasian	41-50	16-20	Traditional	Elementary	3 rd
P22	female	Caucasian	51+	21-25	Traditional	Elementary, Birth-K	3 rd
P23	female	Caucasian	41-50	11-15	Traditional	Elementary	3 rd
P29	male	Caucasian	51+	21-25	Traditional	Elementary, 9-12 Science	9-12

Table 18

Factor Three, Normalized Factor Scores

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	2.1228	+4
8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	1.945	+4
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	1.712	+4
29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	1.600	+3
23	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.	1.449	+3
24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	1.177	+3
7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	1.118	+3
5	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	1.116	+2
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	0.794	+2
21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	0.756	+2
4	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	0.608	+2
12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	0.599	+2
16	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	0.585	+1

Table 18 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	0.469	+1
9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	0.423	+1
20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	0.408	+1
17	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	0.382	+1
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	0.348	+1
28	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	0.337	0
36	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	0.250	0
6	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	0.090	0
37	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	0.039	0
19	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	-0.121	0
1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	-0.122	0
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	-0.210	0
31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	-0.267	0
30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	-0.301	-1

Table 18 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	-0.388	-1
18	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	-0.536	-1
41	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	-0.720	-1
3	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to build relationships with other teachers in the district.	-0.755	-1
22	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	-0.790	-1
13	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve teaching.	-0.811	-2
11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	-0.830	-2
44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	-0.901	-2
27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	-0.967	-2
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-1.056	-2
32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	-1.059	-3
10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	-1.225	-3
15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	-1.272	-3

Table 18 (continued)

Cards	Statements	Z-Scores	Scores
26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	-1.319	-3
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	-1.435	-4
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	-1.533	-4
33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	-1.713	-4

impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher,” falling into the -4 column.

Figure 8 is a model factor array for Factor Three. A model sort is configured based on the Z-scores of each statement after factor extraction and rotation. The model sort represents the viewpoint as a whole of the participants around the topic of teacher retention factors based on a statistical analysis of the Q sorts of participants loading onto Factor Three. Statements in the +4 column correspond to the three statements with the highest Z-scores from Table 18. The three statements with the lowest Z-scores were placed in the -4 column. The model array is the basis for data interpretation and served as a springboard for discussion during post-sort focus groups.

Table 19 highlights the statements with the highest and lowest Z-scores for Factor Three. These statements were all placed into the +4, +3, -3, and -4 columns on the model factor array. Statements in the +4 and +3 column are most representative of the shared viewpoints of the participants loaded on Factor Three. These statements represent the factors that are most important to the participants on Factor Three in regards to their teacher retention decisions.

Common themes that emerged for Factor Three were seeing the impact of teaching on students, the ability to maintain a work-life balance, and a belief in the value of education in society. For the teachers on this factor, they are driven to continue teaching based on the impact they have on society through changing students' lives, and they need to see the impact they have in some form. For these teachers, education impacts each child's future, and they see it as their job to make sure that each child sees the value in their education. Statement 7 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society” was a distinguishing statement for this factor. This statement was placed in the +3 column in the model factor array for Factor Three but was placed in the +1 column for Factors One and Two. These

Least Important		Little/Neutral Importance					Most Important	
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
42	32	13	30	28	16	5	29	25
2	10	11	14	36	34	40	33	8
33	15	44	18	6	9	21	24	38
	26	27	41	37	20	4	7	
		43	3	19	17	12		
			22	1	39			
				35				
				31				

Figure 8. Factor three model sort.

Table 19

Factor Three, High-Positive and High-Negative Statements

Score	Card	Statement
+4	25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.
+4	8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.
+4	38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.
+3	29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.
+3	23	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the perceived impact a teacher has on students.
+3	24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.
+3	7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.
-3	32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.
-3	10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.
-3	15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.
-3	26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.
-4	42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.
-4	2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.
-4	33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.

teachers believe that education is the key to future success for students and has the potential to change how a student views the world. Participant 15 noted, “I love children and have always wanted to work with them. I love knowing that you can change the way a child views the world, and they may only hear kind words from you” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 2 added, “Making a difference can be crucial to the child’s future, even when academic success is limited” (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

These teachers believe that education is the key to changing societal ills, and that education is the most valuable gift that can be given to another. The teachers on this factor teach in the hopes that they are able to change the way a child views himself or the world and that the children they teach will view education as the key to taking control of where their life goes. Participant 29 stated, “Education is the most important thing you can give someone. Without an education, you can’t function. With an education you have more opportunities and can do better in life” (personal communication, February 1, 2017). Participant 23 added further insight by saying, “I think of the book *Three Cups of Tea* when I think about the value of education. Society is dependent on education to be civilized. The answer to violence and poverty is education. The only way to break the cycle of poverty is education. Your education is something that can never be taken away from you” (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

For Factor Three teaching isn’t a job, but a profession. There is an art to teaching that others don’t understand, and not everyone can be a teacher. These teachers know that they have done their job when they are able to change the way a student views the world. Participant 29 stated, “Teaching is a profession, not just a job. You go to a job to pay bills, and anyone can do it. A profession is something you have to work hard at to attain and become good. I teach to make a difference by exposing kids to ideas and a way of thinking they may have never been

exposed to. I'm trying to plant ideas like teachers took the time to do with me" (personal communication, February 1, 2017). Participant 23 added, "I know that I am having an impact on students when I am able to change how they view themselves and how they value their education" (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

The majority of teachers that loaded onto this factor were above the age of forty and had more than 15 years of experience. As such, achieving a work-life balance is very important as many of these teachers have families and are trying to balance the demands of family life and work. Statement 38 "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance" was placed in the +4 column in the model factor array. This was a distinguishing statement for this factor as this statement was placed in the +1 and 0 columns of the model factor arrays for Factor One and Factor Two, respectively. Participant 14 elaborated on this point by saying, "When work life begins to negatively affect my home life, I will have to change. I want to love the job, no matter the pay. However, when I have a family, I know the aspect of salary might change that" (personal communication, December 15, 2016). Participant 23 elaborated on the importance of having a work-life balance by saying, "Experience has taught me the importance of a work-life balance. The first few years that I taught, before I was married and had a family, I worked all the time. Now that I have a family, my life is more balanced. I can't give everything I have to my students at school and have nothing left to give to my own family and children" (personal communication, February 1, 2017).

As the majority of the teachers that loaded onto this factor were older and more experienced, having a high quality mentor and participating in a beginning teacher induction program have little impact on their decision to remain in teaching. Participant 29 stated, "I have

been teaching for more than twenty years. I don't have or need a mentor or an induction program" (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Another distinguishing statement for Factor Three was Statement 42, "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession." For Factor Three this statement was placed in the -4 column in the model factor array. However this statement was placed in column +1 and -1 in the model factor arrays for Factor One and Factor Two, respectively. For these teachers, they want to work with children, and they have no desire to obtain opportunities for leadership within the school or to seek opportunities for advancement. For them their satisfaction comes from making a difference in the lives of students. Participant 14 stated, "I am not looking for advancement because I enjoy working with children and seeing them when they realize they have learned something that may have been difficult" (personal communication, December 15, 2016). This sentiment was echoed by Participant 29 who stated, "I just want to teach, no advancement. I like to work with students and help them develop life skills" (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 provided a summary and analysis of the data that was collected for this study. Data were collected from thirty teachers currently employed at the same elementary school in a rural school district located in northeastern North Carolina. Participants provided input on the elements of the teaching profession that most impact their decisions to remain in the teaching profession through a Q sort in which participants sorted 44 statements based on how impactful the statements were on their decision to remain a teacher. Q sorts were statistically analyzed,

and three distinct factors emerged based on this analysis. A sampling of teachers loading significantly onto each factor participated in post sort focus groups to provide further insight into the values, beliefs, and experiences of teachers that have made these elements so important to teachers as well as providing insight into what these elements look like in practice.

Chapter 5 will provide an overview of the findings from this study to include a discussion of findings supported by current literature and a discussion of the implications of the findings on further research, policy, and practice.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined current teachers' perceptions of the elements of the teaching profession that most impact their decision to remain a teacher. Previous chapters presented a review of the current literature around the topic of teacher retention, provided an overview of the methodology utilized in the study, presented a summary of the data generated from participant Q sorts and focus group interviews, and provided an analysis of the three viewpoints that emerged from the factor analysis. Chapter 5 aims to re-analyze the findings of chapter 4 through the lens of current research, practices, and policies. Literature reviewed in chapter 2 will be used to ascertain if current literature reflects the findings from this study, if new findings emerged, and to determine opportunities for further research based on the findings of this study. This chapter also aims to analyze the relevance and significance of the study's findings through the lens of current practices and policies in education and potential implications of the findings on educational practice and policy.

In chapter 4 three distinct viewpoints emerged based on a factor analysis. Factor One emphasized the role school-level administrators play in teacher retention decisions, particularly for newer teachers. The administrator is viewed as a role model and support system for teachers. Clear, fair, and consistent expectations by administration get the whole school working towards a goal of improvement and are key in creating an environment in which teachers want to work.

Themes that emerged for Factor Two revolved around the role of a student-centered environment and collaboration. Teachers want to have an impact on students' lives and see growth in students. Collaboration is important to these teachers as it allows the opportunity for teachers to find ways to improve their practice and to have a greater impact on the students they teach.

For Factor Three common themes were the importance of a work-life balance and the value of education in society. These teachers see education as the hallmark of a civilized society and as the key to changing the cycle of poverty that many students are born into. However, experience has also taught these teachers the importance of finding a balance between the demands of their home and work lives in order to ensure that needs are met in both places.

Study Findings through the Lens of Literature

This section seeks to connect the literature review findings from Chapter 2 and the findings from the current study. There were findings from this study that were consistent with current literature on the topic of teacher retention as well as findings that were inconsistent with current literature, and this section seeks to explore those consistencies and inconsistencies. There are many factors that impact a teacher's decision to remain in the profession, and this study provides empirical research of what matters to teachers. The findings of this study in comparison to current literature will be analyzed through the lens of consensus and distinguishing statements. Consensus statements are statements from the Q sort that were placed in highly statistically similar locations regardless of who sorted the statements. There were eight consensus statements among participants that will be explored below. Distinguishing statements are defined as those statements that are placed in statistically different locations for one factor versus another. These serve to provide greater insight and clarity into the perspectives and values of the participants on each factor.

Distinguishing Statements

After factor rotation, each factor had elements that emerged as distinguishing statements. This means that there were statements that were placed in a statistically significant different column from the other factors. For example, statement 35 "The decision to remain a teacher is

most impacted by feeling physically safe at work” was placed in the +3 column for Factor One, but this same statement was placed in the -1 and 0 columns for Factor Two and Factor Three, respectively. For the participants loading onto Factor One feeling safe is a high priority when it comes to their decision to remain a teacher, but this element holds significantly less weight for the participants loading onto Factors Two and Three. All of the distinguishing statements for each factor can be seen in Tables 20, 21, and 22.

There were multiple studies reviewed that pointed to the important role that school-level administrators play in teacher retention decisions (Allen, 2005; Boyd et al., 2011; Brown & Wynn, 2009; Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004; Ingersoll, 2002a). This study supported the finding that administrative support is critical to teacher retention. The teachers in this study emphasized the importance of having an administrator that is fair and consistent, provides support to teachers, serves as a role model, and helps teachers to improve their instructional performance, all of which were supported by the research reviewed for this study. This study emphasized the importance of administrative support; however, administrative support was defined in different ways for different teachers. Some viewed administrative support as an administrator that addresses student discipline issues once a teacher has exhausted their resources. Others viewed support as an administrator that provided praise to teachers when they saw teachers doing good things in their classrooms. Still others defined support as an administrator that served as an instructional resource and as a mentor that can guide teachers in specific strategies to improve as a practitioner.

The role of administration clearly sets Factor One apart from the other factors and provides strong empirical evidence that administration is a critical component of teacher retention as can be seen by the placement of statements 17, 21, and 18. The teachers loading onto

Table 20

Factor One Distinguishing Statements

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
17	The decision to remain a teacher I most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	+4	+2	+1
21	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that applies policies in a fair and consistent manner.	+3	+1	+2
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	+3	-1	0
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	+2	-3	+1
25	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by seeing the difference made in students' lives.	+2	+4	+2
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	+2	+3	-1
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	+1	-1	-4
18	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an administrator that creates a shared vision for the school.	+1	0	-1
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	+1	0	+4
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	0	-2	-4
27	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with district policies and procedures.	0	-3	-2

Table 20 (continued)

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
24	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students' academic success.	0	+2	+3
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-1	-2	+2
36	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of control a teacher has over the work environment.	-1	0	0
37	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the curricular support received.	-1	+1	0
5	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students.	-2	+2	+2
44	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration.	-3	-1	-2
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-4	-4	+1
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-4	-1	-2

Table 21

Factor Two Distinguishing Statements

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	+2	+3	-1
20	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment.	0	+3	+1
17	The decision to remain a teacher I most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	+4	+2	+1
22	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being part of a professional learning community.	-2	+1	-1
32	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the professional development that is received.	-3	0	-3
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	+1	0	+4
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	+1	-1	-4
10	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities for leadership in the school.	-3	-1	-3
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-4	-1	-2
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	+3	-1	0
33	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the induction program that a teacher participated in as a beginning teacher.	-4	-2	-4
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	0	-2	-4

Table 21 (continued)

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-1	-2	+2
4	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address.	+1	-2	+2
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-4	-3	+1
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	+2	-3	+1
31	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling respected by the community.	-1	-4	0
1	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by salary.	0	-4	0

Table 22

Factor Three Distinguishing Statements

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
38	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability to maintain a work-life balance.	+1	0	+4
7	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the belief in the value of education in society.	+1	+1	+3
40	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the retirement benefits that a teacher will receive at the end of their career.	-1	-2	+2
12	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the school administrator treating the teacher as a professional.	+4	+3	+2
34	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the job stability the job affords.	+2	-3	+1
9	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having high levels of administrative support.	+3	+3	+1
17	The decision to remain a teacher I most impacted by having an administrator that is actively working to improve the school.	+4	+2	+1
39	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the breaks that are received throughout the year (summer, holidays, etc.).	-4	-3	+1
35	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by feeling physically safe at work.	+3	-1	0
30	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the rigor of the teaching profession.	-2	-3	-1
14	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about curriculum.	+2	+3	-1

Table 22 (continued)

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
13	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the ability of an administrator to provide specific feedback to improve instruction.	+1	+1	-2
43	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.	-4	-1	-2
15	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having opportunities to collaborate with other teachers about pedagogy.	-1	0	-3
26	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's agreement with state policies and procedures.	-2	-2	-3
42	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the opportunities for advancement in the profession.	+1	-1	-4
2	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having a high quality mentor.	0	-2	-4

this factor are looking for a strong administrator that sets the tone for the school and serves as a role model for professionalism and high instructional standards that these teachers can support and follow. However, it is important to note that the teachers on this factor clearly want to view their administrator as a professional role model and not as a friend as seen by the placement of statement 44, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by being known personally by administration,” in the -3 column.

Safety was another distinguishing statement for this factor as the teachers want to know that they are safe and will not be harmed when they come to work. This also goes back to the role of the principal as they see the principal as being responsible for supporting teachers with classroom management decisions and ensuring that problem behaviors are addressed in a way that will ensure a safe classroom environment not just for students but for the teachers as well. The teachers loading onto this factor are the teachers that are more likely to seek opportunities for advancement in the profession as can be seen by the placement of statement 42, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by opportunities for advancement”. Factor One was the only factor to place this statement in the positive with a rating of +1. Factors Two and Three rated this statement as -1 and -4, respectively.

For Factor One, all but one of the teachers loading onto this factor had six or less years of teaching experience which could explain why these participants placed statements 2, 27, 39, and 40 in very different columns from the other two factors. These statements revolve around the role of a mentor, retirement benefits, breaks received throughout the year, and agreement with district policies and procedures in teacher retention decisions. These statements fell in the 0 column for Factor One. As these are less experienced teachers, a high quality mentor would be much more important to them than to more experienced teachers as well as the importance of agreement with

district policies and procedures. While Factor One placed both of these statements in the 0 column, both of these statements were placed in the negative columns for the other factors. Since teacher attrition rates are highest among teachers in their first five years of teaching, mentoring support was shown to be a crucial factor in increasing teacher retention with this group of teachers (Allen, 2005; Alliance for Education, 2008; Ingersoll, 2002a). However, this finding was not supported by this study. One of the limitations of this finding is that this study included only six teachers within their first five years of teaching. If this study were to be conducted solely with teachers within their first five years of teaching, it is possible that the findings could be different.

Age and experience could also explain the placement of statement 40 about retirement benefits. As these are primarily younger and less experienced teachers, they have not necessarily reached a point in their lives in which they are thinking about retirement which could explain why this factor fell in the -1 column for Factor One. However, this factor was rated much higher for Factor Three which consisted primarily of teachers with more than fifteen years of experience and over the age of 40.

Of interesting note is the placement of statements 24, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by students’ academic success,” and statement 5, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of motivation of students,” for Factor One. Statement 24 was placed in the 0 column for Factor One, but it was placed in the +2 and +3 columns for the other factors. Additionally, Factor One placed statement 5 in the -2 column, but this statement was placed in the +2 column for the other factors. Many of their students come to them with significant academic deficits working several years below grade level with troubled home lives. For these students, they are not likely to show grade level proficiency in a short period of time,

so success for these teachers is not measured by the percent of their students who score proficient on end of grade assessments. These teachers are more focused on teaching their students social and emotional coping skills to help their students move beyond circumstances that cannot be controlled by the children. Ingersoll (2002b) found that the level of student discipline issues that a teacher deals with on a daily basis can directly impact teacher retention decisions. This finding is supported by the findings of this study for the teachers on Factors One and Three, but not for the teachers loading onto Factor Two.

An additional distinguishing statement for Factor One is the placement of statement 43, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the knowledge that colleagues know you personally.” Factor One placed this statement in the -4 column whereas this statement was placed in the -1 and -2 columns for the other factors. For these teachers, they see their job as a profession, and they come to work each day for the relationships that they are able to build with students rather than with adults in their building.

Distinguishing statements for Factor Two highlighted the importance of opportunities for collaboration with other teachers, seeing the difference made in students’ lives, working in a student-centered environment, and being part of a professional learning community as seen by the placement of statements 14, 20, and 22. The findings of this study provided strong support for the findings of Ingersoll (2002b) showing that opportunities for collaboration have a significant level of impact on teacher retention decisions. For the teachers participating in this study, collaboration was identified as being critical to the success of teachers, especially for those teachers who are not as experienced or who have recently changed grades or subjects taught. Peers were seen as a resource to help ensure the success of teachers and as a resource for ideas and instructional strategies. The teachers loading onto this factor actively seek

opportunities to collaborate with their peers and view their success as a teacher as dependent upon the support they are able to receive from their peers as seen by the placement of statement 14 regarding opportunities to collaborate in the +3 column. They attribute their success as teachers to the support that they received early in their careers from other more experienced teachers, and they hope to show this same support to other teachers over time. They view their school as a professional learning community in which teachers should learn from the experiences and ideas of others. No one person can know everything, but collectively, teachers are able to find ideas and strategies to try in their classrooms to help reach students more effectively.

Teachers on this factor placed statement 32 regarding professional development in the 0 column whereas this statement was placed in the -3 column for both of the other factors. While a rating of 0 places this in the neutral column, professional development for these teachers is viewed as the opportunity to learn from others and as the opportunity to learn a new method to reach students. Professional development can increase a teacher's effectiveness and ability to impact students' lives.

The teachers on Factor Two rated statement 14, "The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by working in a student-centered environment," as +3; whereas, the other two factors rated this element as 0 and +1. For these teachers, the students are why they come to work each day, and they are truly in the profession for the kids. They are willing to do whatever it takes to connect with students, and each day they strive to create a lasting impression on a child. For them, every decision in the school has to be focused on what is best for students and creating an environment where students can learn and grow. While many teachers can become frustrated and overwhelmed with low performing students or behavior problems, these teachers simply see these as challenges to be overcome, and they are constantly searching for and seeking ways to

overcome barriers to reach their students. This can be seen by the placement of statement 4, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the amount of student behavior problems a teacher has to address,” which was placed in the -2 column, whereas this statement was placed in the +1 and +2 columns for the other two factors.

Greater insight can be gained for this factor when looking at distinguishing statements that fell into the -2, -3, and -4 columns. These teachers truly went into the job wanting to make a difference in the lives of students, and they do not seek rewards of any kind whether they are in the form of retirement benefits, job stability, respect from the community, or even monetary. Statement 14 regarding respect from the community was placed in the -4 column for this factor, but it was placed in the -1 and 0 columns for the other factors. Additionally statement 1 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impact by salary” was rated as -4 for Factor Two but was given a rating of 0 by both of the other factors. These teachers entered the profession for purely altruistic reasons, and they seek nothing in return other than the hope of making a lasting, positive impact on the life of a child. They will teach no matter what the salary is because to them the reward of the job is having students whose lives were changed for the better because of what the teacher was able to do for the students in their care.

While a review of current literature found that many teachers report that salary is a factor in their decision to leave the teaching profession, this study found that salary is not as critical of a factor on teacher retention decisions. Darling-Hammond (2003), Allen (2005), and Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) found that in many cases teacher working conditions were able to overcome the negative effects of a low salary. In this study, these teachers entered the teaching profession knowing what their salary would be and that they would never be truly compensated for all of the hours they invest into the preparation required to teach each day. For the teachers

loading onto Factor Two, salary actually had the lowest rating of all the elements that impact their decision to remain in education. For these teachers, the rewards are not tangible, and they will continue to teach no matter what they are paid so long as they feel they have made a difference in the life of even one child.

Distinguishing statements for Factor Three elucidated the themes of a work-life balance, the importance of students' academic success, and the value of education in society. These statements were all rated in the +3 and +4 columns for this factor but were rated significantly lower for the other factors. Factor Three rated the value of education in society as one of the top reasons they remain in the profession showing direct support for the findings of Loeb, Elfers, Michael, and Plecki (2004). For the teachers loading onto this factor, education is the key to creating a more ideal society, and only through education does one become able to overcome the circumstances in which they were born. These teachers see teaching as the means through which they are able to change the world. To them teaching is not just about the relationships formed with students, but it is about giving students the academic tools they need in order to navigate the path of their choosing in life. To teach students social-emotional skills is not merely enough. In order to take control of their lives, students have to have specific academic skills, and without these skills, students cannot be successful in life. These teachers see it as their moral responsibility to ensure that students have the education they need in order to make wise decisions about where their life will go.

The majority of teachers with more than fifteen years of experience and over the age of forty loaded onto this factor. The influence of age and experience can be seen in the starkly different placement of statements 38, 40, and 39 as compared to the other factors. These statements look at the elements of work-life balance, retirement benefits, and the breaks that are

received throughout the year. Experience has taught them the importance of finding a balance between the demands of home life and the demands of work. Without finding a balance, they are unable to adequately meet the needs of both places. Breaks throughout the year also provide these teachers the time to re-charge and re-energize for a job that can be emotionally draining while also providing the opportunity to have more time with family.

The placement of statements 14, 13, and 15 regarding opportunities for collaboration and administrative feedback further elucidate the wisdom of experience. They are experienced enough to feel confident in their teaching styles, and they also know where to look or who to ask if they do not know what to do. Collaboration and instructional growth are important to them; however, they don't need structured opportunities for this in order to continue doing what they do each day in a classroom. Further insight into Factor Three is the placement of statement 42 regarding opportunities for advancement and statement 2 regarding a high quality mentor in the 4 column. They are experienced enough that they no longer need a mentor. They have also been in the profession long enough to know that they have no desire to be administrators.

Consensus Statements

After factor rotation, there were eight factors that emerged as consensus statements. These are statements that were placed in statistically similar locations across all three factors. Table 23 shows each of the eight consensus statements and where these statements were placed in the model factor arrays for each factor. There were three statements that all three factors rated as high positives. These were statements 8, 16, and 29. These three statements reflect the desire to work with children, the importance of trust, and wanting to feel high levels of job satisfaction. Often teachers enter the teaching profession for altruistic reasons such as a desire to work with children (Loeb et al., 2004). The consensus statements for this study

Table 23

Consensus Statements

Card	Statement	Factor One Values	Factor Two Values	Factor Three Values
8	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the desire to work with children.	4	4	4
29	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by a teacher feeling high levels of satisfaction in the job.	3	4	3
16	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by having an atmosphere of trust in the school.	2	2	1
28	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher's interest in the subject that they teach.	0	1	0
19	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school.	0	0	0
6	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school.	0	0	0
41	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school.	-2	-1	-1
11	The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition.	-3	-4	-2

supported the finding that teachers typically enter the profession based on a desire to work with children. All of the teachers rated the desire to work with children as one of the top reasons that they remain in the teaching profession. They are driven to teach by the desire to work with children and wanting to feel that they are making a difference in the lives of the children they teach. Participant 3 stated, “Every child comes to us with a different story and even though some may not soar academically, I hope to make a major difference in making their life more positive. You have to have a love for children to want to be a teacher” (personal communication, December 15, 2016).

When teachers feel that they are able to help a child to be successful and to have a positive impact on the life of a child, then they feel high levels of satisfaction with what they do each day. The findings from this study emphasized the high levels of job satisfaction that teachers receive from simply working with children and knowing that they are making a lasting impact on a child’s life. However, what this means and looks like in practice to each factor is slightly different. While all participants want to work with children, there are other factors that work in combination with this factor that creates a sense of satisfaction and impacts participants’ decisions to remain in the education profession.

Statements 6 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by how involved a teacher is in the decision making/problem solving processes of the school”, 19 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by teachers having meaningful relationships with staff members in their school”, and 28 “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the teacher’s interest in the subject they teach” were all placed in the zero column with the exception of statement 28 which was placed in the +1 column for Factor 2 only. These statements were supported by multiple research studies such as Brown and Wynn (2009), Boyd et al. (2011),

Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004), Ingersoll (2003), and Lynch (2010). However, the placement of these statements by participants means that for each factor these statements fall into the neutral zone. While these factors may be important to participants, they are not necessarily the tipping point that teacher retention decisions are based on. Participant 3 stated, “It’s good to have relationships with colleagues, but them knowing me personally has nothing to do with my teaching ability” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). While each statement has research to support its relevance to teacher retention decisions, the findings from this study show that these factors are not necessarily factors that are highly correlated to teacher retention decisions for the participants in this study. Since these elements fell into the neutral zone, further research could be done to determine if these factors are more highly correlated with teachers choosing to change schools or districts rather than teachers’ decisions to remain in the teaching profession.

Statement 11, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by receiving work-related recognition,” and statement 41, “The decision to remain a teacher is most impacted by the level of parent involvement at the school,” were high negative statements for all participants. The teachers in this study seek neither fame nor fortune in their profession. They knowingly chose the teaching profession with the understanding that they would never be wealthy and knowing that they would never be famous for what they do each day. Participant 12 stated, “I do not teach in hopes of awards; I teach to make a difference” (personal communication, December 15, 2016). This sentiment was echoed by Participant 26 who said, “I am in this because I love children. I do not want any recognition. It makes me feel good to know the difference I am making” (personal communication, December 16, 2016). For these teachers, seeing the impact they have on a child’s life each day is the reward they need to keep teaching. While it is always

nice to receive rewards and to be recognized for what teachers do each day, teachers do not continue working for rewards from others. To them the relationships that are formed with students and seeing the long-term impact they have had on a student's life are more rewarding than any outside recognition ever could be.

As for parent involvement, teachers want more involvement from parents, but parent involvement is not a key factor in teacher retention decisions. Participant 14 elaborated on this by saying, "Parent involvement makes the job easier. I just wish there was more. Parent involvement is nice, but it doesn't change the way you teach, communicate, or love the children because it isn't their fault" (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

Implications for Research

This study utilized the InQUIRY process to collect and analyze data on current teachers' perceptions of the elements of the teaching profession that most impact their decision to remain in the teaching profession. While this study revealed common factors among the groups of teachers participating in the study, there are still opportunities for further research based on the findings of this study. The following are potential areas for further research:

- One of the limitations of this study is that all of the participating teachers in this study are currently employed at the same elementary school in one school district. The findings of this study could be strengthened by repeating this study with other teachers currently employed in this district at the middle and high school levels. The findings could also be expanded by conducting this study in other districts across the state of North Carolina for comparison.
- This study only contained participants currently employed as teachers. An alternate study could be conducted with a P sample that includes only teachers that chose to

leave the teaching profession preretirement. These findings could then be compared to the findings of the current study for the purposes of highlighting any similarities or differences among the two P samples.

- Future research could also be conducted with school-level and district-level administrators by having these administrators to sort the statements from the current study's Q sample as they think the teachers in their current buildings or districts would sort these statements. These findings could then be compared to the findings of the current study for any similarities and differences.
- Participants for this study varied in experience levels. Often the needs of teachers change as they gain more experience, and the highest rates of turnover are for teachers within their first five years of teaching. This study could be repeated with a P sample comprised only of teachers within their first five years of teaching to see if their values and perceptions are similar to or different from the findings of the current study.
- During the Q sort process participants were asked to consider how the elements of the teaching profession impacted their decision to remain in the teaching profession. However, when teachers choose to change schools and districts, the turnover can still be disruptive to schools even if the teachers choose to remain in the teaching profession. Additional studies focusing solely on the question of what values and perceptions cause teachers to choose to leave a school or district could provide deeper insight into district and school level policies that could increase teacher retention in specific schools and districts.

- The element of administrative support arose as a common theme during post sort questionnaires and focus groups as well as the importance of the school administrator in general on teacher retention decisions. Focusing on defining what administrative support looks like in practice from teachers' perspectives would be an area for additional studies.
- In this study there was an overwhelming agreement among teachers that they teach due to a strong desire to work with children and to make a difference in the life of a child. For each teacher making a difference can be defined as many things, creating an opportunity for additional research focused on fleshing out how teachers define student impact and student success. What do teachers see as their purpose for teaching, and what is the impact that they hope to make on students?
- While this study identified three distinct viewpoints, younger and less experienced teachers tended to cluster onto Factor One, and older more experienced teachers tended to cluster onto Factor Three. It would be interesting to conduct this study with the same group of younger teachers over a period of several years to see if their perspectives change over time.

Implications for Policy

Teachers enter the profession knowing that they will never be paid for the true value of their profession. Salary simply is not a factor that keeps teachers in the teaching profession. Yet, many state level policies and discussions focus on the issue of whether or not to increase teacher pay, especially for beginning teachers. No teacher is ever going to argue with an increase in their base salaries, but for the teachers currently in the teaching profession, the findings from this study showed that salary is not the make or break factor when it comes to teacher retention

decisions. However, it is possible that salary is a factor for recruiting new teachers into the profession as well as a factor for teacher mobility across districts. Many district-level policies for teacher recruitment focus on providing salary supplements to entice teachers to teach in particular districts. There are even additional financial incentives offered for teachers willing to teach in high needs schools and subject areas as well as financial incentives for teachers who are willing to assume extra duties in the school. While these incentives may work as a means of recruiting teachers into the profession, particularly for younger and more mobile teachers, this is not necessarily an incentive that is likely to increase teacher retention rates based on the findings from this study. Policymakers need to thoughtfully consider any policies aimed at financial incentives and whether financial incentives will achieve desired goals.

The findings of this study clearly indicated that administrative support is a key factor in teacher retention decisions, but this support is defined in different ways. For many of the participants in this study, administrative support was defined as having an administrator that assists teachers with discipline issues in the classroom. In terms of policy Positive Behavior Intervention Support, also known as PBIS, has been implemented state-wide as a part of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. However, training on PBIS is often limited to only a few staff members in a school, and administrators are not always included in this training either. Districts need to find ways to ensure that all staff members in a school have access to this training and the support offered to manage student behaviors school-wide and in individual classrooms. Institutes of Higher Education may also want to consider including PBIS trainings as part of teacher preparation and administrator preparation programs.

Many of the teachers in this study shared that they frequently feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of trying to meet the academic needs of all the students in their classrooms. In

focus group interviews, many of the teachers suggested that having more support staff in a school, such as teacher assistants, could ameliorate some of the stress that teachers feel. Policy makers need to keep in mind the role that funding and support staff play in creating school-wide schedules and staffing numbers that allow teachers to have the support of additional adults in the classroom to meet students' needs and allow teachers the opportunity to collaborate during the workday.

Additionally, facilitative leadership skills are crucial for administrators in order to ensure that all stakeholders are involved and on the same page in order to create an environment of cohesiveness within a school. Policymakers and IHEs may want to consider ensuring that training to develop these skills is part of administrator preparation programs.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study showed that younger teachers are interested in opportunities for advancement in their career, but none of the teachers in this study felt that opportunities for leadership within the school were factors critical to their decisions to remain in education. Often teacher retention policies attempt to create paid opportunities for teacher leadership within the school, but according to the teachers in this study, these are not necessarily factors that impact their teacher retention decisions. The majority of the teachers in this study clearly articulated that they were not interested in opportunities for advancement or leadership. In their own words they simply want to work with children. This will be important for school and district level administrators to keep in mind when asking teachers to assume leadership positions within the school. Some teachers may simply not be interested in assuming these roles and may even consider these roles as a burden that negatively impacts their desire to remain teaching. This means that school and district level administrators will need to be aware of which teachers in

their schools and districts are willing and eager to assume these roles and will be productive in such roles.

While collaboration was important to many of the participants in this study, the findings showed that for more experienced teachers this was not as important. This could be due to the fact that more experienced teachers feel more competent in their craft, so collaboration isn't necessarily a key to their success. However, this is an element that is still enjoyed and appreciated by more experienced teachers. For current building level administrators, providing strategic opportunities for productive collaboration among teachers can be essential to creating an environment in which teachers want to work. Younger and less experienced teachers are still trying to explore the many facets of teaching while attempting to build a repertoire of effective strategies they can pull from to be more successful at what they do each day. They rely on the experience of more seasoned teachers to support their efforts and as a sounding board for ideas. School-wide schedules and strategic placement of teachers need to be thoughtfully considered when creating teams of teachers in order to ensure a mix of experience levels on a team as well as ensuring that the personalities of teachers on a team will mesh and work well together.

An overarching theme for many of the teachers in this study was the importance of the role that administrators play in creating an environment in which teachers want to work. While this may look different for each teacher, in general teachers want to feel that they are seen as competent professionals and that their administrator trusts them to make sound decisions in the classroom. Administrators need to be sure to take the time to know what staff members expect of their administrator and to know what staff members define as support.

Administrative support was clearly important to the teachers participating in this study, but administrative support was defined in different ways for different teachers. Some teachers

defined this as support in addressing discipline issues, some defined support as administrative feedback for instructional improvement, and others defined support as having administrators praise teachers when they see the teacher doing something well. Knowing what the teachers in a building define as support and what teachers expect of their administrator can help administrators to establish an environment conducive to meeting the needs of staff.

Particularly in the area of student discipline, teachers want to feel that their administrator understands the issues that teachers face in their classrooms each day and want to see their administrator as a source of support in implementing student consequences and finding solutions to reign in disruptive behaviors. Teachers feel they are held accountable for meeting certain standards and feel that their administrators should be the role model of the standards to which all should be held accountable for maintaining. For discipline administrators need to ensure that all staff in the building are on the same page when defining student behavior issues, and they need to ensure that there are frequent opportunities for staff to work together to define student behaviors and appropriate consequences and to establish procedures to ensure that all staff are on the same page. Often teachers feel that administrators do not support the discipline decisions teachers make in their classrooms, and having open communication in which teachers are part of the process to define student behaviors, consequences, and policies, can help to ameliorate this. Additionally, teachers need access to adequate training to understand how to appropriately manage student behaviors and to understand what they can do to establish a well-managed classroom.

The findings of this study also emphasized the importance of fair and consistent expectations across the school for all students, staff, and parents. School level administrators need to ensure that there are authentic opportunities for input from all stakeholders regarding

policies and practices implemented school-wide as well as ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that all policies and practices are implemented consistently. There also needs to be a frequent revisiting of these policies and procedures to ensure that everyone is consistently enforcing them and to see if they are serving the purpose for which they were established. If it's not working, then find ways to change the system using input from stakeholders.

With the numbers of teachers leaving the profession pre-retirement each year, the issue of teachers exiting the profession is too important to ignore and needs to be addressed. This study provides valuable insights into this issue including those cited in the literature review as well as those outlined above. The findings of this study provide valuable contributions to this issue while clearly indicating that the implications above need to happen and to be addressed.

Chapter Summary

This study was designed to identify the elements of the teaching profession that have the most impact on teacher retention decisions and to understand the perspectives, values, and experiences that shape teachers' perceptions around the importance of these elements. Chapter 5 summarized the key findings of the study and examined the findings through the lenses of current research and implications for future research, practice, and policy.

This study utilized the InQuiry process to answer the study's three research questions. A review of current literature was used to identify elements of the teaching profession that impact teacher retention, and this research review was then used to develop statements for the Q sample. Thirty current teachers then sorted forty-four statements around the topic of teacher retention using a forced choice distribution to show how impactful these statements were on their decision to remain in education. Post sort questionnaires and focus group interviews were used to gain deeper insight into understanding why teachers viewed these elements as essential to their

teacher retention decisions. An analysis of the data collected revealed three distinct viewpoints. One viewpoint emphasized the role of school leadership, another emphasized the importance of students, and the third viewpoint emphasized the value of education in society.

Many of the findings in this study were supported by current literature, but there were opportunities presented for further research. The implications of this study's findings were examined through the lens of educational practices and policies including suggestions based on the findings.

Many people seek vocations that will get them fame or fortune. Surgeons and lawyers go into their respective professions knowing that there is a high likelihood that they will make a lot of money. Ballerinas may not necessarily have a lot of money for what they do, but they will have a lot of fame. However, teachers go into their profession knowing that they will never have a lot of either fame or fortune for what they do each day. Many teachers go into the teaching profession for altruistic reasons, and the one unifying theme for all teachers is the desire to work with and shape the lives of children. Teaching is truly an art, and contrary to popular beliefs, not everyone is cut out to be a teacher. You have to have a passion for what you do because as a teacher, you have the power to change tomorrow through what you do today. Each minute invested into the life of a child holds the possibility of changing the future for that child and for others.

Epilogue

Throughout my career as an educator, I have had the opportunity to work with hundreds of students and educators. As I conducted this study, I wanted to gain more insight into the perspectives of teachers and what drives them to come to work each day. Despite the challenges they face, what keeps them coming back day after day? What I found was a group of passionate

educators that are completely dedicated to changing the lives of children. While they each need to be supported in slightly different ways, ultimately, it all comes down to children for them. Often, I think teachers feel that no one ever asks them what they want or what is important to them. Legislators make laws, and school and district administrators make policies and decisions daily that directly impact the lives of teachers without ever taking the time to truly understand what teachers need and want. The teachers who participated in this study were all eager to have their voices heard, particularly during the focus group interviews. They do not seek monetary gains or rewards and recognition. For them, to see the life of a student change because of something they were able to do in a classroom is all the reward these teachers seek.

My husband and I are both educators, and we both sorted the statements for this study. Based on how we placed the statements, my sort resembles Factor Two, and his resembled Factor Three. For both of us, we never intended to be teachers, but we both dreamed about leaving our mark on the world. We both served in the Peace Corps overseas, and it was through our time in the Peace Corps that we realized our love for working with and teaching others, especially children. There is a quote attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr. that sits on my piano, and I read it every morning, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in great ways." In 2015 the president of Yale used this quote to challenge the student body of Yale to reflect on the King legacy as well as to reflect on their own legacy they leave as they move through life. While teaching may not be an elite career, I know that each day I have the opportunity to impact a life forever.

Through the small things I do each day in a classroom or school, I hope to achieve great impact on the lives of others. As a teacher I wanted every student that I worked with to know that they were loved and for each of my students to see their own potential. Each day as a teacher, I

woke up excited to go to work, and I loved seeing my students learn to overcome challenges. As a literacy coach and as an administrator, I want teachers to love teaching as I much as I do and to see the potential they have to change the lives of others. While I am not doing great things, I try to ensure that the small things I do each day will have great impact on the lives of others.

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APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW TABLE

Citation: APA	Literature Typology	Research Questions	Research Design: Methodology, Procedure, Unit of Analysis & Sample	Main Findings
What is the impact of teacher attrition and retention, and why does it matter?				
<p>Alliance for Education. (2005). Teacher Attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states. Washington, DC: Alliance For Education, Retrieved from http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/TeacherAttrition.pdf.</p>	Conceptual	What is the cost of teacher attrition?	An estimate of the cost of teacher attrition to individual states based on estimates of the number of teachers leaving the profession by Ingersoll and Department of Labor statistics on the cost of attrition to employers	The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) attempted to quantify the dollar amount by examining state staffing numbers based on the annual Schools and Staffing Survey, state turnover estimates based on an analysis by Ingersoll, state teacher salaries, and estimates from the Department of Labor that of attrition costs to employers of approximately 30% of the employee's salary. They estimate the cost of teachers leaving the profession to range from approximately \$3.5 million in North Dakota to \$214 million in Texas. If the cost of teachers that change schools is added to this, the costs jump even higher with a low of \$8.9 million in North Dakota and a high of \$504 million in Texas. Estimates for the national cost of teacher attrition to include those teachers who stay in the profession but change schools are \$4.8 billion.
Guin, K. (2004). Chronic teacher turnover in urban elementary	Empirical	What is the impact of teacher turnover on	Quantitative Large urban school district-analyzed student	Guinn (2004) attempted to examine the impact of teacher turnover on organizational functioning and student

<p>schools. <i>Education Policy Analysis Archives</i>, 12(42), 30. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/61858990?accountid=10639.</p>		<p>organizational functioning and student achievement ?</p>	<p>demographic and performance data, turnover data, and staff climate surveys</p>	<p>achievement by studying elementary schools in a large urban district. Teacher perceptions in these schools felt that high rates of teacher turnover resulted in an inability within the organization to create a cohesive, on-going atmosphere of expectations within the school as well as putting a strain on the creation of relationships with new and veteran staff members. Guin was able to show correlary effects where schools with higher turnover rates had lower student achievement rates, but he was not able to show direct causal effects of turnover on student achievement.</p>
<p>Ronfeldt, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). <i>How teacher turnover harms student achievement</i>. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3386/w17176.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What is the average effect of teacher turnover on student achievement ? Are the effects different for different kinds of schools? What explains the relationship between teacher turnover and student achievement ?</p>	<p>Quantitative 625,000 observations of 4th & 5th grade students across all New York City elementary schools over a five year period & an examination of district administrative data</p>	<p>While teacher turnover is typically viewed as harmful to student achievement, there is little empirical evidence to support this stance. However, turnover can be viewed as having a harmful effect on relationships within the organization. Turnover disrupts the formation and maintenance of relationships within a school between students and staff and among staff themselves. While turnover can also be seen as an opportunity to bring new ideas into the organization.</p>

What are the current statistics for teacher retention and attrition?				
<p>Allen, M. B. (2005). Eight questions on teacher recruitment and retention: What does the research say? Education Commission of the States. Retrieved from http://www.ecs.org/html/educationissues/teachingquality/trrreport/home/TeacherRecruitmentRetention.pdf.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>2. How does those individuals that remain in teaching compare to those who leave? 4. What impact do the working conditions in schools have on their ability to recruit and retain teachers? 5. What impact does compensation have on the recruitment and retention of teachers?</p>	<p>Literature Review Reviewed empirical studies on teacher retention factor to determine which factors had supporting evidence in research</p>	<p>Approximately 50% of teachers leave their initial teaching assignment but not necessarily teaching itself. Attrition rates are highest among teachers in their first 4-5 years of teaching. Teacher attrition is lower in schools that have higher levels of administrative support and teacher autonomy. Research shows that increases in compensation can increase teacher retention rates as well. However, there is some evidence that in some cases working conditions may trump compensation.</p>
<p>Alliance for Education. (2008). What keeps good teachers in the classroom? Understanding and reducing teacher turnover. Washington, DC: Alliance For Education, Retrieved from http://all4ed.org/wp-</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What keeps good teachers in the classroom?</p>	<p>National policy and advocacy organization publication Alliance for Education Issue Brief funded by MetLife</p>	<p>Half a million teachers leave their schools each year, only 16% is attributable to retirement. 84% of teacher turnover is due to school transfers or teachers leaving the profession. The Alliance for Education (2008) found that higher rates of teacher retention occurred when teachers have quality relationships within their school. Studies have shown that teachers who are able to increase their students'</p>

<p>content/uploads/TeachTurn.pdf.</p>				<p>performance each year are more likely to stay in the profession. Teachers need to feel successful in order to want to stay in the profession, and thereby, need adequate supports to reach this goal. When given adequate supports such as a high quality mentor, opportunities to plan and network with other teachers, and evaluations that help the teachers to target their strengths and weaknesses, teachers are more likely to remain in the profession.</p>
<p>Alliance for Education. (2014). <i>On the path to Equity: Improving the Effectiveness of Beginning Teachers</i>. Washington, DC: Alliance For Education, Retrieved from http://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PathToEquity.pdf.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>		<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>The annual teacher turnover rate is 13% (includes movers and leavers). High poverty schools have turnover rates of approximately 20%.</p>
<p>Bonner, J. & Jarvis, C. (2015, August 26). NC Budget Deal Reached on State Employees Pay. <i>The News and Observer</i>. Retrieved from http://www.news</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>			<p>In an attempt to make the teaching profession more lucrative, legislators agreed to increase the base pay for beginning teachers from \$33,000 to \$35,000. -no increase in other pay steps</p>

<p>observer.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article32446125.html.</p>				<p>-one time bonus of \$750 for all teachers and state employees</p>
<p>Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (2003). Wanted: A national teacher supply policy for education: The right way to meet the “highly qualified teacher” challenge. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 11(33) Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v11n33.2003.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>How can we reduce teacher turnover rates?</p>	<p>Publication on an online peer-reviewed forum</p>	<p>-nearly 1/3 of new teachers leave teaching within the first three years and nearly half leave within five years - “In the years ahead, the chief problem will not be producing more new teachers, as many seem to believe. The main problem is an exodus of new teachers from the profession, with more than 30% leaving within five years.” -Darling-Hammond and Sykes make the case that alternative licensure programs, as allowed by NCLB legislation, exacerbates the teacher attrition dilemma as these teachers are most likely to leave the teaching profession than those attend traditional education preparation programs. They argue that the issue is not that of a lack of qualified teachers, but a problem attrition.</p>
<p>Ingersoll, R., & Merrill, E. (2013). <i>Seven trends: the transformation of the teaching force, updated October 2013</i>. CPRE Report (#RR-79).</p>	<p>Empirical</p>			<p>-main issue in teacher shortages is not that of retirement, but that of voluntary teacher turnover -number of beginning teachers in the workforce has dramatically increased from 17% in 87-88 to 28% with 5 or less years of experience in 07-08</p>

<p>Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from http://cpre.org/sites/default/files/workingpapers/1463_seventrendsupdatedoctober2013.pdf.</p>				<p>-from 1988-2008 the attrition rate has risen from 6.4% to 9% (an increase of almost 41%) -highest rates of turnover in high minority, urban schools and rural schools</p>
<p>North Carolina State Board of Education. (2015, November 15). <i>2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina</i> (Report No. 70). Retrieved from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction from http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/educatoreffectiveness/surveys/leaving/2014-15turnoverreport.pdf.</p>	<p>North Carolina's 2013-2014 Annual Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession</p>	<p>In NC what are the current statistics for teacher attrition and retention? In NRMS what are the current statistics for teacher attrition and retention?</p>	<p>Quantitative Annual report presented to the state BOE and the legislature on the current state of teaching</p>	<p>Teacher turnover rates have risen from 11.10% in the 2009-2010 school year to 14.84% at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. Over the past five years, of the five categories cited for teacher turnover, the top reason has been "Turnover but remain in education". This category includes teachers accepting non-classroom positions as well as teachers that change LEAs. However, in 2014 and 2015 the top reason cited was "Turnover for personal reasons". This category includes teachers who are leaving education altogether. This was a significant jump from previous years with this number almost doubling. Under this category, the top reason cited was "dissatisfied with teaching or career change". -State statistics: 40% turnover for personal reasons, 31% turnover but remained in education, 20.81% beginning teachers turnover, 13.37%</p>

				<p>career status teachers turnover</p> <p>-NRMS Statistics: 14-15 18.37% turnover (27th in state), 22.99% turnover but remained in education, 40.80% turnover for other reasons, 21.84% turnover for personal reasons</p> <p>-turnover for other reasons- reduction in force, retired with full benefits, military orders, deceased, end of VIF term, end of TFA term</p> <p>- 10-11 10.3%, 11-12 15.11%, 12-13 20.77%, 13-14 20.02%, 14-15 18.37%, 5 year turnover average 16.21% (21st highest in state)</p>
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What factors impact a teacher’s decision to leave or remain in the teaching profession or at their current school?

<p>Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Ing, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i>, 48(2), 303-333. doi:10.3102/0002831210380788.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What are first year teachers’ perceptions of school contextual factors? What is the relationship between school contextual factors and teacher attrition? What aspects of the school context do former teachers report as being the</p>	<p>Qualitative & Quantitative</p> <p>Interviewed 4,360 first year teachers in New York City</p> <p>Interviewed 61% of teachers who left teaching in New York City after the 2004-2005 school year</p>	<p>Teacher perceptions of their administrators has the greatest influence on a teacher’s decision to stay or leave. Teachers are more likely to remain in education when they feel that they receive recognition and support from their administrators and feel they are respected and appreciated.</p> <p>-encouraged to change teaching methods if not working</p> <p>-collaboration encouraged</p> <p>-instructional planning based on assessment</p> <p>-teachers help solve school problems</p> <p>-agreement among staff about the school mission</p>
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		most influential on their decisions to leave teaching?		
<p>Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). <i>Who leaves? teacher attrition and student achievement</i>. NBER working paper no. 14022 National Bureau of Economic Research. 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-5398. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/61946277?accountid=10639.</p>	Empirical	What is the relationship between student achievement and teacher attrition?	Quantitative Examined the relationship of novice teachers effectiveness from 2000-2005 in New York City to the teachers' decisions to stay, transfer to another school/district, or leave the profession in grades 4-8	When looking at first year teachers, those who are less effective in their first year are more likely to leave the profession. However, when looking at more effective teachers in their second and third years of teaching, they are more likely to leave low-performing schools and move to higher performing schools. Meaning, that the less effective teachers remain at the lower performing schools.
<p>Boyd, D., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Ronfeldt, M., & Wyckoff, J. (2010). <i>The role of teacher quality in retention and hiring: Using applications-to-transfer to uncover</i></p>	Empirical	Which teachers are more likely to request transfers? What kinds of teachers do schools choose to hire?	Quantitative data from an open-market system for NYC teachers to apply for transfer	Teachers are less likely to request a transfer when their students demonstrate higher levels of achievement growth.

<p><i>preferences of teachers and schools. NBER working paper no. 15966.().National Bureau of Economic Research. 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138-5398. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/742871254?accountid=10639.</i></p>				
<p>Brown, K. M., & Wynn, S. R. (2009). Finding, Supporting, and Keeping: The Role of the Principal in Teacher Retention Issues. <i>Leadership And Policy In Schools</i>, 8(1), 37-63.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>How can we better understand the leadership styles of principals with low attrition rates?</p>	<p>Qualitative interviewed 12 principals in an urban school district in a southeastern state</p>	<p>This study interviewed 12 principals with low turnover-attrition rates (less than 20%) in a district with high turnover/attrition rates (42%) to identify strategies these principals use to retain teachers. There were 45 schools total in this district serving 45,000 students. The following are strategies that these principals identified: -look for “fit”- look for applicants that have personalities that will work with the personalities you have on staff, make intentional placement decisions and nurture bonds between the new and veteran staff, shared values key -shared vision/values among staff and an agreement on what that looks like every day in the classroom</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supporting new teachers- be open and available, provide affirmation and resources, build capacity -support focuses on “growth and development, not evaluation and punishment” -Relationships- know your teachers personally, “family feel”, consistent and fair -Situational leadership- leadership styles change dependant upon the situation The school is a professional learning community for all -Shared leadership
<p>Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). <i>Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement. A volume in the american sociological association's rose series in sociology</i> Russell Sage Foundation, 112 East 64th Street, New York, NY 10021 (\$29.95). Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/62195900?accountid=10639.</p>	Empirical	How can effective social relationships serve as a conduit for school improvement?	Quantitative & Qualitative Case studies of 12 Chicago elementary schools undergoing reform	The quality of relationships (trust) is directly related to student achievement. Teacher turnover can disrupt the formation and maintenance of relational trust.
Charlotte Advocates for Education. (2004). Role of principal	Empirical	What specific skills, training, experiences,	Qualitative surveyed 16 principals in CMS with high teacher retention and high	Charlotte Advocates for Education identified principals in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools with higher than average rates of

<p>leadership in increasing teacher retention: Creating a supportive environment. Charlotte, NC: Charlotte Advocates for Education.</p>		<p>and characteristics affect a principal's ability to be an effective leader who creates a supportive environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific strategies principals have implemented to impact the shaping of the working and learning environment in their schools • What support can be provided to principals in becoming more effective – including training and continual professional development 	<p>student achievement and conducted a focus group with 7 of the 16 principals that agreed to participate</p>	<p>retention and high student achievement and asked these principals to participate in a survey and focus group. This group of principals that participated in the survey and focus group identified the strategies that they perceived to be the most effective in retaining teachers. As a leader, it is important to be willing to take risks. The survey and focus group responses identified the following strategies that were used by these principals to increase teacher retention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. being a risk-taker 2. relationships- knowing the teachers as individuals, open door, social opportunities (sense of family) 3. Teacher Support- advocate, remove barriers to success, provide resources, reduce “stressors”, publicly support teachers, recognize teachers, small tokens and notes to say “thank you” 4. include teachers in decision-making- negotiables vs. non-negotiables, do what is in the best interest of the students 5. empower staff 6. build leadership capacity 7. provide opportunities for growth (in house & off site)
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. accessibility 9. protected time for planning (individual & team) 10. mix of new and veteran staff on teams
<p>Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters what leaders can do. <i>Educational Leadership</i>, 60(8), 6-13.</p>	Conceptual	<p>Why are teachers leaving the profession and what can leaders do about it?</p>	<p>Journal article for <i>Educational Leadership</i></p>	<p>4 major factors influence a teacher's decision to leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -working conditions- administrative support, lack of resources, teacher input in decision making -salaries- leave for higher paying jobs or districts; this factor is more important to teachers beginning their career -teacher preparation- inadequately prepared; the more training teachers receive during college, the more likely they are to remain in education; those who enter teaching through alternative licensure pathways are less likely to remain in education -mentoring support- programs have to be designed with opportunities for the new teacher to learn from a veteran teacher rather than by trial and error
<p>Goldhaber, D., Gross, B., & Player, D. (2007). <i>Are public schools really losing their best? assessing the career transitions of teachers and their implications</i></p>	Empirical	<p>Are public schools truly losing their best teachers?</p>	<p>Quantitative information on the career paths of nearly all elementary level (grades 4-6) teachers who entered the North Carolina public school system between 1996 and 2002</p>	<p>Teachers that are found to be more effective through the use of value-added data were more likely to remain in the teaching profession as well as to remain in the schools in which they teach.</p>

<p><i>for the quality of the teacher workforce. working paper</i> 12 National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. The Urban Institute, 2100 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20037. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/742875669?accountid=10639.</p>				
<p>Hanushek, E. A., Kain, J. F., & Rivkin, S. G. (2004). The revolving door. <i>Education Next</i>, 4(1), 76-82. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/62002359?accountid=10639.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What is the impact of salary and working conditions on a teacher's decision to either leave or remain in the profession?</p>	<p>Quantitative An analysis of data sets created by the Texas Education Agency by the University of Texas at Dallas's Texas Schools Project</p>	<p>In general more experienced teachers are found to be more effective than teachers within their first few years of teaching. This project sought to answer the question of whether working conditions matter more than money. The researchers examined data on elementary teachers in Texas to determine any correlations and found that teachers who move between schools or districts typically move to schools or districts with higher achieving students and lower proportions of minority students. In contrast the study revealed that those teachers who changed schools or districts did not receive statistically significant</p>

				increases in salary and in some cases even received lower salaries. The researchers concluded that it would take substantial financial compensations to entice teachers to stay in chronically low performing schools to overcome the working conditions.
Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. <i>American Educational Research Journal</i> , 38(3), 499-534. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00028312038003499	Empirical		Quantitative Review of SASS survey data from more than 50, 000 teachers nationwide	Ingersoll found that 42% of those that are leaving the profession are leaving due to job dissatisfaction Lack of support from administration, low salaries, a lack of influence on decision making, and a lack of discipline were all cited as factors in the decision to leave. Teachers in the first five years of teaching additionally cited poor working conditions and a lack of significant on-the-job training and support as key factors in their decision to leave the profession.
Ingersoll, R. M. (2002a). Holes in the teacher supply bucket. <i>School Administrator</i> , 3 (March), 3-4.	Conceptual			In education the issue is that of high premature teacher turnover with almost 39% of teachers leaving the profession within the first five years rather than a shortage in the supply of teachers. Through his research, Ingersoll has identified four common factors that most impact teachers' decisions to leave the profession: low salaries, lack of administrative support, student discipline issues, and a lack of teacher input into

				<p>decision making at the school. He argues that efforts should focus not on recruitment, but on retention.</p>
<p>Ingersoll, R. M. (2002b). The teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription, NASSP Bulletin, 86, 16–31.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What are the organizational characteristics and conditions of schools that are driving teacher turnover?</p>	<p>Quantitative Analysis of data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics</p>	<p>The organizational characteristics and conditions of schools are driving teacher turnover and have created a “revolving door” in the profession creating an excess demand for teachers. Statistics show that 39% of new teachers leave within their first five years in the profession. Of those teachers who choose to leave the profession altogether, almost half cite either job dissatisfaction or the desire to pursue a better job as their reasons for leaving. When looking at the category of job dissatisfaction, several factors arise related to organizational characteristics and conditions. Teachers cited low salaries, a lack of administrative support for teachers, low students motivation, student discipline problems, and a lack of teacher involvement in decision making at the school as playing key roles in their feelings of dissatisfaction. Principals can do little to change the salaries of teachers in their building, but they can address the issue of involving teachers in the key decision making processes of the school. When teachers are given a voice in the school, there is significantly less turnover. Ingersoll also suggests that by increasing</p>

				the focus on strong mentoring support for new teachers, the attrition rate can be lowered.
Ingersoll, R. M. (2003). Is there really a teaching shortage? (Document R-03-04). Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy Consortium and The Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Washington. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1133&context=gse_pubs .	Empirical	What are the factors contributing to the “revolving door” of teachers?	Quantitative Analysis of data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics	http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1133&context=gse_pubs There are two types of turnover as identified by the SASS SURvey: movers and leavers. Movers are defined as those teachers who stay in the profession but move to another school. Leavers are defined as those who are leaving the teaching profession altogether. Through his analysis, Ingersoll (2003) found that teacher turnover numbers are evenly split between the two categories. From a systems perspective, more emphasis has been given to leavers rather than movers in research. But from an organizational perspective, the number of movers impacts a school in the same way that leavers impact the district. Turnover in either form, movers or leavers, results in a lack of adequately trained and qualified staff in a school and disrupts the quality of the school community and performance. While the commonly held belief is that there is a shortage in the supply of new teachers due to an increase in the student population and an increase in retirements, Ingersoll found that the shortage of teachers is actually due to high numbers

				<p>of pre-retirement turnover. More and more new teachers are being hired each year to fill vacancies caused by teachers leaving the profession, not due to retirement. Each year more teachers are leaving the profession that are even hired. When looking at the reasons why teachers leave, the top two reasons cited are “Pursue Other Jobs” and “Job Dissatisfaction”.</p> <p>“In short, recruiting more teachers will not solve the teacher crisis if 40 to 50% of such teachers then leave within five years. The image that comes to mind is a bucket rapidly losing water because of holes in the bottom. Pouring more water into the bucket will not be the answer if the holes are not first patched.” (p.17)</p>
<p>Krieg, J. M. (2006). Teacher quality and attrition. <i>Economics of Education Review</i>,25(1), 13-27. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/62158787?accountid=10639.</p>	Empirical	What is the role of teacher quality on teacher attrition?	Quantitative Examined student achievement data from third (2000-2001)to fourth grade (2001-2002) in Washington and compared this to the number of teachers that chose not to return after the 2001-2002 school year	Contrary to popularly held beliefs, teachers who are more effective are the ones more likely to remain in the teaching profession whereas less effective teachers are more likely to leave the profession.
<p>Loeb, H., Elfers, A., Michael, K., & Plecki, M. (2004).</p>	Empirical	What are the reasons that teachers cite as being	Quantitative & Qualitative	Teachers remain in the teaching profession for altruistic reasons, a desire to

<p>Preparation and support for teaching: A survey of working conditions of teachers. Paper prepared for the Center for Strengthening Teaching Profession. University of Washington: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy. Retrieved from www.ctpweb.org.</p>		<p>influential in their decision to leave the teaching profession or their current school/district?</p>		<p>work with children, and the value of education in society.</p> <p>Reasons teachers leave the school/profession:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -workload -frustrated with policies -lack of time to do the job -salaries
<p>Lynch, D. (January 2010). <i>The Effect of Involvement In Decision Making on Teacher Retention</i> (Doctoral Dissertation, East Carolina University). Retrieved from the Scholarship. (http://hdl.handle.net/10342/2923.)</p>	<p>Dissertation</p>	<p>How do movers rate their involvement in the decision making process at the school level? How do administrators rate teacher involvement in the decision making process at the school level? Do administrators have the</p>	<p>Quantitative Surveyed 142 teachers and administrators in Onslow County that had left or requested a transfer during 2006 and 2008</p>	<p>Analyzed TWC surveys for Onslow County over a two year period and surveyed teachers who requested a transfer or left the district altogether to determine the factors that had impacted their decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teachers and administrators had different perceptions of teacher involvement in decision making -movers feel they were not involved in the decision making processes that impact the school whereas the administrators felt that the movers were involved in making school level decisions -movers' involvement in decision making had not impacted their decision to leave or request a transfer

		same perception as movers in regards to teacher involvement in the decision making process?		Teacher and administrator perceptions of teachers being a part of the decision making processes at the school are very different.
Maples, B. (2016 March 12). A Dear John Letter to North Carolina from a Fed-up Teacher. <i>The News and Observer</i> . Retrieved from http://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article65487232.html .	Conceptual	Why did I quit the teaching profession		-lack of feeling valued by the state of North Carolina's legislators
Riggs, L. (2013 October 18). Why Do Teachers Quit? And Why Do Teachers Stay? <i>The Atlantic</i> . Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/10/why-do-teachers-quit/280699/ .	Conceptual	What makes teachers quit, and what makes teachers stay in the profession?		-lack of respect -little say in what they do -amount of work outside of the classroom -low pay -hours it takes to do the job well
Stockard, J., and Lehman, M. (2004 December).	Empirical	What are the variables that impact first year	Reviews SASS surveys and conducted panels	First year teachers are impacted by the level of safety they feel in their work environment as well as the

<p>Influences on the Satisfaction and Retention of 1st-Year Teachers: The Importance of Effective School Management. Educational Administration Quarterly 40(5):742-771.</p>		<p>teacher job satisfaction and retention decisions?</p>	<p>with first year teachers</p>	<p>level of control they have over their work environment.</p>
<p>Tomon, Catherine. (January 2009). <i>The Impact of Principal Leadership on Working Conditions and Teacher Retention in North Carolina Middle Schools</i> (Doctoral Dissertation, East Carolina University). Retrieved from the Scholarship. (http://hdl.handle.net/10342/2214.)</p>	<p>Dissertation</p>	<p>1. Is there a difference between what beginning teachers and career teachers value as important to teacher retention? 2. Is there a difference between beginning teachers' and career teachers' perceptions regarding what aspect of one's work environment most affects teacher retention?</p>	<p>Quantitative 2006 NCTWC Survey results from all NC middle schools with at least a 40% response rate</p>	<p>-teachers with positive perceptions of their school's working conditions were more likely to remain at their school -respondents that were planning to remain at their current schools agreed that the leadership of the school was working to improve the school, specifically an atmosphere of trust and respect, shared vision, feedback for instructional improvement, addressing teacher concerns, -school leadership is the factor that most impacts a teacher's decision to remain at their school</p>
<p>National Center for Education</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is the Schools and</p>		<p>The National Center for Education Statistics (2016)</p>

<p>Statistics. (2016). SASS Overview. Retrieved 2016 from https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass/overview.asp.</p>		<p>Staffing Survey?</p>		<p>developed the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) in order to collect descriptive data on the current context of elementary and secondary schools. The survey was given seven times from 1987 to 2011 and was provided to public, private, and charter schools. In 2011 the Survey was redone to reflect a focus on the principal and teacher labor market and to gather information on the current context of K-12 school staffs. Topics on the questionnaire covered teacher supply, staff characteristics, working conditions, salary, staff perceptions of school climate and issues, student population characteristics, and district hiring and retention practices.</p>
<p>Urlick, A. M. (2012, May 1). To What Extent Do Typologies of School Leaders across the U.S. Predict Teacher Attrition? A Multilevel Latent Class Analysis of Principals and Teachers. <i>Online Submission</i>, 2012. <i>ERIC</i>, EBSCOhost (accessed November 10, 2015).</p>	<p>Dissertation</p>	<p>1. What types of principals and teachers exist in school leadership across the U.S.? 2. To what extent do these different types of teachers and principals in school leadership predict teacher retention?</p>	<p>Quantitative & Qualitative a secondary analysis of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and 2000-2001 Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS)</p>	<p>-no matter what type of leadership style a principal has, there will always be those within the school with varying perceptions of principal and teacher leadership -teacher satisfaction with a principal varies dependant on the fit of the teacher with the principal's leadership style -transformational leadership is necessary for shared instructional leadership -teachers who work with "controlling" principals were more likely to leave their position at that school but not necessarily to leave education -leadership is multi-dimensional and leaders</p>

				<p>practice multiple leadership styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher perceptions of leadership are influenced by their satisfaction with the principal and their view of their fit within the school -correlation between leadership styles and teacher styles that contribute to teacher retention/attrition -principals need to be aware of which teachers feel like they don't have principal leadership and find ways to incorporate these teachers into the school leadership to feel supported
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What are programs/approaches/strategies that have been used to address the issue of teacher turnover?

<p>Adcox, S. (2015, January 12). South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley's Budget Proposal Includes Teacher Recruitment Program. <i>The Augusta Chronicle</i>. Retrieved from http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/education/2015-01-12/south-carolina-gov-nikki-haleys-budget-proposal-includes-teacher#.</p>	Conceptual	What is South Carolina's program for teacher recruitment?		<p>Recently, the governor of South Carolina released details of the state's plan to address high rates of teacher turnover in twenty-one districts that have annual turnover rates above twelve percent. The state plans to recruit teachers to work in these districts through financial incentives. By agreeing to teach in one of these districts, college students can receive up to four years of paid college tuition by agreeing to teach for two years for every year of tuition paid. For those who have already completed college, the state will pay off one year of tuition loans for each year a person teaches in one of these districts. Teachers within their first</p>
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				<p>five years of teaching will be paid on the pay scale as if they already have five additional years of experience. Teacher who have more than five years of experience are eligible for two years of paid graduate school tuition, and highly qualified teachers are eligible to receive up to a \$5,000 annual stipend for mentoring beginning teachers. Those who agree to teach in one of the twenty-one districts with high turnover rates are eligible to receive up to three of these incentives. The state plans to pay for this plan by phasing out annual stipends for teachers with National Board Certification. Legislators argue that there is no evidence that teachers with this certification are any more effective than teachers without this certification, and the vast majority of these teachers do not teach in districts with high turnover rates.</p>
<p>Ball, J. (2016, July 11). Some Teachers Left Out of State Pay Raises. <i>Citizen-Times</i>. Retrieved from http://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2016/07/10/some-teachers-left-out-</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is North Carolina doing to raise teacher pay?</p>		<p>In 2016 lawmakers again voted to revise the teacher pay scale (Ball 2016). Under the revised pay scale the base salary for a beginning teacher remains at \$35,000. Revisions in the pay scale in 2013 and 2014 originally implemented a tiered pay scale in which teachers would receive a pay raise only every five years. Under the new revisions, teachers would receive a yearly pay increase each year</p>

<p>state-pay-raises/86747796/.</p>				<p>up until year fifteen. After year fifteen, teachers would only receive another pay raise at year twenty and year twenty-five with no further pay increases after year twenty-five. While base salaries for beginning teachers has been raised, salaries for the most veteran teachers have actually decreased with the implementation of the new pay scales over the past few years. Teachers can receive higher salaries for National Board Certification and a Master’s degree. However, Master’s level pay increases are being phased out.</p>
<p>Barondess, H. (2014, May 16). Denver Aims High for Shared Leadership. <i>Huffington Post</i>. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tntp/denver-aims-high-for-shar_b_5339917.html.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is Denver doing to promote teacher leadership and retain teachers?</p>		<p>In Denver Public Schools (Barondess 2014), district leaders recognize that classroom teachers strive for opportunities for growth and leadership. However, in the teaching profession this often means that teachers have to leave their classrooms in order to seek leadership opportunities such as in administration. In an effort to provide opportunities for leadership and growth to experienced teachers, Denver Public Schools is using funds from the federal Teacher Incentive Fund grant to created a “Differentiated Roles” pilot program. This program offers teachers the opportunity to divide their time each day between classroom instruction and coaching other teachers in the</p>

				<p>school. Teacher leaders are selected by the principal, and they are released from their classroom duties from 25-50 percent of each day in order to fulfill the responsibilities of their roles. Part of their responsibilities include teacher evaluations and feedback as well as planning with and providing feedback to teams of teachers. Teacher leaders receive additional compensation for their roles as well as receiving additional trainings. Each year schools must re-apply for the program, and principals choose whether to retain a teacher leader in the program from year to year.</p>
<p>Blasé, J. L., & Kirby, P. C. (1992). The power of praise-a strategy for effective principals. NASSP Bulletin, 76(548), 69-77.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What can principals do to motivate teachers?</p>	<p>Quantitative interviewed 800 teachers</p>	<p>Recognizing teachers for their individual skills and strengths can promote teacher confidence and satisfaction. The strategy of praise can be used to enhance instructional performance as well as building school climate. Work-related praise is the most influential praise, and teachers viewed the use of praise by principals as reflective of the character of the principal. The research found that in order to be effective praise should be sincere and targeted towards work performance and that there should be time set aside to recognize teachers for their performance both to the teachers and to outside sources.</p>

<p>Bonner, J. & Jarvis, C. (2015, August 26). NC Budget Deal Reached on State Employees Pay. <i>The News and Observer</i>. Retrieved from http://www.newsobserver.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article32446125.html.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is North Carolina's proposal to revamp teacher salaries?</p>		<p>In an attempt to make the teaching profession more lucrative, legislators agreed to increase the base pay for beginning teachers from \$33,000 to \$35,000. -no increase in other pay steps -one time bonus of \$750 for all teachers and state employees</p>
<p>Cornett, L. M., & Gaines, G. F. (2002). <i>Quality teaching: Can incentive policies make a difference?</i> Southern Regional Education Board, 592 10th Street, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30318. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/docview/62291636?accountid=10639.</p>	<p>Empirical</p>	<p>What can states do to keep teachers in the classroom? What can states do to reduce new teacher turnover?</p>	<p>Quantitative A report for the Southern Regional Educational Board</p>	<p>In a report to the Southern Regional Education Board, Cornett and Gaines (2002) found that substantial pay increases could possibly lure some teachers back to the teaching profession as well as improvements in working conditions. To remain in the workforce veteran teachers need to be supported differently. Incentives for this group of teachers should focus on issues of professional growth such as professional development to increase their effectiveness as teachers. At the state level, many policies have been created in an attempt to incentivize teaching as a profession such as the use of scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to attract potential teachers in which recipients agree to teach for a certain number of years. Some states have even</p>

				<p>changed their retirement laws to allow retired teachers to re-enter the workforce part time or offered health benefits to part time teachers. In the wake of federal policies such as No Child Left Behind, alternative pathways to licensure were developed in an attempt to attract those looking for a career change. Many states also offer financial incentives such as increases in pay based on the attainment of advanced degrees and National Board certification. Teachers are also able to receive additional compensation in some states through a willingness to serve as a mentor or by teaching in hard to staff subjects and schools. Recently, one particular incentive has gained attention in the media- pay for performance where teachers are paid bonuses based on student performance which has materialized in several different forms over the years.</p>
<p>Douglas, E. (2015, January 15). 6 Lessons on the Power of Teacher Leadership. <i>Education Week</i>. Retrieved from http://blogs.edweek.org/topschooljobs/k-12_talent_manager/2015/01/powe</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is Tennessee doing to address teacher retention and create teacher leadership opportunities?</p>		<p>In 2013 the Tennessee Department of Education brought together leadership from six different districts in the state to develop a sustainable and innovative teacher leadership model for the state (Douglas 2015). Each of the six districts developed and implemented their own strategic models that were then implemented at pilot schools The district of Kingsport City Schools</p>

<p><u>r_of_teacher_leadership.html.</u></p>				<p>implemented what it calls Teachers Leading Change in which identified teacher leaders maintain their classroom positions but take on additional responsibilities for which they are compensated.</p>
<p>Farmer, B. (2015, March 27). Stretching One Great Teacher Across Many Classrooms. <i>North Carolina Public Radio</i>. Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/03/27/395113707/stretching-one-great-teacher-across-many-classrooms.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is Tennessee doing to address teacher retention and create teacher leadership opportunities ?</p>		<p>In a similar model the Metro school district piloted their teacher leader program at Bailey Middle Prep in which lead teachers are responsible for overseeing a team of fellow teachers while maintaining their own classroom. The lead teacher at this school, Whitney Bradley, argues that positions such as this one allow teachers to have the opportunity to serve in a leadership position without having to leave the classroom behind (Farmer 2015).</p>
<p>Chambers Jr, S. (2014, June 16). Pay Supplements Increase for Nash-Rocky Mount Teachers. <i>Rocky Mount Telegram</i>. Retrieved from http://www.wral.com/pay-supplements-increase-for-nash-rocky-mount-teachers/13738386/.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is the supplement for Nash-Rocky Mount Schools?</p>		<p>Over a three year period teacher supplements have increased from 6% to 9% in Nash-Rocky Mount.</p>

<p>Gonzales, J. (2015, April 16). After 400 Teachers Leave, Nashville Focuses on Retention. <i>The Tennessean</i>. Retrieved from http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/education/2015/04/16/metro-eyes-teacher-retention-program/25859483/.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is Tennessee doing to address teacher retention and create teacher leadership opportunities?</p>		<p>Based on the success of this program at Bailey Middle Prep, the district is planning to expand the model to other schools as part of the district's teacher retention strategies (Gonzales 2015).</p>
<p>Ingersoll, R. M. (2002a). Holes in the teacher supply bucket. <i>School Administrator</i>, 3 (March), 3–4.</p>	<p>Conceptual</p>	<p>What is the cause of the teacher supply shortage, and what can be done about it?</p>		<p>In an attempt to increase the supply of teachers, many states have enacted alternative licensure programs such as Troops to Teachers, Teach for America, and lateral entry programs. States have also tried to entice professionals into the profession through the use of financial incentives such as signing bonuses, financial assistance with housing, student loan forgiveness, and tuition reimbursement programs. However, these programs attempt to address the wrong problem. Ingersoll's research has shown that the teacher shortage problem is the result of high teacher turnover rates rather than a shortage in supply and believes that efforts to improve the teaching profession should</p>

				focus on retention and not recruitment (Ingersoll 2002a).
<p>Leadership Initiative for Teachers. (2015). <i>Leadership Initiative for Teachers Guidebook</i>. Washington, DC: District of Columbia Public Schools. Retrieved from http://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/LIFT%20Guidebook-July24.pdf.</p>	Conceptual	What is the LIFT initiative?		<p>In an attempt to make the teaching profession more lucrative for teachers, the District of Columbia Public Schools has implemented teacher career ladders through their Leadership Initiative for Teachers (LIFT 2015). Through this program teachers are able to move up the teacher career ladder without having to leave their classrooms. There are five stages on the LIFT ladder: (1) teacher, (2) established teacher, (3) advanced teacher, (4) distinguished teacher, and (5) expert teacher. Placement in each of these stages is determined by a teacher's annual evaluation. Teachers can move up the ladder based on their teacher ratings, but they cannot be moved down the ladder once they have achieved a stage. Base salaries increase as teachers advance through the stages, and within each stage, teachers have the opportunity to earn annual bonuses based on achieving a Highly Effective rating and/or a willingness to teach in a high poverty school. As teachers advance through the stages, additional leadership opportunities are provided to teachers such as, education policy opportunities, curricular opportunities, school point of contact positions, coaching and</p>

				mentoring positions, as well as many other opportunities for growth and advancement both in and out of the classroom. Teachers are also able to earn fellowships, grants, and awards as they move through the stages as well as opportunities for sabbaticals, summer school, and travel.
National Education Association. (2016 May). <i>Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the states 2015 and estimates of school statistics 2016</i> . Retrieved from https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2831158-2016-NEA-Rankings-and-Estimates.html .	Empirical	What are current statistics and rankings for teacher salaries?		Currently, North Carolina ranks forty-second in the nation for average teacher pay based on 2015-2016 salaries (National Education Association 2016).
North Carolina State Board of Education. (2015). <i>North Carolina's State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators</i> . North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved from http://www.dpi.st	Conceptual	How can the state of North Carolina ensure equitable access to qualified teachers for all students regardless of race and/or socio-economic status?		In accordance with the United States Department of Education's requirements, the North Carolina State Board of Education (2015) developed a plan to ensure that low socio-economic and minority students are not being disproportionately taught by inexperienced or unqualified teachers. In this plan the state lays out seventeen strategies that will be used to ensure that all students have equitable access to quality

<p>ate.nc.us/docs/program-monitoring/titleIA/equity-plan/equity-final.pdf</p>				<p>teachers. Some of these strategies include creating alternative pathways to licensure such as Troops to Teachers and establishing the North Carolina Teacher Corps (NCTC) in 2012. NCTC cohorts undergo a three phase induction program modeled after Teach for America to provide support to teachers who then receive a full teaching license at the conclusion of the three years. In 2013 the North Carolina General Assembly voted to provide funding to Teach for America in order for them to assume responsibility for future NCTC cohorts. North Carolina also recognizes the need to address the issue of high rates of turnover with beginning teachers. As such the state adopted new Mentor and Beginning Teacher Standards to provide stronger mentoring support and induction programs to beginning teachers. Additionally North Carolina revamped its teacher and principal evaluation systems to focus on professional growth and student outcomes. To address salary concerns the state revamped its salary scale to increase the salary of beginning teachers and create pay increases every five years for teacher. The state has additionally created more opportunities for professional development through resources created by NCDPI,</p>
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				school leadership support, the creation of the Governor’s Teacher Network, summer institutes, and the creation of multi-tiered systems of support.
Wake County Public Schools System. (2016). <i>Salary Schedules 2015-2016</i> . Retrieved from http://www.wcps.net/cms/lib/NC01911451/Centricity/Domain/35/Salary%20Schedule%20Revised%202015-2016%20v17.pdf	Conceptual	What is the Wake County Schools teacher supplement?		Wake County teacher supplements range from 17.25%-24.50% based on teacher experience, highest degree obtained, National Board Certification, and area of licensure.
Zubrzycki, J. (2015, February 9). <i>DPS to Expand Teacher Leadership Program</i> . Chalkbeat. Retrieved from http://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/co/2015/02/09/dps-to-expand-teacher-leadership-program/#.V8ChNZMrLBI .	Conceptual	What is Denver doing to create leadership opportunities for teachers?		Teachers who serve as team leads believe their roles provide the opportunity for them to advocate for teacher needs while serving as a bridge between teachers and administration. Principals that were part of the pilot program feel that the new roles have helped to build staff relationships while creating ownership among teachers over professional learning. Team leads receive between \$3,000 to \$5,000 each year as compensation for their additional responsibilities. Part of those responsibilities include evaluating teachers. In order to apply for the team lead position, teachers must have higher scores on the district’s teacher evaluation.

Summary				
<p>Clark, J. (2016, February 18). Not Worth It: Why NC college students are turning away from teaching. <i>WUNC</i>. Retrieved from http://wunc.org/post/not-worth-it-why-nc-college-students-are-turning-away-teaching#stream/0.</p>	Conceptual			<p>Additionally, the implementation of the A-F school grading system, the amount of standardized testing put on teachers, and low salaries have furthered the current negative public narrative about teaching (Clark 2016).</p>
<p>Ovaska-Few, S. (2015, January 27). Fewer Education Majors, and Worries About Where Tomorrow's Teachers Will Come From. <i>NC Policy Watch</i>. Retrieved from http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/2015/01/27/fewer-education-majors-and-worries-about-where-tomorrows-teachers-will-come-from/.</p>	Conceptual			<p>From 2010 to 2014 colleges of education across the state of North Carolina have seen drastic declines in student enrollment numbers (Ovaska-Few 2015). Over this time period enrollments for undergraduate and graduate level education programs have dropped by 27%. Many attribute this to a national decline in interest in teaching as a profession combined with recent legislative changes in North Carolina that eliminated the Teaching Fellows program, eliminated Master's degree pay bumps, eliminated teacher tenure, and the implementation of a new teacher pay scale that only provides pay bumps every five years once a teacher reaches year fifteen.</p>

APPENDIX B: Q SORT PROTOCOL

East Carolina
University



Title of Research Study: Teachers' Perceptions on the Elements That Most Impact Teacher Retention

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Delano-Gemzik, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello

Please provide a unique identifier that you will remember: _____

Condition for Sorting the Statements—keep this statement in mind as you sort the statements:
What elements of the teaching profession are most influential on your decision to remain in education?

Q Sort Instructions:

1. Lay out the number cards from left to right with the negative (-) numbers on your left (see picture below):
2. Read through all **44** cards to become familiar with the statements.
3. As you read through the statements for a second time, organize them into three piles:
 - On the right, place the cards that you feel are **most representative of what you believe are the elements of the teaching profession that are the most influential on your decision to remain in education.**
 - On the left, place the cards that are least representative.
 - In the middle, place the cards that you feel less certain about.
4. Beginning with the pile on the right, place the **three** cards that you **agree** with the most under the **+4** marker.
5. Now, turning to your left side, place the **three** cards that you **disagree** with the most under the **-4** marker.

Post Q Sort Interview Questions:

1) Please list a few of the cards in the +4 column and your reasons for placing them there.

Card #:_____

Card #:_____

2) Please list a few of the cards in the -4 column and your reasons for placing them there.

Card #:_____

Card #:_____

3) Were there specific statements that you had difficulty placing? *Choose one and please list the number of the statement and describe your dilemma.*

Card #:_____

5) Is there a statement that you would have like to see in the sort? If so, what would the card have said and where would you have placed it?

6) In order, what are the three most important elements of the teaching profession that school and district administrators could provide to increase your willingness to remain in the teaching profession? Why are they important, and how could school and district administrators ensure these elements are in place?

7) Would you be willing to participate in a post-sort focus group interview?

8) Have you ever considered leaving teaching? If so, why?

Background Questions

1) **Gender:** ___M (1) ___F (2)

2) **Ethnicity (Check One):**

_____ African American (1)

_____ Caucasian (2)

_____ Hispanic/Latino (3)

_____ Middle Eastern (4)

_____ Native American (5)

_____ Asian (6)

_____ Other: _____ (7)

3) **Age**

_____ 20-30

_____ 31-40

_____ 41-50

_____ 51+

4) **Years of Teaching Experience**

_____ 0-5

_____ 6-10

_____ 11-15

_____ 16-20

_____ 21-25

_____ 26+

5) What teacher preparation program did you participate in?

_____ Traditional University

_____ Lateral Entry

_____ Teach for America

_____ Other: _____

6) What is your area(s) of licensure?

7) What grade/subject are you currently teaching?

APPENDIX C: POST-SORT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

East Carolina
University



Title of Research Study: Teachers' Perceptions on the Elements That Most Impact Teacher Retention

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Delano-Gemzik, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello

Please provide a unique identifier that you will remember: _____

Participants with significant loading on a particular factor will sit with other participants who loaded on the same factor. Loading on a common factor represents a statistically significant shared perspective. The purpose of this focus group interview is to gain additional insights about why participants have their perspectives.

After performing factor analysis on all of the responses, your responses are statistically similar to those shown in the model sort.

Condition for Sorting the Statements—as a reminder, keep this statement in mind as you participate in the focus group interview process: *What elements of the teaching profession are most influential on your decision to remain in education?*

- 1) Who is in your group? Describe any similarities and/or differences (e.g., demographics, job, etc.).

- 2) Which statements best represent your shared perspective?

APPENDIX D: CARD SORT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

East Carolina
University



Consent to Take Part in Research that has Potentially Greater than Minimal Risk Information You Should Think About Before Agreeing to Take Part in This Research

Title of Research Study: Teachers' Perceptions on the Elements That Most Impact Teacher Retention

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Delano-Gemzik, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello

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 study is to seek to understand what elements of the teaching profession do teachers perceive to have the most impact on teachers' decision to remain in the teaching profession. As a current teacher, you are being invited to take part in this research to seek your perceptions, viewpoints, and insights about how you decide to remain in the teaching profession. You are being asked to take part in the study by participating in a Card Sort Exercise. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The decision to take part in the research is yours to make. You have the right to participate, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. By conducting this research, we hope to obtain findings to the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave the teaching profession?
2. How do teachers perceive the relative importance of the factors identified in question 1?
3. Why did the participants perceive the elements in a particular manner? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will be one of about 40 people to do so.

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

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study. In addition, there are no known risks to participating in the card sorting exercise.

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 Benvenue Elementary School, Rocky Mount, NC 27803. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately one hour.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to sort 44 cards. These cards have statements about elements of the teaching profession printed on them and your task will be to sort them according to your own beliefs and viewpoints. This process should take approximately one hour. After sorting the cards, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about the statements and why you placed specific statements in certain areas on the distribution grid. In addition, you will be asked some general demographic data. Your card sort and your responses to the questionnaire will remain confidential.

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

We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) 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. There may not be any personal benefit to you but 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:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UNCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

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

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely on a computer and in a location of which only the researcher has access. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if I decide I do not 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 at phone number 252-462-2583 (weekdays, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm) or email jpdelano-gemzik@nrms.k12.nc.us

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2941 (weekdays, 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 of the ORIC at 252-744-1971.

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.

Participant’s Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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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.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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APPENDIX E: POST-SORT FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

East Carolina
University



Informed Consent to Participate in Research Information to Consider Before Taking Part in Research That Has No More Than Minimal Risk

Title of Research Study: Teachers' Perceptions on the Elements That Most Impact Teacher Retention

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Delano-Gemzik, under the guidance of Dr. Matthew Militello

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 study is to seek to understand what elements of the teaching profession do teachers perceive to have the most impact on teachers' decision to remain in the teaching profession. As a current teacher, you are being invited to take part in this research to seek your perceptions, viewpoints, and insights about how you decide to remain in the teaching profession. You are being asked to take part in the study by participating in a Card Sort Exercise. Your participation in this study is voluntary. The decision to take part in the research is yours to make. You have the right to participate, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. By conducting this research, we hope to obtain findings to the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors that most impact their decision to either stay in or leave the teaching profession?
2. How do teachers perceive the relative importance of the factors identified in question 1?
3. Why did the participants perceive the elements in a particular manner? What factors and/or knowledge influenced their decisions?

If you volunteer to participate in this research, you will be one of about 40 people to do so.

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

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study. In addition, there are no known risks to participating in the post-sort interview.

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 Benvenue Elementary School, Rocky Mount, NC 27803. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately one hour.

What will I be asked to do?

After performing factor analysis on all of the responses, your responses are statistically similar to those shown in the model sort and to those participating in this focus group interview with you. You will be asked to answer and discuss with others your answers to the following questions based on how you sorted the statements for the Q sort: (1) Who is in your group? Describe any similarities and/or differences (e.g., demographics, job, etc.), (2) Which statements best represent your shared perspective?, (3) What has had the greatest impact on how you sorted your cards the way you did? (Examples- past experience, courses, current knowledge, etc.). Please explain your answers. (4) What name would you assign that represents the perspective illustrated by this model sort? Explain why and the meaning associated with that name—use card statements to provide justification for your name.

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

We do not know of any risks (the chance of harm) 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. There may not be any personal benefit to you but 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:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UNCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

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

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Information gathered from the interview will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be destroyed upon successful completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

What if I decide I do not 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 at phone number 252-792-1575 (days, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm) or email lhodgkins@martin.k12.nc.us.

If you have questions about your rights as someone taking part in research, you may call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2941 (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 of the ORIC at 252-744-1971.

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.

Participant’s Name (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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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.

Person Obtaining Consent (PRINT)	Signature	Date
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APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office

4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682

600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834

Office 252-744-2914  · Fax 252-744-2284  · www.ecu.edu/irb

Rectangular Snip

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Jennifer Delano-Gemzik](#)
CC: [Matthew Militello](#)
Date: 1/23/2017
Re: [UMCIRB 16-002220](#)
TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHER RETENTION

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 1/23/2017. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2.

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

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

The UMCIRB office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

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

