

ABSTRACT

William Dale Norris, AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF TEACHER TURNOVER ON THE SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS IN THE COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: A BEST PRACTICE MODEL TO PROMOTE TEACHER RETENTION (Under the direction of Dr. Harold Holloman). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

This study examines the causes of increased teacher turnover rates and how these rates detrimentally affect schools and student performance. In addition, this study provides recommendations for best practices in retaining teachers, especially new teachers, in the Columbus County School District. The study uses both quantitative and qualitative techniques and improvement science methodology. Current system-wide teacher turnover data, as well as surveys from principals, teachers, beginning teachers, and mentors are utilized. The scope of the study focuses on elementary, middle, and high schools in Columbus County, North Carolina. Columbus County is located in a rural region and has an increasing teacher turnover rate. Based on this study, best practices for retaining teachers are presented as a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The specific best practices include strong mentorship programs, meaningful professional development opportunities, targeted school leadership recruiting, modified teacher assignments, and critical self-reflection programs.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF TEACHER TURNOVER ON THE SCHOOLS
AND STUDENTS IN THE COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: A BEST
PRACTICE MODEL TO PROMOTE TEACHER RETENTION

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by

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AND STUDENTS IN THE COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: A BEST
PRACTICE MODEL TO PROMOTE TEACHER RETENTION

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family: Christy, Jackson, Peggy, Henry, Sally, Brett, and Henlee, who have given me unconditional support throughout my life, and especially during this endeavor.

To my wife Christy, who never became aggravated with me for spending endless hours typing and reading.

To my son Jackson, who is an inspiration to me because of his determination and dedication to be a good person and succeed.

To my mother and father Peggy and Henry, the best parents any person could hope for, who have encouraged and supported me throughout my entire life.

Lastly, to my awesome sister Sally, who has supported my endeavors throughout life and continues to give support in a number of ways each and every day.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Columbus County School (CCS) district is a public school system located in southeastern North Carolina. The district consists of seventeen schools that serve 5,700 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The school system has nine elementary schools, four middle schools, three traditional high schools, and one early college high school. The Columbus County School system is a rural district bordering Bladen County and Pender County, North Carolina on its northern side; Robeson County, North Carolina on the northwest side; Brunswick County, North Carolina on the southwest side; and Horry County, South Carolina on its southern side. Like other districts across the nation and state, the CCS has experienced a large increase in its teacher turnover rate during the past eight years. Since 2010, CCS teacher turnover rate has increased each year, and this growth is higher than the North Carolina state average over the same eight-year period.

Although teacher turnover is the focus of this study, its impact on lowered student performance and other factors, such as: delayed program implementation and increased district professional development cost will also be examined. These negative impacts reiterate the importance of the development of a streamlined and district-wide model for best practices in teacher retention.

Public schools are constantly challenged to provide an equitable education to all school-aged children. Many of the obstacles public schools face cannot be solved only by teaching the best and most advanced curriculum, or by providing a safe and clean environment for students. The learning gap that exists between students of varying socioeconomic backgrounds is just one example of a challenge that is difficult or impossible for public schools to fix (Adnot, Dee, Katz,

& Wyckoff, 2016). Although many school systems across the United States have developed extensive intervention programs to address learning gaps that exist between students of various socioeconomic backgrounds, the public school system has no control of the socioeconomic environmental factors that influence student advancement or achievement. Although the public school system cannot control some of those factors, it can help mitigate the influence of some of these factors, by reversing high rates of teacher turnover, to help promote student achievement.

One of the best ways to improve student achievement is through the recruitment, cultivation, and retention of qualified teachers. Studies show that schools with lower teacher turnover often have higher student achievement (Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2012). Therefore, as a way of both addressing student performance and teacher quality and satisfaction in the Columbus County School system, this study was developed to analyze and implement a district-wide model in best practices of retaining CCS teachers.

Background of the Problem

One specific area that has been proven to affect student achievement is teacher turnover. Turnover occurs when a teacher decides not to return to his or her same teaching position, whether that means taking a position at another school or changing professions entirely. Schools with low teacher turnover rates are made up of educators who have remained at the same school year after year. These schools often report smaller class sizes, appropriate funding for teacher and student resources like textbooks and supplies, and better preparation and mentorship programs for new teachers (Westervelt, 2016). On the other end of the spectrum, high teacher turnover rates can have a negative impact on student achievement, whether through disrupting productive relationships between teachers and students, or severing other social and institutional relationships needed to produce a functional learning environment (Ronfeldt et al., 2012, p. 7).

As opposed to factors like socioeconomic status or home environment, teacher turnover is an area that the public school system can work to improve. Through the development and implementation of policies and practices to improve and retain teachers, school systems can provide teachers with the support and resources they need. Nationally, about 30% of new teachers leave the profession after five years, and the turnover rate is fifty percent higher in high-poverty schools when compared to more affluent schools (Ingersoll, 2001). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average teacher turnover rate in the United States is around 17%. Urban school districts in the United States have a higher turnover rate of approximately 20%.

Not only can high teacher turnover rates negatively impact student achievement, but high turnover can also negatively affect school systems financially. Since new teachers have to go through more rigorous and substantive orientation and training processes, it is costlier to hire new teachers than to retain those who have already participated in training. Furthermore, the monies spent to train and retain teachers could be spent on more beneficial programs within school districts.

The per-teacher cost associated with teacher turnover varies across the nation depending on the size and location of the school district. In 2007, researchers in conjunction with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future conducted a study in five school districts to help determine the cost associated with teacher turnover. In both small and large districts, the study found that the costs of recruiting, hiring, and training a replacement teacher are substantial (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). In Granville County, North Carolina, the cost of each teacher who left the district was just under \$10,000.00. In a small rural district such as Jemez Valley, New Mexico, the cost per teacher is \$4,366.00. In Milwaukee, the average cost

per teacher was \$15,325.00. In a very large district like Chicago, the average cost was \$17,872.00 per teacher. The total cost of turnover in the Chicago Public Schools is estimated to be over \$86 million per year. It is clear that schools lose thousands of dollars each time a teacher leaves (Barnes et al., 2007).

Specifically, in the state of North Carolina, the teacher turnover rate reached 13.4% in the 2016-2017 school year. Of this 13.4%, 4.8% of teachers left their districts to work in schools elsewhere (Hui & Helms, 2018). Whether a teacher leaves the profession altogether, retires, or changes school districts, the impact is felt by the students in the schools and the classrooms that have been left behind. A 2014-2015 Columbus County School District report categorized teacher demographics on a local level. Among elementary school teachers in Columbus County, 25% were in their first three years of teaching, 21% had four to ten years of experience teaching, and 53% held more than ten years of teaching experience (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). Since studies show that teachers at the beginning of their careers and those at the age of retirement make up the highest risk and percentage of teachers who leave their positions, it is important to take this number into account when considering implementing new programs and practices aimed at retaining teachers. With one in four elementary educators in Columbus County considered as beginning teachers, it is essential to evaluate and update the supportive services and practices that assist new teachers. On the middle school front, the numbers are similar, with 18% of CCS teachers in their first three years, 25% in years 4-10, and 57% with more than ten years of teaching experience (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). The teacher turnover rate for Columbus County elementary schools in the same year was 13%, and CCS middle school teacher turnover rate was 20%.

Teachers are not the only school employees facing higher than desired turnover rates. In the state of North Carolina, the principal turnover rate is 10%, and at the district level in Columbus County public schools, it is 11% (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). With regards to experience, 44% of CCS principals were in their first three years as a principal, 44% had four to ten years of experience as a principal, and 11% had more than ten years of experience as a school principal (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). Furthermore, a study from the 2016-17 school year found that only 11.1% of CCS principals held advanced degrees, as compared to 21.3% of principal's statewide (Columbus County Schools 2016-2017 District Profile, 2017).

Figure 1 shows teacher turnover numbers for eighteen public Columbus County schools from 2012-2017. The five-year period shows that there are some schools in the district who struggle more than others, with regard to teacher turnover. For example, Acme Delco Middle School has some of the highest, most consistent turnover percentages, with 46% in 2013, 42.9% in 2015, and 35% in 2017. On the contrary, Old Dock Elementary School records a low percentage of teacher turnover, with teacher turnover totaling less than 7% in all years studied. While it is clear that the Columbus County School district has much room to improve across the board when it comes to teacher turnover, schools like Old Dock Elementary show that the district already has some successful policies in place. These policies simply need to be streamlined and organized into a district-wide model that takes principal and teacher feedback into consideration, as well as evidence-based practices that have been proven to improve teacher retention.

When teachers leave the profession or simply move out of a school district to teach in another local education agency (LEA), a reason code is assigned to explain the departure. Figure 2 represents the Columbus County School teachers and the North Carolina state reason codes for

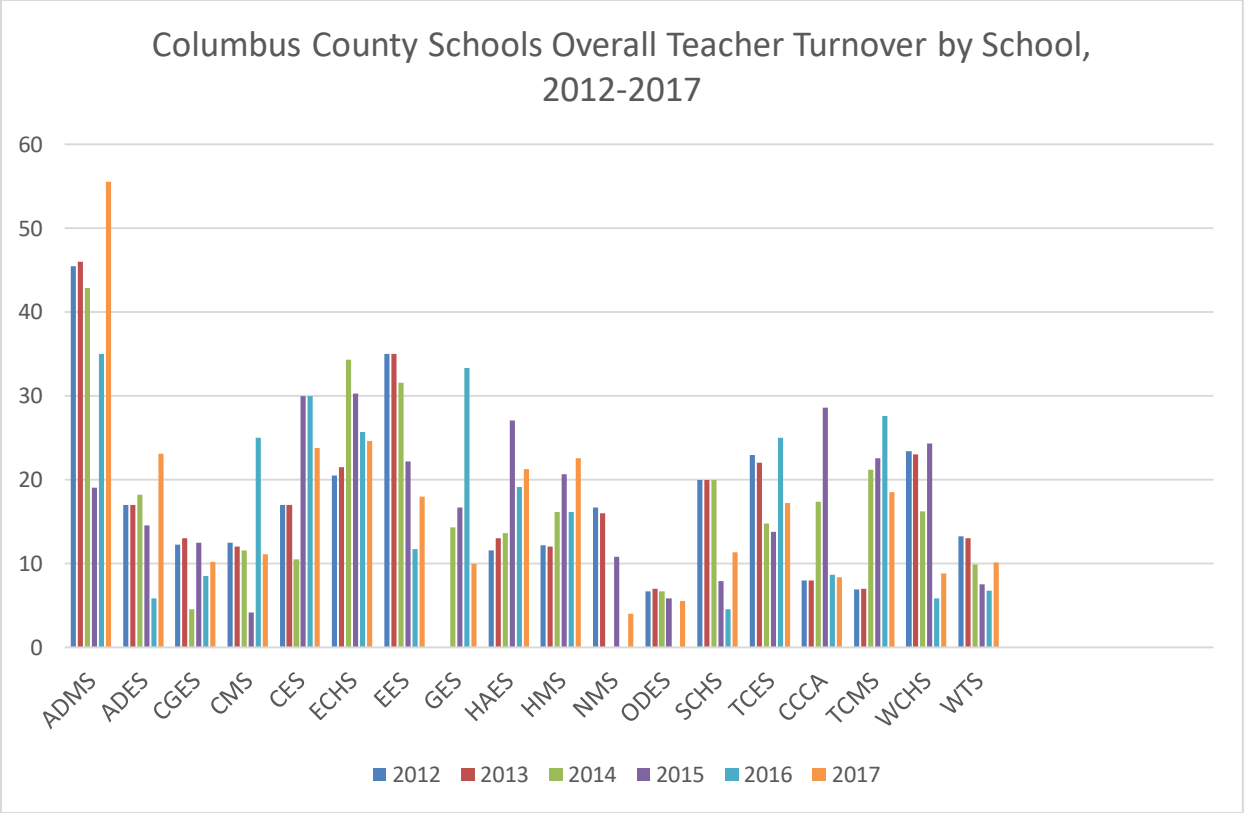


Figure 1. Teacher turnover numbers for eighteen public Columbus County schools from 2012-2017.

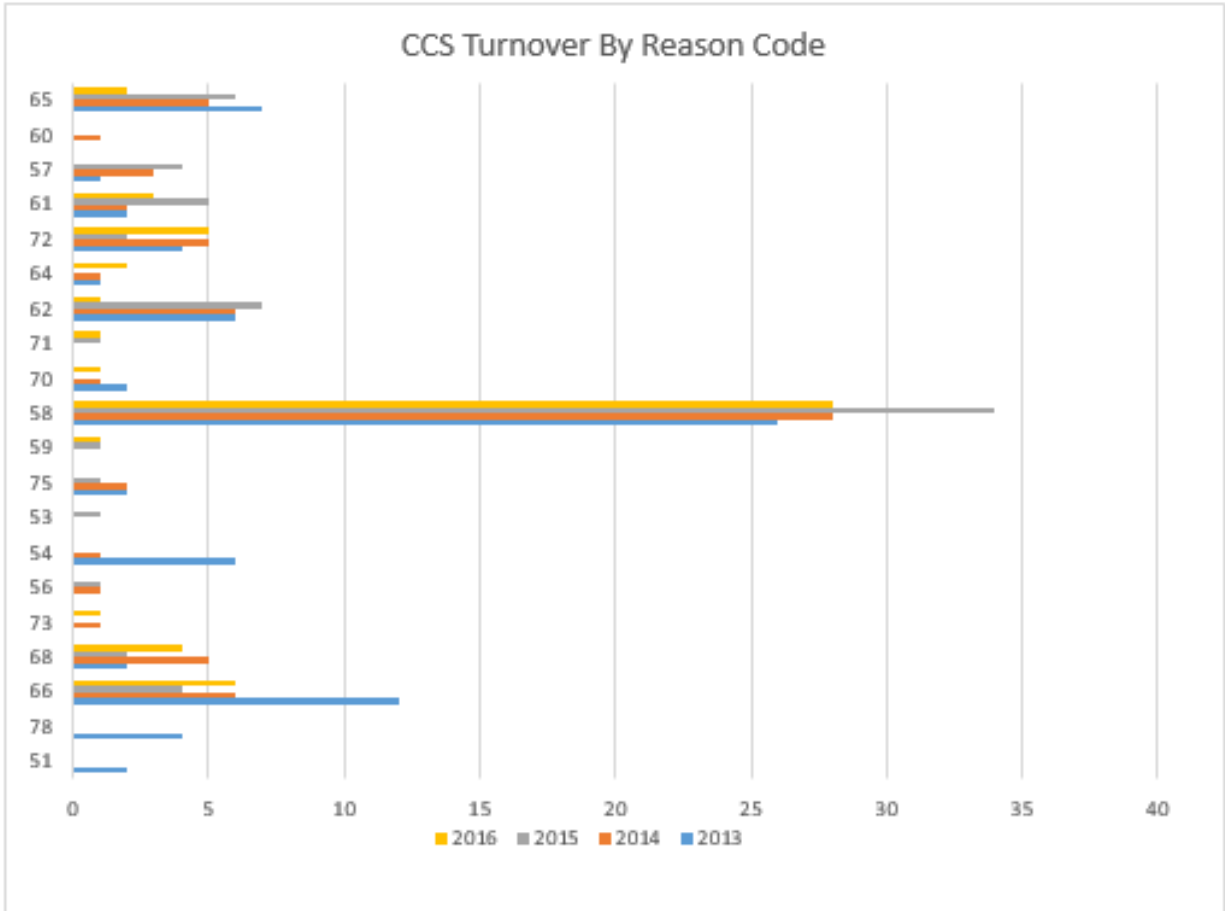


Figure 2. Columbus County Schools teachers and the North Carolina state reason codes for teacher turnover from 2013 to 2016.

teacher turnover from 2013 to 2016. The data in this chart show that the top reason for CCS teacher turnover is code 58, which explains that the teacher “Resigned- to teach in another NC public school system” (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession - NC Public Schools, 2017). Other top reasons throughout the last few years include code 66, or “Retired with full benefits,” code 65, or “Resigned- other reasons,” and code 62, or “Resigned- to teach in another state.” Understanding the reason codes behind Columbus County Schools’ teacher turnover numbers is essential to addressing the localized issues that contribute to educators leaving these schools. Since the most cited reasons for leaving Columbus County Schools include resigning to teach in other districts or states, it is clear that the policymakers of CCS need to consider what motivations other school districts and states are using to recruit CCS teachers. For example, it is well-known that neighboring Horry County, South Carolina averages higher starting teacher salaries than those of Columbus County Schools. This study will use this type of information, as well as feedback from teachers, to determine the draw of other local education agencies and how CCS can implement and improve upon those practices. It will furthermore be essential to delve into the “other reasons” teachers give for exiting the position. By using data from previous years, communicating with current teachers and administrators, and consulting a range of peer-reviewed literature, the problem of teacher turnover within the Columbus County School district can be addressed.

The trend of climbing teacher turnover can be observed, nationally, state-wide, and even locally. In Figure 3, it is observable that the Columbus County School district’s teacher turnover rate is slightly higher than the corresponding state average. Over a seven-year period, CCS teacher turnover rates fell from 12.85% in 2009 to 11.10% in 2010. From there, the turnover rate has grown to its highest level at 18.03% and plateaued to around 17% for the last two years.

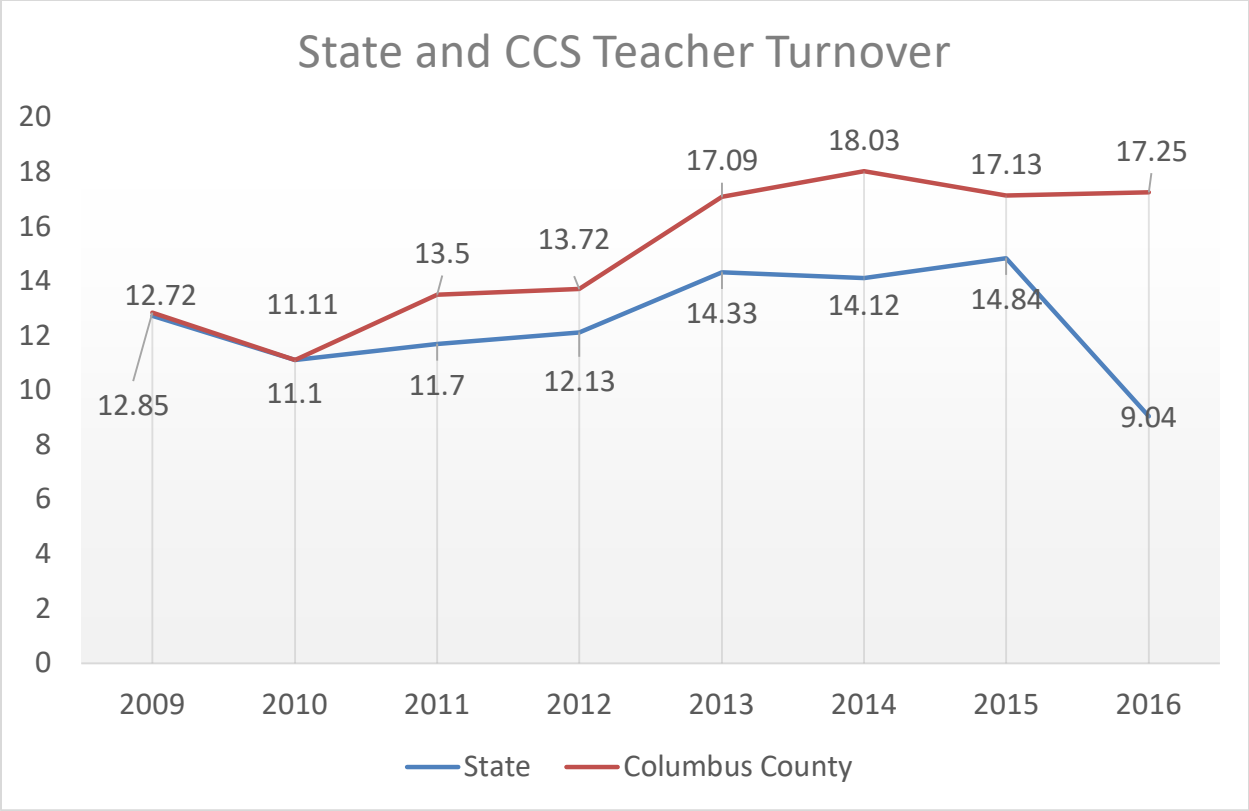


Figure 3. State and CCS Teacher Turnover vs state average.

State-wide teacher turnover, however, seems to have stabilized around 14% from 2013 to 2015, before dropping significantly to 9.04% in the 2016 school year. To develop a best practices model for teacher retention among Columbus County Schools, this study will also examine what nearby school districts are doing to help reduce teacher turnover, as well as to recruit new, highly qualified teachers.

In Figure 4, the differences in teacher turnover can be seen across counties and school districts in the surrounding local area. From 2012 to 2016, the Columbus County School system has been one of the districts in southeastern North Carolina with the highest and most consistent rate of teacher turnover. In both 2014 and 2016, CCS schools had higher teacher turnover rates than Bladen, Brunswick, Robeson, and Whiteville city school districts at 18.01% and 17.04%, respectively.

In summary, one problem facing the Columbus County School system, like countless others across the state and nation, is the teacher turnover rate, which in turn negatively affects student performance. Teacher turnover occurs when educators leave the school at which they are presently employed. As a result, each year, students nationwide return after the summer break to more than 100,000 classrooms that are staffed by under-qualified instructors. Teachers who are not fully qualified to teach are sometimes hired as a last-resort by districts who have vacancies to fill from the previous year. Though a portion of these vacancies occur due to retirement, overall, 90% of teaching vacancies are created by those educators who have decided to leave the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The United States teacher turnover rate is unique in that it is about double the rate of comparable education systems in Canada and Finland. This difference shows that teacher turnover is a problem that can be improved with best practices in retaining classroom teachers.

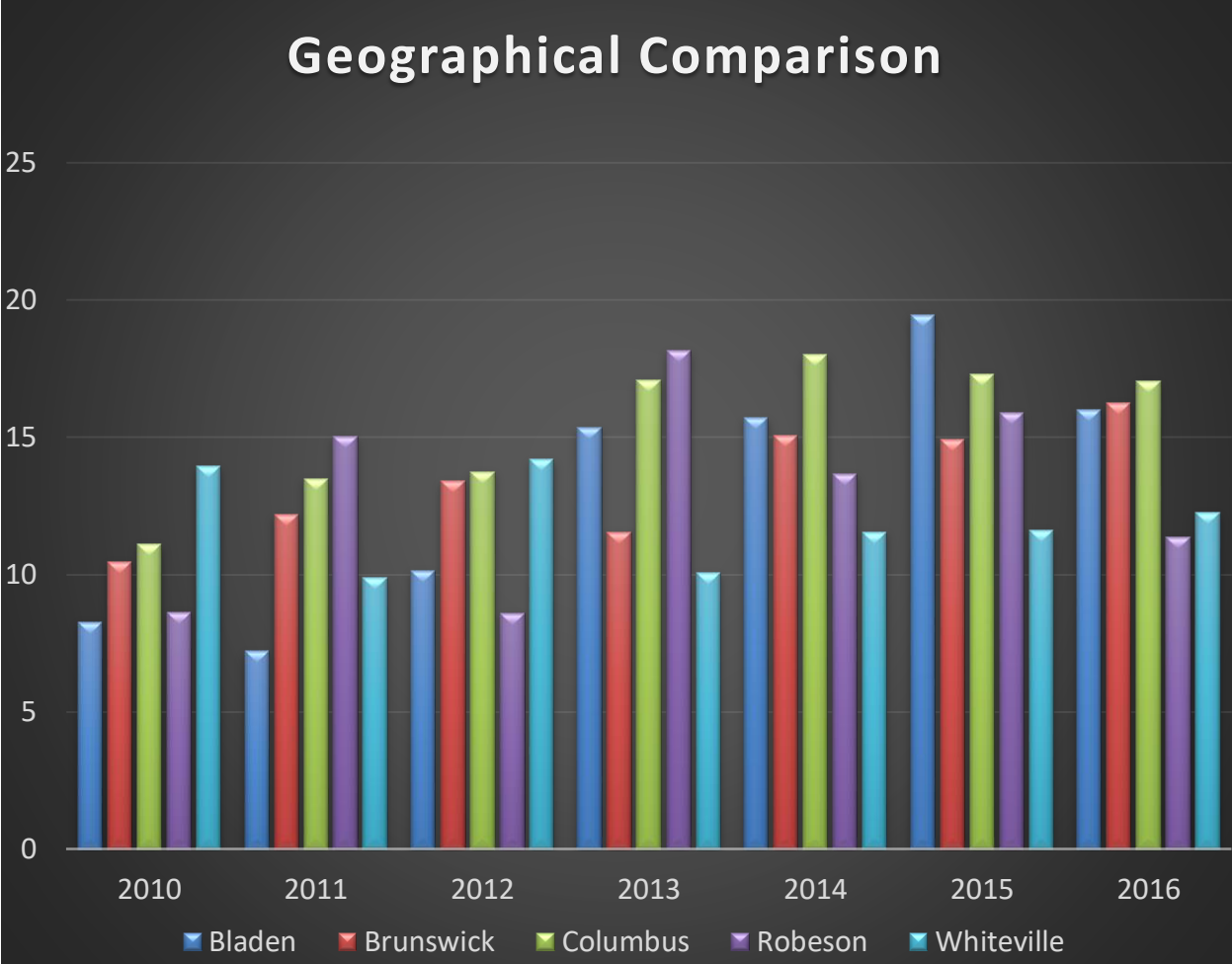


Figure 4. Differences in teacher turnover across counties and school districts.

As previously stated, North Carolina, and more specifically, the Columbus County School district, faces challenges with teacher turnover. A study conducted by the NC Department of Public Instruction over the 2013-2014 school year noted 28 self-reported reasons educators gave for leaving. Among those reasons, the top five were reported that the leaving teacher moved to a non-teaching position in education, resigned due to movement required by Military order, reached the end of TFA term, reached end of VIF term, and resigned in lieu of non-renewal (2013-2014 Annual Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, 2014). VIF teachers are those teachers who have come to the United States from their country of origin to teach. TFA (Teach for America) teachers are educators who commit to working in low-income areas. Furthermore, the study found that 37% of North Carolina teachers left due to personal reasons, 30% left the district where they worked but remained in the field of education, 18% left for reasons beyond the local education agency's (LEA) control, 8% were terminated, and 7% left for other reasons (2013-2014 Annual Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, 2014).

When examining the local effects of teacher turnover in the Columbus County School system, it is apparent that the same trend seen across the state and nation is occurring locally. According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the 2016 teacher turnover rate for elementary schools in the state of North Carolina was 14% (Hinchcliffe, 2016). Using the same data, it was reported that among elementary schools in Columbus County, the teacher turnover rate was 13%. Middle schools in Columbus County reported a 20% turnover rate, which weighed in higher than the state's 16% turnover rate for middle schools (Hinchcliffe, 2016). While these numbers hover near or above the state average, there is clearly room for improvement when it comes to retaining highly qualified classroom teachers in CCS.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction also reported data regarding the percentage of highly qualified teachers working in school districts across the state. Across North Carolina, the state average for employing highly qualified elementary school teachers was an impressive 99% in 2016 (Hinchcliffe, 2016). However, in Columbus County elementary schools, 97% of elementary school teachers are highly qualified. For middle schools, 96% of middle school teachers in the state were considered highly qualified in 2016, while only 90% of Columbus County middle school teachers were designated as being highly qualified to teach their subject matter or grade level (Hinchcliffe, 2016). Though 90% still sounds very high, it should be stated that this percentage in effect, means that one out of every ten teachers in a Columbus County middle school lacks the needed qualifications to benefit student performance the most.

As demonstrated in other parts of the study, high teacher turnover rates can lead to under-qualified or unqualified personnel being placed in teaching positions. This trend needs to be reversed. Though other school districts in the state may have drastically higher rates of teacher turnover, it is important to work with new and current teachers now to encourage them to remain in the profession and at the schools that have come to rely on them. This encouragement must go beyond mere words and gestures. The school district should take a step further by introducing a district-wide plan for retaining great teachers by implementing new best practices, as well as exploring and gauging retention practices that have already been implemented at some schools in the county.

Once the problem of teacher turnover has been defined and outlined on national, state, and local levels the discussion can turn to the problems caused by high teacher turnover. Two of these problems include financial costs and decreased student performance. The Learning Policy

Institute estimates that each teacher who leaves an urban school setting can cost the respective school district up to \$20,000 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). These financial costs can directly impact the second teacher turnover concern: student performance.

With a loss of funding, school districts not only miss out allocating those resources toward teacher supplies, school facilities, and other district programs, but they also often end up hiring teachers who are not highly qualified. Under-qualified instructors are not as prepared to face the daily challenges of teaching and furthermore may not even be well-versed in the subject matter for which they are responsible.

Though teacher turnover rates are relatively high all across the United States, those districts serving low-income or high-minority populations often suffer the worst from this issue. A 2004 study of 66 elementary schools in a large American urban district compared student reading and math scores with the district's teacher turnover rate and found correlational evidence to suggest that higher teacher turnover can lead to lower test scores (Ronfeldt et al., 2012). Whether low student performance leads teachers to leave or whether teachers leaving the profession directly causes lower student performance may still be a topic of discussion, but it is clear that steps should be taken to minimize the teacher turnover rate as much as possible.

In the 2013-2014 school year, the Columbus County School district had a total of 427 teachers. The total number of teachers who left their positions numbered seventy-seven, with thirty of those remaining in the field of education but within a different school. Fourteen teachers left for reasons beyond the LEA's control, while sixteen left for personal reasons, ten were terminated, and seven left for other reasons (2013-2014 Annual Report on Teachers Leaving the Profession, 2014).

In the school year following the 2013-2014 Annual Report, Columbus County School system did not see a large change in End of Grade Test (EOG) proficiencies, but the EOG scores nonetheless remained less than ideal. For example, 2015 EOG test takers reached 44.4% proficiency in the district and 56.3% proficiency in the state (End-Of-Grade Assessments, 2015). These EOG test scores also portray the achievement gaps between subgroups of Columbus County's students. While the district's white students reached district proficiency rate of 55.8%, Hispanic students averaged a 38% district proficiency rate, and African American students averaged a district proficiency rate of 28% (End of Grade Assessments, 2015). While there is room for improvement among all subgroups, it is clear that the achievement gap needs to be addressed. Since it has been established that teacher turnover can contribute to decreased student performance, it stands to reason that by instituting better practices for new and struggling teachers, EOG test scores will also improve.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major challenges to improving student performance in the United States is reducing teacher turnover. Teacher turnover is a prevalent problem within our nation and it has reached alarming levels in North Carolina and the Columbus County School district. Therefore, it stands to reason that by addressing the problem of teacher turnover, schools in Columbus County, North Carolina and throughout the United States can see improved student performance in the months and years to come.

Underachieving schools leave students with little to no options for enhancing their economic livelihoods. If they graduate, many students from these schools struggle to participate in the economy of the country because of the minimal skills they have learned from the education system, with many eventually finding themselves unemployed. Poor performing

schools can lead to higher rates of crime and higher unemployment rates in the country. In fact, a staggering 2013 report found that the United States could save about \$18.5 billion in annual crime costs with an improvement in the high school male graduation rate of just 5% (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013). Thus, a great way to diminish the school to prison pipeline among these school systems is to ensure that these schools have the resources and highly qualified personnel needed to provide an exemplary United States education. Improving teacher turnover rates can be one of the first ways to tackle this staggering problem. If improvements in teacher turnover can improve even a small percentage of student performance, this improvement could translate to billions of dollars allocated elsewhere.

It is vital to note that many studies on the effects of teacher turnover already exist. The link between high teacher turnover rates and lower student performance is also well-researched. However, there is no study that has focused on the relationship between these two factors within the context of underfunded public schools in Columbus County. Furthermore, most of the studies on this subject are quite general and their findings, therefore, are not readily applicable. There is a huge informational gap in terms of how teacher turnover in the Columbus County School system relates to student performance in the system. The recommendations and findings made in general studies may not apply to the dynamics of the state of North Carolina or CCS. This study will produce results specific to CCS. It is important to have such a categorical study of CCS so that it provides ideas and recommendations, which are customized to suit the local dynamics. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the existing informational gap regarding the best practices in retaining quality teachers in CCS in order to devise a district-wide model for solving this problem. The best practices proposed in this model will be based on scholarly literature, current successful programs that combat teacher turnover, as well as qualitative and quantitative

feedback provided by Columbus County teachers and principals. The possible solutions suggested from this study will be applicable in CCS because they will account for local dynamics and factors affecting teacher turnover.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify the causes of teacher turnover in the CCS system especially during the early stages of the teaching profession. Moreover, it is the purpose of this study to find out how this teacher turnover impacts academic performance of students in the low-income public schools of Columbus County, North Carolina. Finally, the study will seek to provide suggestions for developing and implementing best practices for retaining teachers and especially new teachers, who are one of the most at-risk subgroups of teachers who leave the profession.

It is vital to note that the causes of teacher turnover are quite diverse. Developing a better understanding of these causes requires a holistic approach so that the major factors influencing teacher turnover are identified. To clearly comprehend the factors related to teacher turnover decisions, this study analyzes the impacts of salary, working environment and career training experiences on the satisfaction of teachers. The study also presents some of the school characteristics that affect the rate of teacher turnover in the process of developing a district model that can be implemented throughout the Columbus County School System. This model of best practices will incorporate existing programs, as well as new ideas that are focused on keeping qualified teachers satisfied in their positions at all Columbus County schools. Many components will be considered, from teacher feedback and expectations as well as principal support. The results and findings will be used to design and propose a plan that will be specific to the Columbus County School district.

Significance of the Study

This study is vital to stakeholders in the education sector of Columbus County, North Carolina. Since it is a district that is impacted from the disruption caused by the high rate of voluntary teacher turnover, CCS must find this study a worthwhile document for its policymakers. The lack of empirical research on the relation of teacher turnover to academic performance in CCS has been a problem in this district for some time. This study offers the Columbus County School system information that is customized to the local circumstances and needs of Columbus County, hence making it quite relevant and applicable within the entire district. In short, this study will identify the causes of teacher turnover and its impact on the academic performance of students in Columbus County's low-income public schools. This study also gives effective recommendations about the actions policymakers should consider to help solve this problem. In fact, policymakers in Columbus County will also significantly benefit from the findings of this study, as it offers insights on some effective on-the-job professional training programs for teachers.

Furthermore, this study is not just important to the education systems already affected by the problem of teacher turnover alone, but it is also important for future researchers. The information contained in this study adds to the body of existing literature on this particular subject. Therefore, future researchers will find it worthy to review as they seek insights to inform their studies.

Additionally, different disciplines are integrated in order to explain the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County. These different disciplines include labor economics, organizational behavior management, human resource management, and psychology. It is this interdisciplinary approach that makes the study quite useful and significant to users. It will be a

very effective resource for those interested in analyzing the problem of teacher turnover holistically. Furthermore, the methodology employed in this study is significant because it gives accurate estimates of the relationship between teacher turnover and student performance while developing a best practices model for retaining teachers that can be implemented across the schools of the Columbus County School district.

Study Questions

This particular study is guided by the following nine study questions. The study questions were developed using input from stakeholders in the CCS system.

1. What is the status of teacher attrition and turnover in the State of North Carolina public schools, Columbus County Schools, and surrounding districts in terms of data and trends?
2. What are the major reasons teachers continue to work in CCS?
3. What is the impact of teacher turnover on the academic performance of low-income public school students in the Columbus County School district?
4. Which actions can help minimize the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County?
5. What current best practices are being utilized by schools in the Columbus County School system?
6. How do low-performing and high-performing schools in Columbus County compare with regard to teacher turnover?
7. What major components should be included in the teacher retention plan according to CCS stakeholders?
8. Is the current mentor program producing the desired results?

9. Does the Columbus County School System need a comprehensive teacher retention plan?

Definition of Terms

A number of terms used in this study must be clearly defined. First, it is vital to understand the meaning of the term teacher turnover as it is applied in the context of this dissertation. Turnover, as applied here, does not include transfers within the same school. Thus a teacher's departure from one CCS school counts as one instance of teacher turnover for the school but not for the district. Teacher turnover means the rate at which educators leave a school relative to the mean number of teachers employed in the same year. Therefore, turnover in the context of this dissertation specifically means leaving a profession either voluntarily or involuntarily.

As turnover is the prime term to be used in this study, it is vital to know the major types of teacher turnover. Teacher turnover happens in many different ways. Two of the major types of turnover to be considered in this study are voluntary and involuntary. It must be noted that this particular study focuses on the voluntary type of turnover only. Voluntary turnover is initiated by the employee and is a personal decision of the worker to end his/her contract with the employer. This voluntary turnover usually takes place for different reasons including minimal remuneration, a poor working environment and other social factors.

Nevertheless, it is vital to understand involuntary turnover so that the distinction between these two types can be made. Involuntary turnover refers to the departure of a worker at the will of their employer. In this case, employers decide that the teacher should leave the school for any number of reasons, such as poor performance, the need to cut down labor costs or punitive purposes.

The problem of teacher turnover in the State of North Carolina typically arises from the voluntary departure of the educators. It is quite rare to witness the involuntary type of teacher turnover in North Carolina. Therefore, the problem to be addressed will be voluntary teacher turnover.

It is important to define two types of voluntary turnover that include the functional and dysfunctional forms. The functional voluntary turnover is needed in any organization since it brings with it the chance for recruiting new and productive employees. Functional turnover is therefore normally regarded as positive and beneficial to the organization. However, dysfunctional turnover is the excessive loss of effective and skilled employees by a given organization, which then negatively affects the organization through the high costs of recruiting new employees and the instability created in the organization. It is vital to note that this dissertation focuses on dysfunctional teacher turnover, which hurts the education system in many ways, such as causing lowered levels of student performance. In short, turnover, at least in the context of this dissertation, simply refers to the voluntary exit of employees from the teaching profession in CCS.

Other key terms like End-of-Course Tests (EOC) and End-of-Grade Tests (EOG) will also be used in this dissertation. EOC Tests are used to gauge a student's knowledge of subject-related concepts as required by the NC Standard Course of Study. EOC Tests are given in three subject-areas: NC Math 1, English II, and Biology. EOG Tests, on the other hand, measure student performance with regards to the goals, objectives, and grade-level competencies indicated by North Carolina school standards. EOG Tests are administered to students in grades 3-8 in math, science, and ELA.

EOC and EOG test scores help the state of North Carolina and individual districts like

Columbus County monitor which of their educational facilities are meeting standards. Schools not meeting standards are categorized as low-performing schools, another key term in this study. According to North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction (2018), "Low-performing schools are those that receive a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" as defined by G.S. 115C-83.15". This study will compare what low-performing schools in CCS are doing to retain teachers and improve student performance with measures taken by the higher-performing schools in the district to develop a model of best practices that can be implemented at all schools throughout the Columbus County School system.

Conclusion

Teacher turnover negatively affects a range of areas within education, from budgetary spending to student performance to teacher satisfaction and school culture. The statistics provided in this chapter show that the turnover rate of teachers in Columbus County is above the national and state averages and should be addressed in a localized manner. One way to address the problem of teacher turnover is through the development of a pilot program within Columbus County Schools that emphasizes best practices in teacher retention and can be applied across the district.

Although all teacher turnover is examined and addressed in this study, one segment of teachers who leave the profession at higher rates are beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are highlighted in this study. Currently, new teachers work an average of four years before leaving the career field. In Chapter 2 of this study, the literature, related studies, statistics dealing with new teacher turnover, reasons for leaving, and best practices for reducing new teacher turnover are included.

After analyzing some of the reasons why new teachers leave the profession, best practices can be designed and implemented in order to help retain these new teachers who are at a higher risk of leaving their positions. New-teacher-focused best practices explored in this study include understanding and developing early experiences that help retain new teachers, providing strong administrative support for new teachers, and implementing new and improved systems of support (such as mentoring programs, supportive seminars, and professional coaching from other sources).

Following this discussion of literature, the third chapter is dedicated to the research design and methodology of the study. This section explains the background of the study, a description of how study findings are organized, the main objectives of the study, the study questions, and the tools, methods, and procedures for analyzing the data used in this study. In addition, Chapter 3 discusses the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) approach to organizational improvement, the study questions, the actions taken to conduct the study, the plan for analyzing the data, and the plan for sharing the results.

Following Chapter 3, Chapter 4 details the findings of the study. Data is analyzed, processed, and presented in a meaningful way to aid researchers in drawing inferences and making suggestions for best practices among teachers in CCS.

In Chapter 5, the analyzed data from Chapter 4 will be further interpreted to present what implications and conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. Chapter 5 concentrates on advancing solutions to problems described in earlier chapters. The researcher also provides an outline for best practices to decrease the high rate of teacher turnover in CCS. Chapter 5 will then conclude with a summation of the entire study, including a brief overview of the problem, the methods used to analyze the problem, implications for schools and district leaders, and

school leaders based on the findings, along with solutions and suggestions for improving the retention of teachers and especially beginning teachers. Together, these five chapters will reveal the problems of teacher turnover in CCS and how these rates can be decreased through the implementation of new comprehensive teacher retention plan designed to meet the needs of the Columbus County School district.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to understand the negative impact of teacher turnover in Columbus County, NC, it is necessary to recognize the importance of providing a quality education for students. Education is a basic necessity for youth across the world. However, the quality of education students receive varies significantly depending on the location and the resources available for schooling. It is essential that the education provided to the children of the United States of America be of the highest quality. Today's children will be responsible for the future success of our nation. Like all other states across the country, North Carolina's future is highly dependent on the quality of education provided to youths who will take charge in the coming years (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). One of the best ways to prepare today's youth for tomorrow's challenges is by providing them with a quality education.

Though there are instances of Americans becoming successful without furthering their education, studies show that a person's level of education directly correlates with lifetime income attainment and financial independence. In 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that high school dropouts can expect to earn a yearly income of \$20,241, which is \$10,386 less than an American with a high school diploma. This trend continues to grow as education level increases (Breslow, 2012). For example, women who earn graduate degrees can expect to earn over \$1 million dollars more than those without a college education over the course of their lifetime. A child's education is a major factor in determining his/her worth in society in the future. Thus without a proper education, one is highly limited in terms of contributing to societal development or even in terms of earning a stable living.

Therefore, of the many factors that contribute to the quality of an educational program or school system, two factors, in particular, should be discussed: (1) the availability of school resources and (2) the retention of teaching staff.

It is vital to note that the quality of a student's education depends on the resources provided to education systems. Of these resources, a major one that determines the quality of education provided to the students is the teaching staff. The teaching staff, which is the main human resource for schools, has the largest impact on student performance (Ingersoll, 2003). When the right quantity and quality of human resources are used in the organizational processes, this facilitates an organization's achievement of its goals and objectives, as well as its overall performance and productivity.

One of the greatest determinants of high student performance in schools is the attraction and retention of effective teachers. As previously stated, high teacher turnover negatively impacts student performance in schools (Ingersoll & Perda, n.d.). Furthermore, a school that has a high rate of teacher turnover, in most cases, records lower student performance. Therefore, the achievement of high student performance, and of the quality education students need to become higher achieving members of society, depends a great deal on how well schools strive to attract and retain the best quality teachers.

Existing research indicates that 20% of the new entrants in the teaching profession often exit this particular field after just a period of three-years. Urban school districts fare even worse, with an estimated 50% of new teachers in urban areas leaving the teaching field within their first five years (Research Spotlight on Recruiting & Retaining Highly Qualified Teachers, 2017). Staggeringly, many schools in the US lose half of their teaching staff every five years. The exit

of both the new and experienced teachers brings about major challenges to schools, consequently affecting poor student performance.

Teacher turnover has a negative effect on a student's school performance in a range of ways. First and most obvious, teacher turnover causes schools to lose quality teachers. Teachers who leave the profession take with them years of insight, experience, and expertise that those new to the field could have benefited from. Furthermore, the loss of quality educators impacts the effective achievement of educational goals and objectives.

It is clear that when a team loses its best mind or player, it becomes weaker. As a result, the team cannot produce the same results as it did before the departure (Northouse, 2016). This is why teams always struggle to retain their best talents. This same logic is applicable in schools, when the best educator or team leader is lost, the delivery and quality of education that students receive is affected. Great teachers want to work for great school systems that know how to support their staff while delivering the best quality education possible to students.

High teacher turnover rates also affect the level of student performance in schools by impeding the effective implementation of educational programs and professional decisions. When the teachers charged with the responsibility of implementing educational changes and programs in the school exit from the institution, the whole implementation process is disrupted for a considerable period of time (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Before exiting, these veteran teachers have already put in time and effort to learn and devise ways to carry out new policies and protocols. Even if new teachers are hired to replace the ones who leave, it takes time to train them on program methods, which can slow or even stop the implementation of an educational program. New teachers already have so much to learn in their initial years in education, which

makes it even harder for them to learn and carry on with what programs have been established in the schools where they are hired.

Furthermore, high teacher turnover is a cause of massive costs for school districts. The amount of money used in advertising new vacancies, as well as interviewing and recruiting new teachers is quite high. In fact, a report from 2015 showed that throughout the United States, school districts spend more than \$2.2 billion due to teacher turnover alone. Apart from the cost of replacing the teachers, there is also the expense of orienting the new staff into school programs (Northouse, 2016). When teachers leave the district or the profession entirely, the money that was dedicated to their recruitment and orientation is a lost investment.

Considering that this lost investment could have provided a multitude of other benefits for the school, it is apparent that changes must be made to retain new teachers. For example, this money could have been used to provide resources for students and staff. These huge costs have a significant bearing on the overall student performance in the school. Therefore, it is essential for school districts, especially in lower-income systems like Columbus County, to ensure that all funding is being used efficiently and in the best way possible to improve the learning environment of Columbus County teachers and students.

However, beyond providing a financial burden on school systems, which may already be limited with regards to resources, the constant turnover of teachers in schools significantly destabilizes teacher-student relationships in the school. A positive teacher-student relationship is crucial when it comes to improving the academic performance of learners. An established teacher-student relationship gives learners the motivation to actively attend lessons and ask clarifying questions about concepts they fail to understand. A strong teacher-student relationship also provides learners with the encouragement to perform well so that they learn how to

appropriately engage in academically and socially productive ways (Gallagher, n.d.). Furthermore, students in high-poverty areas benefit even more from positive teacher-student relationships because of the risks associated with poverty, like high rates of high school dropout, low self-confidence, and lower rates of college applications (Gallagher, n.d.). Research further shows that the trust between teachers and students is a predictor of student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2012). Teacher-turnover eliminates this relationship, consequentially negatively affecting learners greatly in the process. When students do not feel that their teacher is invested in their learning, performance suffers. It takes a great deal of time for learners to establish a progressive teacher-student relationship with the new staff. Therefore diminishing or losing the trusted teacher-student relationship is just another way that teacher turnover can negatively impact the performance of students in schools.

Once it has been established that high teacher turnover rates negatively affect student achievement through the loss of financial resources, the loss of knowledge and experience, as well as through the deterioration of teacher-student relations, it is then vital to consider the reasons why teachers choose to leave the profession. Although each case may be unique, there are studies that show recurring patterns behind the reasons given for teacher turnover in the United States.

Teacher turnover occurs for a number of reasons. It is vital to understand these reasons, to better retain teachers. One major reason for turnover is the absence of worthy remuneration for important teachers. In the 2016-2017 school year, starting teachers in the United States earned an average of \$38,617 per year (2016-2017 Average Starting Teacher Salaries by State, 2017). In North Carolina, that average drops to \$37, 514 (2016-2017 Average Starting Teacher Salaries by State, 2017). When considering that these teachers must go through college training, a

baccalaureate program, and certification training and testing, it is clear that this starting salary of \$37,514 does not do much to entice the best and brightest to invest their efforts in becoming teachers. There are many other programs that take far less time to complete but offer better salaries. Across the United States, teachers have shared stories of having to work second and third jobs just to afford to provide for their families. The poor remuneration comes in form of minimal basic salaries and the lack of fringe benefits that some more progressive companies in the private sector offer.

Another factor that contributes to high levels of teacher turnover is poor teaching conditions in schools. Many schools do not have the teaching resources they require; a factor that greatly frustrates teachers. It is difficult to engage 21st Century learners without 21st Century tools, and many schools, especially in rural districts, are not equipped with latest and best resources, technologically or otherwise. In districts that serve impoverished populations, there is frequently a lack of funding and tax base to provide for better computers and technical tools in schools. Sometimes resources, like textbooks and everyday supplies, are very difficult to provide to students in need. Teachers will then use their own funds to stock their classrooms with various items, from pencils and crayons to tables and bookshelves. The lack of needed teaching resources usually contributes to the teacher being ineffective through no fault of his/her own, and nonetheless produces lower student performance. And when learners perform poorly, the blame is normally directed at the teacher, whether deservedly or not, for lowered student performance. Insufficient teaching resources, in addition to low starting teacher salaries, cause many teachers to leave the profession.

Although many school districts across the country provide teachers with a small stipend for purchasing classroom supplies, recent surveys show the allocated amount is not enough to

stop teachers from having to use their own money to cover the costs of additional resources. For example, recent surveys from the National School Supply and Equipment Association show that teachers spend between \$500 and \$1,000 out of pocket to stock their classrooms with needed supplies that are not provided by the school district (Clark, 2016). In the state of North Carolina exclusively, state funding for classroom supplies dropped from more than \$60 per student in 2010 to less than \$30 per student in the 2015-2016 school year (Clark, 2016).

While the Columbus County School system receives more state and federal funding than the average public school in North Carolina, local funding is below the state average. In the 2016-2017 school year, CCS received \$1,054.99 per pupil in local funding, while the average North Carolina public school received \$2,231.65 per student in local funding. Combining local, state, and federal education funding, CCS received \$9,910.83 per student, and the spending of this funding fell into four categories. 82% of the funds were allocated to compensation for employees, 8.6% went to supplies, 7.8% for services, and 1.6% to instructional equipment (Columbus County Schools 2016-17 District Profile, 2017).

With these factors in mind, this study will investigate the problem of teacher turnover in North Carolina and particularly among Columbus County Schools. The key focus of this dissertation is to establish and review the results of teacher support platforms to improve teacher retention and produce better student performance in Columbus County Schools. This study will establish a relationship between teacher turnover and student performance in the Columbus County School system and seek to develop a district-wide plan to implement best practices for retaining teachers. Many researchers have dealt with the issue of teacher turnover; however, none of the existing studies analyze this subject within the scope of Columbus County Schools.

Most scholars attempting to comprehend the problem of teacher turnover have commonly laid much focus on the reasons the educators decide to leave the profession. This focus primarily emphasizes two factors as causes: opportunity costs and remuneration. However, recent research is now shifting this traditional focus. Whereas the traditional focus on remuneration and opportunity costs was informed by the limited availability of relevant information, researchers have now turned their focus to other factors like working conditions, peer support and treatment from the school and district administration as they seek to find new and better ways of retaining teachers and decreasing teacher turnover.

Salary and Teacher Characteristics

Teacher turnover typically has a U-shaped correlation with age and experience (Monk, 2007). More specifically, the less experienced and younger teachers have the highest likelihood of leaving the profession. Younger, inexperienced teachers are more likely to leave due to lack of support, low pay, and the unrealistic expectations placed on them by school administrators (Mulvahill, 2018). The same trend can be observed with the more experienced and older teachers, who typically leave due to retirement, health reasons, and loss of enthusiasm that they felt earlier in their career. However, the experienced, but middle-aged teachers have minimal likelihood of leaving the profession. Different reasons account for the nature of the relationship between teacher turnover and age as well as experience.

Beyond age and years of experience, an acceptable work-life balance is an important indicator of teacher job satisfaction. Teachers have many obligations required outside of the normal school day, including parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular coaching, and participation in school events. The additional duties can be seen as a hindrance that takes time away from a teacher's outside life, children, or family. A 2012 study of public schools in

Springfield, Illinois found that teachers average working 61 hours per week during the school year. The study also noted that the average teacher workday involves about one and a half hours inside the school plus more than two additional hours of work from home each day after school. Furthermore, teachers spend an average of three and a half hours per day completing non-instructional duties (Bruno, Ashby, & Manzo, 2012).

Though these motivating factors present challenges to school districts in the retention of quality teachers, there are steps that can be taken to minimize teacher turnover where possible. For example, low wages encourage teachers to leave the teaching profession or to relocate to states or cities that pay teachers more money. It is understandable that teachers would easily decide to leave a comparatively low-paying job in the teaching profession when they have a chance to earn more in another career field. The first way to address this is for state and local leaders to adjust the salary scales for their teachers. Teachers in a range of states from around the United States have already come together to push for pay raises in places like Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Arkansas, so this is definitely an undertaking that can and should be pursued.

Working Conditions

The working conditions of a school or classroom has also become a major factor that causes teacher turnover. Traditionally, it was not considered as a significant causative factor. However, many former teachers who left the profession have largely cited the working environment as the key reason for their departure. Working conditions imply different aspects within the working environment, such as the availability of resources for teaching, commuting arrangements, peer support, capacity building opportunities, workload, student behavior, teacher welfare and security within the school (Northouse, 2016). There are also many schools that lack

security, leaving teachers to work while fearing for their lives and the lives of their students. Poor working conditions make it difficult for teachers to perform their tasks, competently.

Moreover, there are schools where the students do not cooperate with their teachers because of rudeness and a culture of stubbornness. When teachers believe they are not receiving the respect they have worked to earn, they may become further disillusioned with the profession.

In other cases, teachers are kept within the school all day without time for proper planning, which increases the workload they must take home. In these cases, teaching is hardly a standard full-time job. Such issues constitute poor working conditions that may lead to a higher teacher turnover rate. A new teacher, without extra assistance to manage a difficult workload, is 33% more likely to leave their school if they find their workload unmanageable (Torres, 2016)

Schools which aim to retain teachers need to make use of better induction methods, better mentoring and professional development programs (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016). To the extent schools succeed in these efforts, they can indirectly help improve student performance by lowering teacher turnover rates (Hanushek et al., 2016). Furthermore, a lack of organizational support for new teachers is a major cause of turnover and, in turn, poor student performance, increased costs of operation, and increased loss of finances necessary to keep schools properly resourced (Kraft, Marinell, & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016). Therefore, teachers require opportunities for gaining constructive feedback and a work environment that is as orderly and disciplined as possible (Kraft et al., 2016).

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Teachers in the United States of America have come under scrutiny by scholars and researchers in recent years as part of the ongoing national debate regarding the problem of teacher turnover, the suitability of the American school system, and student outcomes. The issues

raised in this debate are the poor quality of education and dismal student performance associated with teacher turnover throughout the country and in states like North Carolina. Other factors consistently discussed in this debate include the quality of the teaching force, sufficiency of teacher remuneration, shortages of educators and magnitude of teacher turnover. This specific study is premised on clear and elaborate conceptual and theoretical frameworks, which help foster an accurate understanding of the problem of teacher turnover and the steps that can be taken to resolve this issue in the Columbus County School district.

Human Capital Approach

The first conceptual framework reviewed for this particular study is the human capital approach. It is vital to note that human beings usually make systematic assessments of the advantages and disadvantages of entering and remaining in a given career. Knowing that there are two types of human capital, generic and specific, is also essential to have a clear understanding of teacher turnover (Northouse, 2016). It is said that the probability of turnover is low when the accumulation of specific human capital is large. When that accumulation of specific human capital is low, attrition and turnover become more prevalent and quite likely to occur in the early stages of a given profession.

In the initial contract between a specific teacher and the school district accepting a teaching position is normally premised on the available information and the existent situation. The information available and situation prevailing at the time of making the commitment to work normally inform the commitment of a teacher to work in a given school or enter the teaching profession. Therefore, when teacher turnover occurs, it is important to understand and recognize the change the teacher has experienced from when they first signed onto the job, expecting

certain, favorable conditions, to what they experienced by the time they decided to leave, causing the teacher to reverse his/her initial commitment.

Human capital theory of occupational choice helps people to analyze their available career options before deciding upon which career to enter. The analysis and evaluation of the available career options by a worker are premised on the possible monetary and non-monetary benefits of a career (Northouse, 2016). Furthermore, people assess the realistic negative impacts of choosing a particular career. Based on the outcomes of this systematic assessment, people choose to enter, stay or leave a given profession. Monetary benefits assessed, in this case, include a stream of possible net incomes and other financial allowances. Some of the non-monetary benefits assessed by a worker include chances of promotion through the occupational ranks, working environment, the likely treatment from peers and seniors, as well as the work-life balance. In the case of educators, the human capital theory of occupational choice allows teachers to consider the availability of teaching resources, attitudes of students, parental support and opportunity for career advancement when deciding whether to enter, stay, or leave the teaching profession. It is expected that rational individuals will always choose to enter occupations which maximize their discounted net earnings.

According to the human capital theory, an individual accumulates resources over the time he or she stays in the profession. This accumulated human capital translates into wage premiums. The generic type of capital can be transferred to other careers easily (Northouse, 2016). However, the specific type of human capital cannot be transferred to any other profession apart from the current one. Therefore, if the amount of specific human capital one accrues in his/her profession is huge, it holds a person within that given occupation. On the other hand, if the

generic human capital is low, then the worker may find it beneficial and easy to transfer to another career.

In contrast to general human capital, specific capital includes home ownership and seniority status in a given occupation. At the early stage of the profession, many people do not have the specific capital. This makes it much easier to leave the career field within a few years of entering it. However, with age, a person accumulates a great amount of specific capital that then helps to retain the employee in the occupation.

Therefore, the human capital conceptual framework offers a clear explanation of the variance between turnover at the early career stages and the late periods in the same profession. In the case of the teaching career, this human capital approach explains the reasons for the higher likelihood of teacher turnover among new entrants than for experienced educators who have spent much time in the industry.

The major limitation of this approach is that it assumes an individual always has perfect information regarding the remuneration, benefits and the negative aspects of the jobs while doing the systematic assessment before selecting one. This assumption is wrong because, in reality, the process of job offering is shrouded in uncertainty.

Incomplete Information

The second conceptual framework considered in this study is the concept of incomplete information in various stages of the job offering process. When a potential employee is contacted by the interested employer, a lot of information about the job is not made known to the applicant (Northouse, 2016). Thus during the hiring process, both employer and employee have incomplete knowledge about each other. It is also true that while accepting a given job offer, the employee normally lacks information about the other existent employment opportunities that

may be available. Likewise, potential employers may not have access to information about other interested job seekers.

Considering this concept, early attrition and turnover may be explained as an outcome of limited emergence or revelation of crucial information about the costs and benefits of the current job, relative to other alternative employment opportunities. There are two types of characteristics which are observable from the prospective employee's point of view. Search characteristics are observable even before the actual experience of the employment, which could include the appearance of the school building based on visits during the interview process, first impressions of school personnel, and the distance from the school to the teacher's home. The second category is made up of the specific characteristics that can only be realized after experiencing the job for some time. Additionally, the search features entail items like wages and other benefits (Northouse, 2016), while the specific experience features include workload size and support from the peers as well as the seniors. The availability of teaching resources is another aspect of the job that may not be revealed until a demonstrable amount of time has passed after starting the job.

It must be noted that acceptance of any particular job is conditional. In the event that an already-committed worker realizes specific experience features of the job are below a given preferred or critical level, the worker may just quit. Alternatively, it is the employer who could find the specific experience characteristics of a given worker to be below a critical level, preceding the employer's asking the worker to quit so a replacement can be found (Northouse, 2016). This scenario is real in the education sector. The school district is imperfectly informed about the specific attributes of the applying teacher while considering him/her. If the

performance of the teacher proves to be dismal after he or she is already hired, the school could simply decide to fire him or her based on this new information.

Because there are so many instances where incomplete information is provided during the hiring process, this theory suggests that a job with a high level of experience attributes involves a huge risk of turnover, to the extent employer or employee lack the information needed to deal with these experience attributes. In other words, a job like teaching requires actual time in the classroom with students and everyday routines to understand exactly how the job works. Therefore, the chance of a teacher entering the classroom with unrealistic or false expectations is high, considering there is little chance to become acquainted with the school's norms and procedures prior to stepping into the classroom itself. Even though students who have pursued an education in the teaching field have undergone internships and student teaching experiences, when accepting a teaching position at a new school with different personnel, they could get a very different experience. It is only after beginning and continuing actual practice in the classroom that teachers can develop of sense of how their school operates and whether or not the job is the right one for them. If the new experience attributes realized are not pleasant, it is more likely that the teacher will decide to abandon the profession, or at least the current school where they are employed. With only 13% of new teachers returning to the classroom after their first year in education, there is clearly room for improvement when it comes to presenting new hires with realistic expectations (Neason, 2014).

Life-Cycle Factors

Finally, the concept of life-cycle factors is also of great importance to this subject. The original decision to accept a given profession is based on some familial factors like the existing family status and the choice of the residential location (Northouse, 2016). Therefore, when there

is a change in these factors after a person is already hired, turnover is bound to happen. The upgrading of one's family status may influence him or her to change careers.

Hertzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Job Satisfaction

This study will also review the theory of job satisfaction as explained by Hertzberg. According to Hertzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory of Job Satisfaction, every employee typically has two categories of needs: motivational and hygiene needs (Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, & Provost, 2009). Hertzberg's Theory suggests that employees, and in this case, teachers, will always stay in the profession as long as they feel motivated in their work and have their hygiene needs satisfied. When these needs are not met, teacher turnover is inevitable. In this particular study, there will be a focus on establishing the degree of influence that hygiene needs have on teacher turnover.

However, this particular theory also holds the assumption that all workers lack loyalty to their employers to such a degree that they would leave immediately upon realizing that their needs are not being satisfied. This assumption may be far-fetched since formal employment in the real world is not easy to find and therefore not easy to pass up. Many people continue to work in their current occupations not because of satisfaction but because of the lack of other job opportunities. Therefore, it is possible to have workers who are not satisfied or motivated with their current occupations but who continue to work because of limited options for finding new work.

Dual-factor job satisfaction theory has to be used together with the previous concepts mentioned in order to improve the understanding of the problem of teacher turnover. Job satisfaction is a key factor in deciding to leave the teaching profession. When determining whether to leave the job, teachers consider some of the challenges and factors that have led them

to feel unsatisfied by the current job (Northouse, 2016). Interestingly, almost all the factors that cause teacher turnover are related to a lack of job satisfaction. Subsequently, the reason for not simply explaining teacher turnover as a result of job dissatisfaction is that this variable is quite subjective and there is no standard way to measure it, directly. It has to be indirectly explained using other factors like low salaries and poor working conditions.

Additionally, teachers may have varying views regarding what makes the profession satisfying. These views can vary from teacher to teacher, depending on life goals, expectations, and family life, among other factors. Furthermore, there are certain positive things about the teaching job that may offset the negative side of it. Many teachers normally point out minimal cases of behavior problems among the students, control over lesson plans, administrative support and the chance to participate in the decision-making process as the top aspects of job satisfaction. When educators deal with parents who offer them support in delivering their work, they also feel satisfied with the profession. Thus, it holds true that without these factors present in the school, a teacher is bound to feel unsatisfied and possibly leave the profession.

In fact, in 2013, teacher job satisfaction was reportedly at a 25-year low. In a study that has been conducted each year since 1984, MetLife's "Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership" samples 1,000 teachers and 500 principals from across the nation to determine their average level of satisfaction with the profession (Richmond, 2013). In the 2013 survey, only 39% of respondents reported feeling very satisfied with their jobs, a twenty-three point drop from only five years earlier in 2008 (Richmond, 2013). The survey found that the following factors contributed to decreased job satisfaction: school budget cuts, lack of professional development, and few opportunities for teacher collaboration. Additionally,

more than half of the educators surveyed reported being under great amounts of stress several days per week. This has increased from about one-third of teachers in 1985 (Richmond, 2013).

As for the principal responses, the survey showed that principals of school districts with larger low-income student populations rated their teachers lower than principals in wealthier school systems. For example, excellent ratings for teachers in low-income districts hovered around 48%, while principals gave excellent ratings to an average of 75% among schools that serve more affluent student bodies (Richmond, 2013). This finding reiterates the point that low-income schools tend to have less-qualified teachers. Unfortunately, this often results in low-income students receiving fewer educational opportunities and instruction than their peers who live in wealthier districts.

One way to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers in schools like those in Columbus County, North Carolina, is by building a culture of excellence, where teachers want to go and stay. Since the poverty levels of students can not necessarily be addressed by teachers or school personnel, districts must focus on providing better resources to teachers, including support programs and increased collaboration time among educators. By emphasizing the improvement of job satisfaction, new teachers will more likely be retained from year to year.

Characteristics of the Teacher Labor Market

In the process of analyzing all the components that can contribute to teacher turnover, one aspect that should be taken into consideration is the teacher labor market. Attributes of the education labor market include hiring practices, minimum qualifications required, the models for screening the applicants, and the policies implemented to govern the entry and exit of teachers. All of these components play a part in determining the rate of teacher turnover.

The labor market for educators is quite distinct from others since salaries for teachers are normally created through a political process. This political process features the state government, and in some states, teacher unions. Most state departments of education set minimal salary levels and provide them as a take-it or leave-it compensation for the work of teaching. For the other labor markets, and specifically, those that do not derive from public funding, salary is normally driven by the market forces of demand and supply of labor. While federal and state workers do typically enjoy a stable salary, those individuals working in the private sector sometimes have more ways to grow individually and therefore achieve higher salaries. In the field of education, teachers typically do not receive higher salaries based on merit but rather based on tenure, education level, and advanced certification opportunities (Will & Sawchuck, 2018). In recent years, however, some school districts have begun experimenting with merit pay increases based on student performance and achievement (Will & Sawchuck, 2018).

In cases where teachers have a weak union, the salaries teachers are given by the government are always quite discouraging and, as such, can produce turnover (Kirkpatrick & Johnson, 2014). For example, in the 2012-2013 school year, North Carolina teachers had an average starting salary of just \$30,778 (“Teacher Salary: What To Expect”, 2018). Combined with all of the other factors increasing teacher dissatisfaction and stress on the job, this rate of pay is not very conducive to encouraging teachers to stay in schools. In other labor markets, wages are not controlled by the government. Therefore, one must consider the teacher labor market characteristics in order to have an improved understanding of the forces behind teacher turnover.

Another factor driving teacher turnover is the achievement gap created by race and income, which have some scholars further examining the issue of high teacher turnover rates,

especially in the schools serving learners from low-income families. In fact, it is thought that this trend is part of the vicious cycle, which affects the most disadvantaged learners. For example, in the 2017 school year in the Columbus County school district, the percentage of white students who reached proficiency on the NC state test was nearly double that of African American students. While 61.4% of white students reached district proficiency, only 38% of African American students reached district proficiency (End of Grade Assessments, 2017).

Furthermore, teachers unfortunately, have the highest likelihood of leaving schools where students are lower performing and have behavior problems. The result of this turnover is continued, diminished teacher performance, which can discourage the remaining educators and motivate them to leave their positions as well. This cycle negatively affects all of those involved, but it unfortunately affects low-income students the most. As the revolving door of teachers constantly changes, they are left with inexperienced educators who are often using these schools as stepping stones to get to a higher-paying district. This is the result of teachers feeling unsupported, underpaid, and unprepared for the challenges that low-income areas may present to new teachers.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is yet another effective conceptual framework for explaining the problem of teacher turnover in North Carolina and Columbus County Schools. Social learning theory explains one's career decisions with emphasis on the interaction that exists between personal characteristics, environmental determinants, and the educational experiences (Borman & Dowling, 2006). People make decisions about their career based upon factors like genetic endowment and special characteristics. Special characteristics, in this case, refer to things like

gender, race, intelligence, and physical characteristics. Moreover, career decisions are also based on the conditions of the environment and events.

Social learning theory can be used in developing a model for the retention of teachers. Teacher retention would be a function of various variables like personal characteristics, educational experience, social integration in work and external influences. Therefore, the social learning process is a key factor in teacher turnover. The social learning theory of career decision-making gives a comprehensive picture of what takes place in teacher turnover decisions (Borman & Dowling, 2006). It is possible to understand the psychology behind the decision on teacher turnover if this social learning theory is applied. The importance of this specific theory to this study is that the teacher turnover must begin with some type of decision-making by the educator. The point of deciding to leave the teaching profession is what has to be interrogated, so the genesis of this problem can be understood. Social learning theory makes this interrogation easier and thus can help determine ways to combat teacher turnover.

Expectancy Theory

The expectancy theory is a key consideration in this paper, and it focuses on the expectations of employees in an organization. Employees have expectations when they commit to working for a given company (Borman & Dowling, 2006). When these expectations are not met, employees decide to leave for other professions or places where they think their personal goals can be better met.

Along with the human capital approach, the Expectancy Theory is one of the preferred methods of analyzing teacher turnover in this study. It is true that failure to meet the expectations of workers can lead to low commitment in the workplace, as well as outright turnover. Therefore,

the solution recommendations given in this study are based on the expectancy theory and the human capital concept as explained so far.

The first step to addressing the issue of high teacher turnover rates is for policymakers to identify the factor that has the largest causative effect on teacher turnover. After this identification, policymakers must target this factor so that it is addressed properly. Addressing the factor that causes the problem of teacher turnover would lead to a direct outcome of reduced teacher turnover rates and higher performance of students. It is vital to note that the lack of a clear focus and target is what weakens efforts aimed at curbing the problem. When the policymakers divide their attention among the many different causes of teacher turnover, then it becomes quite difficult to solve the issue of teacher turnover. Instead of attempting to tackle every possible factor, this particular study will identify and analyze the major areas where schools in Columbus County can improve. A district-wide model of best practices for retaining teachers will take into consideration the attitudes of teachers and administrators, as well as the contributing factors that lead to teacher turnover.

Review of Research: Best Practices for Retaining Teachers

Principals and Teacher Turnover

According to the Learning Policy Institute, teacher turnover is the cause of almost 90% of new teacher demand (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). This means that a majority of new teachers are entering classrooms and schools that have previously been abandoned by other educators who either retired, moved to another district, or moved out of the education field entirely. In these cases, in order to retain teachers, it is essential that the principal play a role in welcoming, encouraging, and supporting new teachers. Furthermore, teacher turnover is now linked to the way principals run their schools. It is for reasons like these that studies show

teachers desire having a strong and supportive administrator even over the rate of salary (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

Low performing principals, in addition to poorly serving the schools they work for, are more likely to exit the education system or take demotions to lower-level positions, contributing to turnover (Bartanen & Grissom, 2018). Meanwhile, high performing principals are more likely to take promotions toward central office positions (Bartanen & Grissom, 2018). The lack of effective, high-performing principals in low-income school systems makes it more difficult to reverse the trends or extenuating effects of teacher turnover (Bartanen & Grissom, 2018).

Among the leaders of education who influence teacher turnover, principals have the greatest effect. Support from administrators can come in various forms but they are typically counted on to give emotional and instructional support, allocate resources for better teaching materials, and provide teachers with professional learning opportunities (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Principals with low teacher turnover rates tend to be great, clear communicators who know how to utilize sensible budgets to meet the learning needs of their faculty and students (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

Additionally, depending on a principal's administrative and management style, teachers can feel either highly supported or entirely alone in their profession. The type of principal leadership style that studies show effects the lowest teacher turnover rates include administrators who see themselves as facilitators and collaborators rather than traditional, top-down principals who tend to make their power known (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Principals who have generally more autocratic, authoritarian dispositions tend to negatively impact working conditions, increasing teacher turnover, in turn (Bickmore & Sulentic Dowell, 2018). The best practices for principals looking to retain their teaching staff include setting up leadership and

collaboration teams, which consider every new teacher's perspective as being just as important as those of veteran teachers and even administrators. Best practices for principals looking to retain teaching staff also include properly allocating funds to cover the basic needs of classroom teachers.

Additionally, there are cases where the principals rule schools tyrannically. In such schools, the principals are always harsh to the teachers and do not consider their grievances. These principals have a direct impact on the rate of teacher turnover. This negative relationship between administrators and teachers is the reason district education leaders usually start by blaming the principals whenever a school experiences rampant cases of teacher turnover. In fact, principals are the ones bearing the biggest brunt of the blame for teacher turnover.

Furthermore, studies show that high-needs schools that are low-achieving and often high-poverty, tend to have less effective principals. More specifically, teachers in schools with a high percentage of minority students are nearly twice as likely to report major dissatisfaction with their principals. Unsurprisingly, this is just one more factor that contributes to the high teacher turnover rate among high-minority, low-income school districts.

The Learning Policy Institute outlines an analysis of six studies, which revealed qualities of effective school leaders. First, effective principals are also effective school managers. They ensure that teachers have the resources, communication networks, and budgets that can get the job done without too much stress on the classroom instructor. Secondly, good principals are also effective instructional leaders. As good instructional leaders, principals hire teachers and staff strategically based on the school's needs, strengths, and weaknesses. They also carry out consistent but fair teacher evaluations, providing feedback when necessary to improve teacher skills and success rates. Finally, effective principals are decision makers who listen to input from

their teachers and colleagues and thereby grant classroom instructors a sense of autonomy in their classrooms (Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

A major step towards reducing teacher turnover is by hiring and empowering effective principals. Yet this can be difficult in a state like North Carolina, where the principal turnover rate is 10%, and at the district level in Columbus County public schools, it is 11% (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). With regards to experience, 44% of CCS principals were in their first three years as a principal, 44% had four to ten years of experience as a principal, and 11% had more than ten years of experience as a school principal (North Carolina School Report Cards - District Snapshot, 2014-15). Furthermore, a study from the 2016-17 school year found that only 11.1% of CCS principals held advanced degrees, as compared to 21.3% of principals statewide (Columbus County Schools 2016-2017 District Profile, 2017) In high-minority, low-income districts where principals tend to be weaker and less effective, it is essential that schools are recruiting strong administrators who can embody the sense of academic culture and excellence that makes teachers want to return to their classrooms year after year.

Collegiality

Beginning teachers often feel overwhelmed and under-supported. However, with the best practices in place to assist new teachers, the trend of high beginning teacher turnover rates can be reversed. One way to address this problem is by implementing a system of collegiality in schools. Collegiality refers to a policy of collaboration, in which teachers help each other succeed by working together, sharing encouragement, and establishing a more cooperative atmosphere throughout the school (Abdallah, 2009). Collaborative tasks can and should include lesson planning, developing goals and objectives, improving student learning, and implementing

discipline policies. Studies show that those new teachers who are offered collegiality in their schools are less likely to leave their position as an educator.

When collegiality is practiced in schools, teachers gain a greater sense of community. They begin to trust, not only the teachers and administrators around them but the culture of the profession as well. A trusting, encouraging environment can best be implemented by having teachers meet informally on a recurring basis (Jarzabkowski, 2002). If new teachers feel they are being socially and emotionally supported by their work peers, they will be more likely to see their school as a healthy workplace. When teachers are able to work together, collaborate, and offer encouragement and support on a more regular, informal basis, both the teacher's performances and those of their students can be improved (Jarzabkowski, 2002). This is just one practice that Columbus County Schools could implement to help make new teachers feel like valued members of their school community.

Mentorship

With beginning teachers making up a significant percentage of teachers who leave the profession, it is imperative to examine the mentoring programs that are available to new teachers during their induction period. After graduating from a teacher education program, most elementary and high school teachers may find themselves largely isolated from their colleagues (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). While they often go through an orientation process after their initial hire, beginning teachers frequently enter the classroom feeling lost or unprepared.

To combat this learning curve that comes with entering any new profession, mentorship is a research-based practice that can help prepare and retain new teachers. Since the 1980s, mentoring has become one of the most dominant aspects of teacher induction (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Mentorship provides new teachers with local guidance of sorts from a veteran

member of the school faculty. Although the concept of mentorship has been around for decades, it often varies in its availability and scope from school to school. For example, some mentors may meet with their assigned new teachers a single time at the beginning of the school year, while others may be part of a more consistently-structured mentorship program, where mentees meet with their mentors frequently over the course of a couple of years (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

A 1987 New York City study examined how using retired teachers as mentors could affect new teacher turnover rates. From a group of over 250 teachers, the study found that those who had regular contact and guidance from retired teacher mentors had a slightly higher retention rate than their non-mentored peers (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

A 1992 Toronto-based study examined the effects of a mentorship program, which paired teachers of the same grade level or content over the course of two years. The mentorship included orientation at the start of the school year, as well as workshops throughout the remainder of the year. At the end of the study, researchers found stark differences in the attitudes of teachers who had mentors versus those who did not. For example, 88% of mentees reported their first year as a teacher as being positive, while only 53% of the non-mentored teachers felt the same positivity (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). When asked whether becoming a teacher was the right decision, 100% of the mentored teachers answered affirmatively, while 73% of the non-mentored teachers agreed. Finally, when asked if they planned to remain in the teaching profession, 76% of mentored teachers said yes, and 60% of non-mentored teachers responded in the affirmative (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). These differences cannot be overlooked and demonstrate the importance of effective mentorship during the initial years of teaching.

More recently, the *Washington Post* pointed to studies from 2008-2009, in which 92% of teachers who had first-year mentors were still in the profession, whereas 84% of those who did not have mentors were still teaching. By the end of the 2011-2012 school year, those numbers had dropped to 86% and 71% respectively (Brown, 2015). Though these numbers need to be improved on both fronts, the correlation between teacher retention and mentorship programs is clear.

Supportive Seminars - Professional Development

Most schools have some kind of staff development opportunities available during the school year, with many falling in the days leading up to a new school semester. However, the practicality and effectiveness of these brief opportunities are often lacking. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) argues that current professional development initiatives are constricted due to factors including top-down decision making, a “blame the teacher” attitude, lack of ownership over the staff development experience and the results that follow, technocratic content, one-size-fits-all approaches, dull or uninspiring delivery modes, lack of support for implementing professional development ideas in the classroom, standardized approaches that ignore teacher experience, and lack of evaluation and accountability (Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). Principals and other school leaders should take all of these problems into account when creating professional development opportunities for beginning and veteran teachers.

To be effective, supportive seminars and professional development days should be more widely available throughout the year. These opportunities should involve collaborative decision-making, rather than a top-down approach which places the accountability and initiative in the hands of school administrators only. Professional development should have an approach that

encourages growth and collaboration among educators. Ideas should be based on practical inquiry and include tailor-made techniques that teachers can adapt and adjust for use in their own classrooms. Furthermore, professional development opportunities should be varied and include a range of delivery methods that are not always lecture-based. Professional development should also include context-specific opportunities that avoid the one-size-fits-all mentality. Finally, these learning development initiatives should include proactive assessment, which gauges how and to what degree teachers can implement the programs in a way that makes sense for their grade level or content category (Diaz-Magioli, 2004).

A 2007 study examined the relationship between Professional Development Schools and the rate of new teacher turnover in Illinois. Professional Development Schools include those that require student-teacher experiences, field placements leading to immersive experiences in the classroom and school environment, opportunities for work with university faculty members, emphasis on improving student performance, and improving pre-service and in-service professional development (Latham & Vogt, 2007). Though many universities incorporate some or all of those components into their teacher education programs, it is evident that these programs should be both required during college study and continued after taking a position as a teacher. Latham and Vogt's 2007 study found that of the more than 1,000 graduates studied, those who were prepared in professional development schools (PDS) both entered the teaching profession more often and remained in the profession longer. Since schools that focus on professional development show better results, local school districts should follow suit and implement effective, continuous staff development programs as well.

Extra Support Initiatives for Beginning Teachers

Beginning teachers often come into the field with little or no immersive experience running a classroom or delivering lesson plans, but are still expected to be just as effective as veteran teachers who have taught for a decade or more. Aside from matching new teachers with seasoned mentors, planning out more and better professional development opportunities, and recruiting stronger principals, school districts can also provide other support initiatives for beginning teachers. Some of these initiatives can include adjusting work conditions, providing release time, offering mini-courses that address common challenges, and encouraging critical self-reflection (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Without tenure or seniority, new teachers are commonly given the toughest teaching assignments, whether that be large class sizes, average or low-performing classes, or content areas that more seasoned teachers pass on. When a teacher is just entering the field, he or she already faces uphill challenges of finding their place in a new profession. School districts and school principals can help minimize burnout and teacher turnover by reevaluating how they assign positions to new hires. For example, to help new teachers, administrators can reduce their class sizes, avoid assigning them the most challenging or problematic students and minimize added responsibilities or extra-curricular assignments for beginning teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). This way, new teachers can devote more time to learning and growing as educators, instead of simply trying to keep up with a difficult workload.

Release time is another initiative that can improve the new teacher experience and reduce teacher turnover. It occurs when teachers are released from their teaching duties temporarily, either to attend an educational workshop, collaborate with peers, or to observe and monitor the methods used by fellow teachers (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Release time gives teachers a

chance to see how other teachers deliver lessons and approach common classroom issues, as well as work on improving their own classroom pedagogy. Release time opens the door to better discussions and collaboration between teachers within the same school building.

Though formal professional development has already been discussed and emphasized, it should also be noted that schools should offer more informal, mini-course educational opportunities for beginning teachers. There are many predictable scenarios that every teacher will face at some point throughout their career, and informal courses can help beginning teachers adapt to these challenges. Topics that are challenging but that can be covered quickly and informally include implementing student discipline plans, working with English language learners, and planning appropriate assessments (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Finally, beginning teachers should be encouraged to engage in critical self-reflection throughout their early years in the profession. After observing other teachers, collaborating, or completing mini-courses, new teachers should complete self-assessments and reflect on how they can grow as educators. Self-reflection can be completed using teacher-created websites, interactive journals, blogs, or other mediums, with which they are comfortable. Through mentorship and self-reflection, new teachers can grow to be autonomous members of the school faculty, who use their own experiences, as well as the experiences of veteran teachers to guide their growth in the field of education (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

Conclusion

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the problem of teacher turnover. Among many things, Chapter 1 discussed some of the effects of teacher turnover on schools and student performance. It also discussed some of the underlying causes and tendencies behind teacher turnover. All of

this was a prelude to describing some of the major struggles which CCS has with retaining its teachers.

Chapter 2 covered the literature that was reviewed and considered when developing this study. From examining sociological and psychological theories to gauging the success rates of best practices in teacher retention, the second chapter sets the parameters for the work that follows. Among the components suggested in this chapter are developing a support model for teachers in Columbus County schools, which includes mentorship, supportive seminars and professional development, principal support, and collegiality. These evidence-based approaches can help CCS leaders, administrators, and teachers counter the rising trend of teacher turnover in the school district.

Chapter 3 covers the methodology and research that contributed to the study. An outline of the study's organization is provided, and the mixed methodology research plan using both quantitative and qualitative data is described. The study design, objectives, study questions, and procedures of the study are presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 then delves into the data findings and is organized by the study questions as outlined in Chapter 3. These results are reported objectively and analyzed with the intention of drawing references and implications. Finally, Chapter 5 contains an overview, summary of results, a comprehensive teacher retention plan for the CCS system, recommendations to stakeholder groups, and implications for the state and local level.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Background of the Study

In September of 2016, the superintendent of Columbus County Schools held a meeting to discuss his concern over a potential shortage of highly qualified teachers to replace retirees and other teachers leaving the district. The meeting's participants consisted of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, the researcher, and the district's beginning teacher coordinator/human resources director. The discussion focused on ways the district could improve teacher attendance and retention along with the development of highly qualified teachers.

With the support of the superintendent, a local team was formed to determine the current teacher turnover status in the Columbus County School System and develop a retention plan to help ensure the retention of highly qualified teachers in the district. The first step of the process was for the team to determine if the district truly had a problem with teacher turnover. After reviewing existing published state and local data, the team determined that CCS has a higher teacher turnover rate compared to the state average. After determining that CCS does have a high teacher turnover rate, the local team started to review the areas and stages in which the highest teacher turnover occurs in the CCS system. The local team discovered that the system's highest rate of turnover occurs among teachers in years 1-5 of their teaching career.

In August of 2017, the local team presented the findings to the superintendent. At the direction of the superintendent, the local team administered a five-question survey that was given to CCS teachers in years 1-3 of their teaching careers to help the team get a better understanding of the feelings and needs of new teachers.

For the purposes of this problem of practice study, the CCS superintendent has asked the researcher to review and analyze the existing data that the local team gathered from 2016 to the

winter of 2019. As a member of the local teacher retention team and as a student practitioner, the researcher participated in the development, design, and delivery of the stakeholder surveys that were analyzed in this study.

The Presentation of the Study

The presentation of the study is organized into chapters and subsections. The five chapters cover various aspects of the research process. The first chapter introduces the problem of teacher turnover in the Columbus County School system. The second chapter conducts a review of appropriate explanatory and analytical literature on the subject. The third chapter provides an outline of the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings and results found through data analysis and observation. The fifth chapter presents a series of recommended solutions regarding best practices for retaining teachers based on this study's findings and a plan for implementing these solutions.

More specifically, the first chapter is an introduction and overview of the study. After reading this initial chapter, the reader should be able to understand the purpose of the study, its background, significance, objective, shortcomings, conceptual framework, and the procedures employed.

The second chapter is the literature review, which is an overview of past research on this topic. The literature review chapter presents the views and perspectives of other researchers, specifically related to teacher turnover. Important points are shared from this existent literature on the subjects of teacher retention, best practices, and teacher turnover. It is important to note that it is this literature review that provides the necessary data used in the analysis of the problem and the development of a conceptual framework for this study's problem of practice.

The third chapter is dedicated to the research design and methodology of the study. This section explains the background of the study, a description of the study findings, the main objectives of the study, the nine study questions, the tools, methods, and procedures for analyzing the data used in this study. In addition, this chapter discusses the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) approach to organizational improvement. In essence, this chapter presents the study questions and the actions taken to conduct the study, analyze the data and the plan for sharing the results.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The findings of the study are presented objectively in this section. The findings presented in Chapter 4 include the data analyzed and processed into meaningful information ready for interpretation and drawing of inferences. Chapter 4 is also the discussion of the results and a presentation of the researcher's interpretations of the findings from the study. It is in this section that logical conclusions about the results of the study are made.

Chapter 5 focuses on the solutions recommended. In this chapter, the researcher gives his views on the possible strategies that the policymakers in the Columbus County School district need to consider in order to solve the problem of teacher turnover. The recommendations are evidence-based and provided to various stakeholder groups and future researchers. Additional strategies are suggested by the researcher based on the causes of teacher turnover highlighted in this study.

Study Design

This study used improvement science methodology, and a blend of qualitative and quantitative techniques to better understand the issue of teacher turnover and teacher retention in the CCS system. Existing CCS survey data was analyzed. These surveys consist of questions

with both qualitative and quantitative components. The combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques can help provide greater understanding for stakeholders and specific implications to help CCS improve the teacher retention rate.

Quantitative data refers to the collection of objective information that is strictly structured and based on statistical evidence. This type of information is valuable for showing descriptive statistics related to the CCS teacher turnover rate and student performance scores.

Qualitative data consists of information collected, which includes various viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, all of which are subjective and dependent on the individual respondent's personal feelings. This type of data can help establish trends and perspectives among the local staff members who face the triumphs and pitfalls of the education system each and every day in Columbus County. Since personal reasons are often given for teachers who leave the profession, the insight gained from qualitative data can help understand the needs and wants of Columbus County's teachers.

These quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from a series of surveys administered by Columbus County Schools to educators from 2016 to 2019. The existing data results from four separate surveys, each containing twenty questions, were used. The questions in these surveys were designed and administered by the CCS Human Resource Officer and the BT/Mentor coordinator. Surveys were distributed to all teachers (including beginning teachers), principals and mentors in the CCS system. Survey Monkey was used to house and collect data. Most of the data used for this study came from existing public knowledge, along with existing data collected by the researcher in the course of work at the direction of the superintendent. These surveys were distributed using the Columbus County Schools email system and Survey Monkey. Furthermore, the district protected the data and housed it in a secure location within

Survey Monkey's database, with one username and login password being given to the Director of Human Resources. The CCS system ensured that all surveys were anonymous to preserve the honesty and integrity of the data collected. In addition to these existing survey results, this study utilized in-person interviews with teachers and principals in schools that have a consistently low teacher turnover rate.

By combining the research behind teacher turnover with the satisfaction level, happiness, needs, and confidence of educators, this study examined the problem of teacher turnover in the CCS system. Surveys that incorporate both quantitative and qualitative questions provided the most insight into which best practices for retaining teachers are successful, as well as what measures can be taken to ensure a better experience for educators and administrators in CCS.

Main Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify the causes of teacher turnover during all stages of a teaching career. Moreover, it is the objective of this study to find out if teacher turnover affects the academic performance of students in the low-income public schools of Columbus County, North Carolina. Finally, the study will seek to provide suggestions for developing and implementing best practices for retaining teachers and especially beginning teachers who are one of the most at-risk subgroups of teachers who leave the profession. Some of the specific objectives of this study include the following:

- Identify the status of teacher attrition and turnover in North Carolina's Columbus County Public Schools
- Determine the impact of teacher attrition and turnover on the academic performance of learners in low-income public schools of Columbus County

- Use existing surveys to determine teacher and principal attitudes, expectations, and needs in order to reach workplace satisfaction
- Highlight the measures already in place by the education department in North Carolina, as well as Columbus County, to solve this problem
- Identify successful teacher retention initiatives already in place in Columbus County
- Suggest some practical and effective actions that can be implemented to solve the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County, NC

Study Questions

This particular study is guided by the following nine questions:

1. What is the status of teacher attrition and turnover in the State of North Carolina public schools, Columbus County Schools, and surrounding districts in terms of data and trends?
2. What are the major reasons teachers continue to work in CCS?
3. What is the impact of teacher turnover on the academic performance of low-income public school students in the Columbus County School district?
4. Which actions can help minimize the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County?
5. What current best practices are being utilized by schools in the Columbus County School system?
6. How do low-performing and high-performing schools in Columbus County compare with regard to teacher turnover?
7. What major components should be included in the teacher retention plan according to CCS stakeholders?

8. Is the current mentor program producing the desired results?
9. Does the Columbus County School System need a comprehensive teacher retention plan?

Procedures

This study utilized improvement science methodology and employed quantitative and qualitative techniques in data analysis. In the fall of 2016, a meeting was conducted with the CCS superintendent, assistant superintendent, and the beginning teacher support coordinator to determine how to further approach the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County Schools. Since 2016, five surveys were administered to teachers, mentors, mentees and administrative staff in CCS to gather data to help develop a model of best practices for teacher retention in the CCS system.

This study analyzed the data gathered from the five existing surveys and utilized in-person interviews to gain feedback from education stakeholders, especially school administrators and teachers, related to the causes of voluntary teacher turnover. To examine the relationship between teacher turnover and the level of student performance, the study employs data from 17 public schools in Columbus County, North Carolina and evaluates the academic results of learners compared to turnover rates. This analysis was crucial to establish the impact of teacher turnover on the performance of learners in public low-income schools, and furthermore bolsters the need for a new district-wide model of best practices for retaining teachers.

In this study existing survey data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Qualitative methods of research are basically descriptive in nature. The main purpose for using qualitative techniques is to ensure a clear and easily understandable description of the data related to teacher turnover in CCS. Therefore, the descriptive surveys analyzed for this

particular study helped the researcher determine areas that need to be strengthened. The researcher used existent factual information and analyzed it before making a meaningful interpretation of it.

Existing CCS survey data and face-to-face interviews with school principals from selected schools provided some primary data used in this study. Additional sources of data were considered, including those delineated in the literature review section of this study. The additional sources of data for this paper include articles and books about teacher retention. The information provided by these additional sources of data were applied during the analysis of the primary data. Moreover, the theories used in forming the conceptual framework for this particular study have been derived from the additional sources of data.

The instruments of data collection for the interview process were designed based on the existing literature of proper practices in collecting data. The principal and teacher questionnaire is located in the appendix section as Appendix D and Appendix E. Principals and teachers from schools with the four lowest rates of teacher turnover in the CCS system (which recorded less than 10% teacher turnover) were selected for face-to-face interviews. Before the face-to-face interviews could be conducted, consent was established from selected participants and related schools to secure the process and data gathered. The district management assisted the researcher in assembling the interview participants, as well as distributing the interview questionnaires prior to the face-to-face interviews.

After the CCS Human Resource Department released the data gathered from five existing surveys, it was analyzed. A comparison of descriptive statistics and objective quantitative data was made regarding teacher turnover reason codes, student performance in schools with varying degrees of teacher turnover, and current policies being used either successfully or unsuccessfully

in Columbus County Schools. This data was analyzed using demographic categories including years of experience, subjects taught and teaching level. Next, the data derived from existing teacher and administrator surveys and in-person interviews were analyzed. Moreover, to establish the relationship between teacher turnover and poor performance of students, currently published school data were compared. Open-ended comments from the surveys were coded and categorized.

Data Analysis

Existing local and state data gathered and reported publicly by Columbus County Schools and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction was analyzed to help answer the study questions. The type of data that was used and the method in which the data was analyzed are listed below under each study question. The data was used to help develop a teacher retention plan suitable to the needs of Columbus County Schools.

- What is the status of teacher attrition and turnover in the State of North Carolina public schools, as well as Columbus County Schools, in terms of data and trends?
The data collected by the state as it relates to teacher turnover was quantitatively analyzed to help answer this question. The teacher turnover data in CCS was compared to teacher turnover data found at the state level and turnover data from other counties. Local teacher turnover data collected by Columbus County was also analyzed to help answer this question. The time period ranged from 2009 to 2017. Comparisons were made of turnover rates between the district and the state and are presented in visual data displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994).
- What are the major reasons teachers continue to work in CCS?

The data used to answer this question came from the five existing surveys given by the school system over a three-year period. Parts of the data were analyzed qualitatively and other parts were analyzed quantitatively. The data was categorized and ranked according to the responses given on qualitative questions. For example, the categories of professional development, salary, teacher assignment, principal support, teacher recognition, and behavioral support were used to help answer the question: Why do you continue to teach with CCS?

- What is the impact of teacher turnover on the academic performance of low-income public school students in Columbus County School district?

Historical state and local end-of-grade and end-of-course data, as well as descriptive data gathered by federal education agencies, was used to answer this question.

Quantitative methods of analysis were used to analyze specific data such as EOG/EOC data, school composite data, and demographic subgroups with information provided by federal agencies.

- Which actions can help minimize the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County?

Historical data describing best practices, along with existing survey data collected by CCS over the past three years was used to answer this question. In addition, in-person interviews that were conducted with participants from schools that maintain a low teacher turnover rate. Qualitative data from face-to-face interviews and surveys, along with quantitative data from surveys, was analyzed. Open-ended survey questions were coded and categorized according to similarities, such as when teachers report district reputation, spouse transfers, or geographic location as reasons why they

continue teaching in the CCS system. Additional qualitative themes emerged and were categorized and presented.

- What current best practices are being utilized by schools in Columbus County School System?

Existing survey data and face-to-face interviews provided the qualitative and quantitative data to answer this question. Responses to surveys were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Qualitative answers were ranked according to the frequency with which people responded to questions about best practices for reducing teacher turnover in CCS.

- How do low-performing and high-performing schools in Columbus County compare with regard to teacher turnover?

Existing federal, state and local data, such as demographic data, EOG/EOC data, school report card, and student performance data, were used to answer this question. The data analyzed included ELA, math, and school composite data organized in table form to help compare and establish if there is a difference between low-performing and high-performing schools, related to teacher turnover.

- What major components should be included in the teacher retention plan according to CCS stakeholders?

Existing survey data provided qualitative and quantitative findings to answer this question. Face-to-face interviews with leaders of schools that record 10 percent or less turnover provided the strategies they are using to reduce turnover. Their responses were considered trustworthy and relevant to determining best practices related to reducing teacher turnover as the information comes from principals and

teachers working in the schools of Columbus County. Existing survey data from surveys conducted in CCS schools were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, based on the responses of stakeholders regarding what best practices should be included in a plan to reduce teacher turnover; such as the implementation of a mentor program, professional development, school leadership, etc.

- Is the current mentor program producing the desired results?

Existing qualitative and quantitative data collected by CCS were utilized to answer this question, including 2016-2018 teacher turnover data gathered from CCS teachers in their first three years of teaching. Existing survey data which was gathered from mentors and mentees was also analyzed and categorized according to yes or no responses given by teachers regarding mentor-mentee relationships.

- Does the Columbus County School system need a teacher retention plan?

School report card data issued by the state, survey data collected by CCS, state and local data, and teacher retention data was used to help answer this question. This data came from a review of turnover rates as well as existing survey responses. The survey responses were qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. Stakeholder responses were categorized as yes or no, agree or disagree. Additional qualitative themes emerged and were categorized and presented.

After all the data were collected and analyzed, the researcher developed a teacher retention plan based on the existing data and shared it with the superintendent and the team.

Plan-Do-Study-Act Model

After the data has been collected and the theories of improvement discussed, the next course of action will be to follow the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Model of organizational

improvement. The PDSA Model is a type of scientific method often used alongside action-oriented learning. By adopting an improvement science approach, school systems can apply Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles to innovate, test, review, and revise improvement strategies (e.g., Deming, 1993; Langley et al., 2009). The PDSA cycle is a scientific method for making hypotheses about the efficacy of proposed solutions on standard work, processes and outcomes (LeMahieu, Nordstrum, & Greco, 2017). This model works by, first, defining the metrics by which progress will be easily measured as well as improved with proper feedback. Goals are identified and outcomes are predicted. The model then establishes and monitors the process to be implemented in dealing with the organizational problem, as well as it measures the success of the improvement process in its implementation. All this is followed by presenting results, which suggest areas for further improvement in the organization where the PDSA model is applied (Morelli, 2016). At this stage, the researcher applying the model will determine effectiveness, create recommendations for improvement, and report the findings to the district superintendent. The PDSA model can be applied repeatedly, as many times as desired (Murray, 2018, p. 376).

Conclusion

Chapter 1 provided a brief overview of the problem of teacher turnover in the nation as well as in the CCS system. Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature revealing much of the current thinking among scholars on the issue of teacher turnover. Chapter 3 has introduced the improvement science methodology employing mixed methods of research to produce fact-based, quantitative data, as well as personal perspectives and opinions, or qualitative data, needed to furnish a model of best practices for teacher retention in the CCS school system. This data was collected through both anonymous surveys and in-person interviews with principals and teachers

who work at four schools that consistently maintain a low rate of teacher turnover. All results remain anonymous to protect the identities of survey recipients and the integrity of this study.

The data gathered for this study will help Columbus County teachers and principals determine if their schools are succeeding or failing in their efforts to reduce teacher turnover, and how to improve these efforts, over time. The findings were essential for developing a new and unique teacher retention model among Columbus County schools.

Once the data was collected, it was then analyzed and presented in Chapter 4, where the results of the study are delineated. The final chapter takes Chapter 4's results and uses them to show future implications, as well as determine the best practices for improving teacher turnover rates in the Columbus County School district.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

Columbus County School (CCS) district is a public school system located in southeastern North Carolina. The district consists of seventeen schools that serve 5,700 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The school system has nine elementary schools, four middle schools, three traditional high schools, and one early college high school. The Columbus County School system is a rural district bordering Bladen and Pender County, North Carolina on its Northern side, Robeson County, North Carolina on the Northwest side, Brunswick County, North Carolina on the Southwest side and Horry County, South Carolina on its southern side. Like other districts across the nation and state, CCS has experienced a large increase in its teacher turnover rate during the past eight years. Since 2010, CCS teacher turnover rate has increased each year and growth is higher than the North Carolina state average over the same eight-year period.

In late 2016, the superintendent of the Columbus County School system identified teacher turnover as a concern for the district. The superintendent realized that teaching positions were becoming harder to fill with highly qualified teachers. At the direction of the superintendent, the researcher along with team members from the Columbus County School's district office started to review the districts teacher turnover rates and possible reasons teachers were leaving the district. The team identified the mentor program as one area that may influence teacher turnover in the district. In the fall of 2017, beginning teachers in the district were given a preliminary survey to determine if more research needed to be conducted in regards to teacher turnover.

The team decided more research needed to be conducted in order to identify problem areas and gain the necessary information to start the development of a comprehensive teacher retention plan that would address teacher turnover at the beginning stages of a teacher's career, as well as, throughout the span of a teaching career. Overall the district conducted five surveys. Four stakeholder surveys were created and administered in the district to gain data to help answer the questions in this study. Face-to-face interviews were also conducted with select stakeholders in the district for the purpose of gaining information to help answer the questions used in this study.

Beginning Teacher Preliminary Survey

In September 2017, a preliminary survey was provided to beginning teachers in the Columbus County School district (see Appendix C). Fifty-five teachers who were considered beginning teachers attended the meeting. All fifty-five attendees were provided with a survey designed to gauge their perception of the effectiveness of the beginning teacher program. Forty-seven attendees returned the survey. The response rate for the preliminary survey was 85%. The term beginning teachers applies to those educators who are in their first three years of teaching, either in the profession as a whole or within the Columbus County School district. Questions on the preliminary survey included five items, which focused on how long the teachers had been teaching, why they decided to become a teacher, whether or not they have considered changing careers, what CCS can do to make them want to continue in the teaching profession, and how the beginning teacher program can better support new teachers.

All CCS Teacher Survey

During the fall of 2018, the Columbus County School system conducted a series of four surveys. The surveys were emailed to all certified teachers who were employed by Columbus

County Schools at the time of the survey. The first survey was sent to 421 teachers and contained twenty questions (see Appendix I). One hundred sixty-two teachers fully responded to the survey. The survey response was 38%. The questions on the survey were designed to help the district gain a better understanding of how teachers feel in regards to the impact that teacher turnover has on student performance, support received from the administration, recognition of their work, and the need for a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

CCS Mentor Survey

The second survey of the series was given to the teachers who serve as mentors to new teachers (see Appendix H). New teachers or teachers who are assigned mentors are those teachers in years one through three of their teaching career. The second survey contained twenty questions. The survey invitation was sent to twenty-nine teachers in the district who served as mentors during the time the survey was conducted. Twenty-two of the teachers fully responded. The CCS mentor survey response rate was 75.8%. The purpose of the survey and the questions that it contained were designed to help the district gain a better understanding of how the district's mentor program is performing in relation to the retention of highly qualified teachers. The questions on the survey addressed the awareness of matching mentors to mentees, important factors that relate to teacher retention, preparation at the college level, time mentors and mentees actually spend working with each other in a productive manner, and their overall perception of the mentee/mentor program.

CCS Beginning Teacher Survey

The third survey of the series was given to beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are considered those teachers who are in years one through three of their teaching career. The survey was emailed to sixty-five teachers who were considered beginning teachers at the time the survey

was conducted. Twenty-eight of the beginning teachers fully responded to the survey. The CCS beginning teacher survey response rate was 43%. The survey contained twenty questions (see Appendix G). The questions on the survey were designed to gain information on the beginning teacher's perception of the quality of the mentor program. The survey also contained questions related to proper placement of mentors and mentees, professional learning community participation, selection criteria of mentors, the need for a comprehensive teacher retention plan, attitudes about training provided by the Columbus County School system, and reasons they decided to work in the CCS system.

CCS Principal Survey

The fourth and final survey of the series was given to all principals who were employed by the CCS system at the time the survey was given (see Appendix F). The survey invitation was sent to seventeen principals in the CCS system. All seventeen principals responded to the survey. The response rate for the CCS principal survey was 100%, which was the highest response rate recorded of all the surveys given during the series. The questions on the principal survey were designed to gain information related to the placement of mentors and mentees, principal attitudes toward support for the mentor program, the impact of teacher turnover on student performance, the need for a comprehensive teacher retention plan, and resources provided to schools and principals to help retain highly qualified teachers.

The data gained from these surveys, along with data from other sources were used to help the CCS system and the researcher answer questions related to the mentor program, determine areas of strengths, as well as areas that needed improvement in regards to retaining teachers. The response rate to the individual surveys varied. The CCS all teacher survey had the lowest response rate at 38% and the principal survey had the highest at 100%. The lower response rate

for the all teacher survey could be attributed to the teacher's fear about opening and responding to emails. During the last two years, the CCS system has suffered from a large number of emails that are considered dangerous to open. Teachers and other employees were instructed by the superintendent and the technology department to be very careful when opening and responding to emails.

Preliminary Survey Results

In September 2017, a preliminary survey was given to the beginning teacher stakeholder group. The total number of respondents to the preliminary survey was forty-seven. This included fifteen first-year teachers, eighteen second-year teachers, ten third-year teachers, two respondents who did not provide information but were past their first year, and two who had been teaching for more than three years.

Out of forty-seven respondents, four stated that they had considered changing their careers from their current positions as teachers. The reasons for thinking about leaving the teaching profession ranged, with one teacher stating he/she was worried that the music department would be cut, another stating he/she wished to pursue a job as a counselor, one teacher stating that he/she did not like the current rate of pay in Columbus County, and one stating that they wanted to leave the profession because of student placement and not having a good mentor to go to in times of need. Two of these four educators were in their very first year of teaching.

With regards to the question relating to how the district can better support new teachers, the answers varied. Four teachers stated that the district is doing enough and that the CCS system should continue the work they were doing with beginning teachers. Six teachers did not provide feedback on the question. The remaining thirty-seven respondents mentioned a range of ideas for better support for new teachers, with some ideas overlapping. Nineteen teachers referred to the

need for some form of professional development training, seven stated that there is a need for better resources and technology access, four suggested better mentor programs, and nine desired increased pay or funding for schools. Among those who stated that they would like to see more training opportunities, many voiced the need for differentiated learning training in their content areas, more one-on-one training, more training in technology and localized software programs, and the need for more relevant and engaging professional development workshops. The results from the preliminary survey indicated that some of the beginning teachers in the Columbus County School system felt like the programs in place to promote teacher development and retention were successful. However, the results also indicated that the school district had room for improvement in the development and implementation of programs designed to enrich and retain beginning teachers.

Study Question 1

What is the status of teacher attrition and turnover in the State of North Carolina public schools, Columbus County Schools and surrounding districts in terms of data and trends?

State of North Carolina Teacher Turnover Data

The overall teacher attrition rate for North Carolina public schools from 2016-2017 was 8.7% (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2017). The overall teacher attrition rate for the reporting period of 2016-2017 was slightly lower than that of the 2015-2016 reporting period. There were 94,792 teachers employed in NC between March 2016 and March 2017 and 8,249 were no longer employed by NC public schools at the end of the reporting period (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2017). The attrition rate for beginning teachers in North Carolina is substantially higher than that of the overall state attrition rate. The beginning teacher attrition rate for 2016-2017 is 12.31%. The majority or 53.6% of

teachers who left NC public schools during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited personal reasons for their decision to leave (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2017). Retirement with full benefits accounted for 18.7% of the total teacher attrition for the 2016-2017 reporting period. Nearly one in ten teachers or 9.4% who left employment with NC public schools indicated that they intended to teach in another state (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2017). During the 2016-2017 reporting period in elementary schools, core subject teaching positions were the hardest positions to fill. During the same period at the middle and high school level, LEAs reported Math as the hardest subject area position to fill (2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2017).

The overall teacher attrition rate for North Carolina public schools from 2015-2016 was 9.04% (2015-2016 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2016). There were 95,549 teachers employed in NC between March 2015 and March 2016 and 8,636 are no longer employed by NC public schools (2015-2016 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2016). The attrition rate for beginning teachers in North Carolina is substantially higher than that of the overall state attrition rate. The state attrition rate for beginning teachers is approximately 56% higher than that of their more experienced counterparts (2015-2016 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2016). The beginning teacher attrition rate for 2015-2016 was 12.78%. The majority or 53.3% of teachers who left NC public schools during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited personal reasons for their decision to leave (2015-2016 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2016). Retirement with full benefits accounted for 19.8% of the total teacher attrition for the 2015-2016 reporting period. During the 2015-2016 reporting period, 100 of the 115 LEAs (86.96%) reported the five hardest license areas to fill: Math (9-12

and Middle Grades), Exceptional Children-General Curriculum, and Science (9-12 and Middle Grades) (2015-2016 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2015).

The overall teacher attrition rate for North Carolina public schools from 2014-2015 was 14.84% (2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2015). There were 96,081 teachers employed in NC between March 2014 and March 2015 and 14,255 were no longer employed by NC public schools at the end of the reporting period (2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2015). During the 2014-2015 reporting period, NC public schools had 18,944 teachers classified as beginning teachers. During the same reporting period, 3,942 beginning teachers exited the teaching field. The attrition rate for beginning teachers was 20.81%. A large number or 40.0% of teachers who left NC public schools during the 2014-2015 reporting period cited personal reasons for their decision to leave (2014-2015 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina, 2015). Retirement with full benefits accounted for 12.3% of the total teacher attrition for the 2014-2015 reporting period. During the 2014-2015 reporting period, LEAs reported Math as the hardest subject area positions to fully fill.

The highest teacher attrition rate for NC public schools over the three-year period from 2014 until 2017 was recorded during the 2014-2015 reporting period at 14.84%. The lowest attrition rate was recorded during the 2016-2017 reporting period at 8.7%. Beginning teachers in NC public schools are leaving the state at higher rates than other teacher categories. Over the three-year period from 2014-2017 Math was the hardest subject area for LEAs to fully fill.

Columbus County Schools Teacher Turnover Data

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the CCS system employed four hundred teachers. During the same period, the CCS system lost sixty-nine teachers. The CCS system teacher

turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 17.25%. Thirty-one or 45% of the total sixty-nine teachers that the CCS system lost during the 2014-2015 reporting period remained in the education field. Six or 8.7% of the total sixty-nine teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Twenty-four or 34.8% of the sixty-nine teachers that left during the 2014-2015 reporting period reported leaving for personal reasons. Two or 2.3% of the teachers who left during the 2014-2015 reporting period left because the LEA had initiated the process.

During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the CCS system employed four hundred one teachers. During the same period, the CCS system lost fifty-seven teachers. The CCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 14.21%. Two or 3.5% of the total fifty-seven teachers that the CCS system lost during the 2015-2016 reporting period remained in the education field. Four or 7.0% of the total fifty-seven teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Nineteen or 33.3% of the fifty-seven teachers that left during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Two or 3.5% of the teachers who left during the 2015-2016 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the CCS system employed three hundred ninety-eight teachers. During the same period, the CCS system lost 63 teachers. The CCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 15.83%. Twenty-seven or 43% of the total sixty-three teachers that the CCS system lost during the 2016-2017 reporting period remained in the education field. Seven or 11.1% of the total sixty-three teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Seventeen or 26.9% of the sixty-three teachers that left during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons.

Thirteen or 20.6% of the teachers who left during the 2016-2017 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

Surrounding School Districts Turnover Data

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the Whiteville City School system employed one hundred sixty-three teachers. During the same period, the WCS system lost nineteen teachers. The WCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 11.66%. Three or 15.79% of the total nineteen teachers that the WCS system lost during the 2014-2015 reporting period remained in the education field. Nine or 47.37% of the total nineteen teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Four or 21.05% of the nineteen teachers that left during the 2014-2015 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. One or 5.26% of the teachers who left during the 2014-2015 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the Whiteville City system employed one hundred sixty-three teachers. During the same period the, WCS system lost twelve teachers. The WCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 12.27%. One or 8.33% of the total twelve teachers that the WCS system lost during the 2015-2016 reporting period remained in the education field. Four or 33.33% of the total twelve teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Five or 41.67% of the twelve teachers that left during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. One or 8.33% of the teachers who left during the 2015-2016 reporting period left because the LEA had initiated the process.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the WCS system employed one hundred sixty-two teachers. During the same period, the WCS system lost twenty-two teachers. The WCS

system teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 13.6%. Eight or 36.4% of the total twenty-two teachers that the WCS system lost during the 2016-2017 reporting period remained in the education field. Seven or 31.8% of the total twenty-two teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Six or 27.3% of the twenty-two teachers that left during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. One or 4.6% of the teachers who left during the 2016-2017 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the Bladen County School system employed three hundred thirty-four teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost sixty-five teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 19.46%. Twenty-five or 38.46% of the sixty-five teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2014-2015 reporting period remained in the education field. Twenty-one or 32.30% of the total sixty-five teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Thirteen or 20.00% of the sixty-five teachers that left during the 2014-2015 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. One or 1.54% of the teachers who left during the 2014-2015 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the BCS system employed three hundred nineteen teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost twenty-seven teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 15.99%. One or 3.7% of the total twenty-seven teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2015-2016 reporting period remained in the education field. Thirteen or 48.15% of the total twenty-seven teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Eight or 29.63% of the twenty-seven teachers that left during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons.

None of the teachers who left during the 2015-2016 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the BCS system employed three hundred seven teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost forty-seven teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 15.3%. Seventeen or 36.2% of the total forty-seven teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2016-2017 reporting period remained in the education field. Twelve or 25.53% of the total forty-seven teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Thirteen or 27.66% of the forty-seven teachers that left during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. None of the teachers who left during the 2016-2017 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the Brunswick County School system employed eight hundred five teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost one hundred twenty teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 14.91%. Thirty-one or 25.83% of the one hundred twenty teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2014-2015 reporting period remained in the education field. Twelve or 10% of the total one hundred twenty teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Fifty-seven or 47.5% of the 120 that left during the 2014-2015 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Ten or 8.33% of the teachers who left during the 2014-2015 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the BCS system employed eight hundred and six teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost one hundred thirty-one teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 16.25%. Three or 2.29% of

the total one hundred thirty-one teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2015-2016 reporting period remained in the education field. Twenty or 15.27% of the total one hundred thirty-one teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Fifty-four or 41.22% of the one hundred thirty-one teachers that left during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Nine or 6.87% of the teachers who left during the 2015-2016 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the BCS system employed eight hundred five teachers. During the same period, the BCS system lost ninety-two teachers. The BCS system teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 11.4%. Twenty-five or 27.17% of the total ninety-two teachers that the BCS system lost during the 2016-2017 reporting period remained in the education field. Eleven or 11.96% of the total ninety-two teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Thirty-eight or 41.30% of the ninety-two teachers that left during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Eight or 8.7% of the teachers who left during the 2016-2017 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the Public Schools of Robeson County employed one thousand five hundred eleven teachers. During the same period, the PSRC system lost two hundred forty teachers. The PSRC teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 15.88%. One hundred and nineteen or 49.58% of the two hundred forty teachers that the PSRC lost during the 2014-2015 reporting period remained in the education field. Forty-five or 18.75% of the total two hundred forty teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Sixty-five or 27.08% of the two hundred forty teachers that left during the

2014-2015 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Seven or 2.95% of the teachers who left during the 2014-2015 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the Public Schools of Robeson County employed one thousand five hundred three teachers. During the same period, the PSRC lost one hundred seventy-one teachers. The PSRC system teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 11.38%. Seven or 4.0% of the total one hundred seventy-one teachers that the PSRC lost during the 2015-2016 reporting period remained in the education field. Forty-six or 26.90% of the total one hundred seventy-one teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Forty-six or 26.90% of the one hundred seventy-one teachers that left during the 2015-2016 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Six or 3.50% of the teachers who left during the 2015-2016 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the Public Schools of Robeson County employed one thousand four hundred forty-eight teachers. During the same period, the PSRC lost one hundred sixty-nine teachers. The PSRC teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 11.7%. Forty-nine or 28.99% of the total one hundred sixty-nine teachers that the PSRC lost during the 2016-2017 reporting period remained in the education field. Twenty-two or 13.02% of the total one hundred sixty-nine teachers that left were recorded as leaving teachers beyond the control of the LEA. Fifty-seven or 29.69% of the one hundred sixty-nine that left during the 2016-2017 reporting period cited leaving for personal reasons. Two or 1.8% of the teachers who left during the 2016-2017 reporting period left because the LEA initiated the process.

Summary

During the three reporting periods from 2014 till 2017, the CCS system recorded the highest or second highest teacher turnover rate of the four surrounding districts. During the

2014-2015 reporting period, the CCS system recorded the second highest teacher turnover rate when compared to the four surrounding districts. The Bladen County School system recorded the highest teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period. The CCS system reported the highest teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period. The Bladen County School system recorded the highest teacher turnover rate of the four surrounding districts for the 2016-2017 reporting period. The CCS system reported the second highest of the four surrounding districts for the 2016-2017 reporting period (see Figure 5).

Overall the five districts recorded similar percentages each year in the number of teachers who remained in the education field after leaving their respective district. The NC teacher turnover reason category percentages for the five districts were also similar during the three-year period. The NC state average teacher turnover rate for the three-year period from 2014 till 2017 was 10.86%. For the same three-year period the average teacher turnover rate for the five districts were: (1) CCS 16.12%, (2) WCS 12.51%, (3) Bladen 16.92%, (4) BCS 14.19%, and (5) PSRC 12.99%. The CCS system ranked as the school system with the second overall highest average over the three-year period.

Study Question 2

What are the major reasons teachers continue to work in CCS?

Stakeholder Survey Data

During the fall of 2018, the Columbus County School system conducted surveys with four stakeholder groups. Portions of the surveys were designed to gain information related to teacher age groups, length of teaching career, decisions to teach in the CCS system and why teachers continue to teach in the CCS system. In reviewing the data some themes across stakeholder groups emerged. Survey data indicates that the age and experience level of the teacher

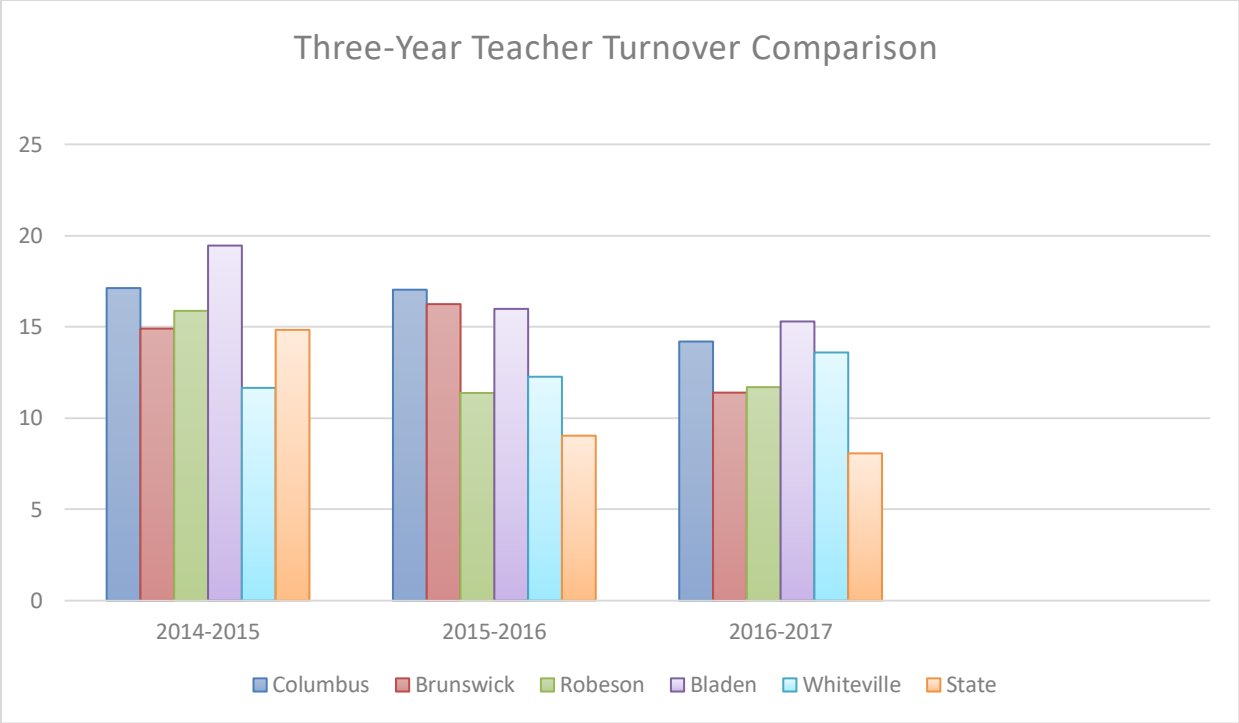


Figure 5. Three-year teacher turnover comparison of the CCS system and surrounding districts from 2014-2017.

completing the survey impacts the response given by the teacher. A central theme emerged across the three teacher stakeholder groups that principal support is the most important reason for continuing to teach in the CCS system.

Beginning Teacher Stakeholder Group

The beginning teacher stakeholder group respondents ranged in age from under thirty to sixty or over. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were under thirty years old. Twenty-six percent of the respondents reported being in the age group thirty to thirty-nine. Seven percent of the respondents were in the age group forty to forty-nine. Four percent were in the age group fifty to fifty-nine. Seven percent of the respondents reported that they were sixty years old or older. The beginning teacher stakeholder group was also asked to record their experience level. Thirty-two percent responded that they were in their first year of a teaching career. Thirty-six percent responded that they were between years one and two of their teaching career. Twenty-eight percent responded that they were between year two and three of their teaching career. Four percent of beginning teachers responded that they were between years three and four of their teaching career.

All three teacher stakeholder groups were asked the question: what is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system? The three teacher stakeholder groups were asked to select the choice that best reflected their decision. The choice options were district reputation, spouse transferred, geographic location, close to family, your position/assignment and salary. None of the beginning teacher stakeholder selected district reputation as a reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. Seven percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder selected spouse transferred as the reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. Twenty-two percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group selected geographic location as the reason they decided to teach in the

CCS system. Twenty-two percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group selected close to family as the reason they decided to teach in the CCS system. Forty-five percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group selected position/assignment as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS. Four percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group selected salary as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS system.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group was asked to rank professional development, salary, teacher assignment, principal support, teacher recognition, and behavioral support in order of importance when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Principal support was ranked as the most important factor by the beginning teacher stakeholder group when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Forty-three percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the number one factor and 30% ranked principal support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined total of the beginning teacher stakeholder group either ranking principal support as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue with the CCS system was 73%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group overall ranked behavioral support as the second most important when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Fifteen percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Nineteen percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to behavioral support as the most important or second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system was 34%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher assignment as the third most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Fourteen percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Twenty-three percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher assignment as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS was 36%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group overall ranked salary as the fourth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Eight percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Four percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to salary as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 12%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group overall ranked professional development as the fifth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Ten percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the most important factor when deciding to teach with the CCS system. Ten percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to professional development as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 20%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher recognition as the sixth most important factor when deciding to continue teaching in the CCS system. None of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Four percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher recognition as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 4%.

The beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Behavioral support was ranked second, teacher assignment was ranked third, teacher salary was ranked fourth, professional development was ranked fifth and teacher recognition was ranked sixth as the most important factor by the beginning teacher stakeholder group when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system.

Mentor Stakeholder Group

The mentor teacher stakeholder group respondents ranged in age from thirty to sixty or over. None of the respondents were under thirty years old. Nineteen percent of the respondents reported being in the age group thirty to thirty-nine. Thirty-three percent of the respondents were in the age group forty to forty-nine. Forty-three percent were in the age group fifty to fifty-nine. Five percent of the respondents reported that they were sixty years old or older. The mentor teacher stakeholder group was also asked to record their experience level. Five percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group responded that they were in their first to fifth year of a teaching career. Eighteen percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group responded that they

were between years six and ten of their teaching career. Fourteen percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years eleven and fifteen of their teaching career. Twenty-seven percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years sixteen and twenty of the teaching career. Twenty-three percent of the mentor stakeholder group responded that they were between years twenty-one and twenty-five of their teaching career. Nine percent of the mentor stakeholder group responded that they were between years twenty-six and thirty of their teaching career. Four percent of the mentor stakeholder group recorded thirty-one years or more teaching experience.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group responses varied from that of the beginning teacher stakeholder group when asked: what is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system? None of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected district reputation as a reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. None of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected spouse transferred as the reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. Twenty-nine percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected geographic location as the reason they decided to teach in the CCS system. Thirty-eight percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected close to family as the reason they decided to teach in the CCS system. Twenty-eight percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected position/assignment as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS system. Five percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group selected salary as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS system.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group was asked to rank professional development, salary, teacher assignment, principal support, teacher recognition, and behavioral support in order of importance when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Principal support was ranked as the most important factor by the mentor teacher stakeholder group when deciding

to continue teaching with the CCS system. Twenty-one percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the number one factor and 32% ranked principal support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined total of the mentor teacher stakeholder group either ranking principal support as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system was 53%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher assignment as the second most important when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Sixteen percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Thirty-seven percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher assignment as the most important or second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system was 53%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group overall ranked salary as the third most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Thirty-two percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. None of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to salary as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS was 32%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group overall ranked behavioral support as the fourth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Fifteen percent

of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Ten percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to behavioral support as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 25%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group overall ranked professional development as the fifth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Ten percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Ten percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to professional development as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 20%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher recognition as the sixth most important factor when deciding to continue teaching in the CCS system. Ten percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Ten percent of the mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher recognition as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 20%.

The mentor teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Teacher assignment was ranked second, teacher salary was ranked third, behavioral support was ranked fourth, professional development was ranked fifth and teacher recognition was ranked sixth as the most important factor by the mentor teacher stakeholder group when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system.

All Teacher Stakeholder Group

The all teacher survey did not include an age range section. However, the survey did include the same experience level question as the beginning teacher and mentor teacher stakeholder groups. Twenty-one percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were in their first to fifth year of a teaching career. Twenty percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years six and ten of their teaching career. Eighteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years eleven and fifteen of their teaching career. Thirteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years sixteen and twenty of the teaching career. Twelve percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years twenty-one and twenty-five of their teaching career. Nine percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they were between years twenty-six and thirty of their teaching career. Seven percent of the all stakeholder group recorded thirty-one years or more of teaching experience.

The all teacher stakeholder group responses varied from that of the beginning and mentor teacher stakeholder groups when asked; what is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system? Three percent of the all teacher stakeholder group selected district reputation as a reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. One percent of the all teacher stakeholder group

selected spouse transferred as the reason for deciding to teach in the CCS system. Twenty-six percent of the all teacher stakeholder group selected geographic location as the reason they decided to teach in the CCS system. Forty-two percent of the all teacher stakeholder group selected close to family as the reason they decided to teach in the CCS system. Twenty-seven percent of the all teacher stakeholder group selected position/assignment as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS system. One percent of the all teacher stakeholder group selected salary as the reason they decided to teach with the CCS system.

The all teacher stakeholder group was asked to rank professional development, salary, teacher assignment, principal support, teacher recognition, and behavioral support in order of importance when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Principal support was ranked as the most important factor by the all teacher stakeholder group when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Thirty-five percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the number one factor and 24% ranked principal support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined total of the all teacher stakeholder group either ranking principal support as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue with the CCS system was 59%.

The all teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher assignment as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Twenty-seven percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Nineteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher assignment as

the most important or second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system was 46%.

The all teacher stakeholder group overall ranked salary as the third most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Twenty-four percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Sixteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked salary as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to salary as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS was 40%.

The all teacher stakeholder group overall ranked behavioral support as the fourth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Six percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Twenty-seven percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked behavioral support as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to behavioral support as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 33%.

The all teacher stakeholder group overall ranked professional development as the fifth most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Six percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the most important factor when deciding to teach with the CCS system. Nine percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to professional development as the

first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 15%.

The all teacher stakeholder group overall ranked teacher recognition as the sixth most important factor when deciding to continue teaching in the CCS system. Five percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Four percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher recognition as the second most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. The combined ranking given to teacher recognition as the first or second most important factor when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system was 9%.

The all teacher stakeholder group ranked principal support as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Teacher assignment was ranked second, teacher salary was ranked third, behavioral support was ranked fourth, professional development was ranked fifth and teacher recognition was ranked sixth as the most important factor by the all teacher stakeholder group when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system.

Combined Stakeholder Ranking

When all three teacher stakeholder groups rankings were combined, principal support was ranked as the most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Teacher assignment was ranked second, behavioral support was ranked third, teacher salary was ranked fourth, professional development was ranked fifth and teacher recognition was ranked as the sixth most important factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system (see Table 1).

Table 1

Three Teacher Stakeholder Groups Ranking of Reasons to Continue Teaching

Stakeholder Group	Professional Development	Salary	Teacher Assignment	Principal Support	Teacher Recognition	Behavioral Support
Beginning Teacher	2.95	2.96	3.64	4.91	2.20	3.92
Mentor	3.30	3.68	4.16	4.32	2.20	3.45
All Teacher	2.74	3.71	3.96	4.62	2.47	3.55
Overall Ranking	3.00 (5)	3.45 (4)	3.92 (2)	4.62 (1)	2.29 (6)	3.64 (3)

Summary

Community and family ties play a leading role in the decision-making process for teachers who are deciding to work in the CCS system. However, although family ties are important, the younger teachers place more emphasis on the position/assignment they have with the school system. This may be because younger teachers have not developed family ties in the area or they are more open to accepting a position that is not located close to family members. All three teacher stakeholder groups reported that salary, district reputation, and spouse transfer are not a major factor when deciding to teach with the CCS system. All three teacher stakeholder groups reported that principal support is the major determining factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. All three stakeholder groups' ranked professional development and teacher recognition as the least two important factors when deciding to continue with the CCS system. Younger teachers in the CCS system placed more emphasis on behavioral support as a reason to continue teaching in the system. More experienced teachers in the system ranked teacher position/assignment and salary as more important factors than behavioral support when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Some factors, such as principal support, play major roles across all three teacher stakeholder groups. However, based on the data collected from all three teacher stakeholder groups, age and experience level in part determines reasons why teachers remain in the CCS system.

Study Question 3

What is the impact of teacher turnover on the academic performance of low-income public school students in Columbus County School district?

Low-Wealth Eligibility

The Columbus County school system is considered a low-wealth district by the state of North Carolina. The state of North Carolina provides additional funding to school districts in the state that meet certain criteria. In order to receive the additional funding, a school district must meet the eligibility requirements set by the state. According to the 2017-2018 NC Allotment and Policy Manual, the eligibility requirements are as follows. Eligible LEAs are those located in counties in which the calculated county wealth (per the legislated formula) is less than 100% of the state average wealth (2017-2018 Allotment Policy Manual). The Columbus County school system qualifies under the eligibility requirements set by the state of North Carolina and has received additional funding for the last twenty-six years.

Stakeholder Survey Data

The principal stakeholder group and the all teacher stakeholder group along with other stakeholder groups were asked to complete a survey administrated by the Columbus County school system during the fall of 2018. A total of four stakeholder groups were surveyed. The following question was appropriately placed on the principal survey and the all teacher survey. Does teacher turnover have an impact on student performance at your school? All CCS principals responded to the survey and 100% answered yes that teacher turnover impacts student performance at their school. The response given by the all teacher stakeholder group varied slightly from the response given by the principal stakeholder group. Seventy-three percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that teacher turnover does impact student performance at their school. Twenty-seven percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that teacher turnover does not impact student performance at their school. Although 27% of the teacher stakeholder group responded that teacher turnover does not impact student performance at their

school, a substantial percentage of both stakeholder groups responded that teacher turnover does impact student performance.

Teacher Turnover and School Performance Data

In 2015, eleven schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card issued by the NC Department of Public Instruction. In 2015, six schools in the CCS system did not meet their student growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Four out of the six schools that did not meet their growth targets received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card. The average teacher turnover rate for the eleven schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 20.16%. The average teacher turnover rate for the seven schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 13.93%. The NC Department of Public Instruction reported a state teacher turnover rate of 14.84% for the same 2015 period. The average turnover rate for the eleven schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card was considerably higher than the total state teacher turnover for the same period. The average teacher turnover rate for the seven schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card was slightly lower than the state teacher turnover average reported during the same period. Four out of eleven or 36.4% of the schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card did not meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Two out of seven or 28.6% of the schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card did not meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction.

In 2016, six schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card issued by the NC Department of Public Instruction. In 2016, four schools in the CCS system did not meet their student growth targets set by the NC Department of Public

Instruction. One school out of the four schools that did not meet their growth targets received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card. The average teacher turnover rate for the six schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 24.7%. The average teacher turnover rate for the twelve schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 11.70%. The NC Department of Public Instruction reported a state teacher turnover rate of 9.04% for the same 2016 period. The average turnover rate for the six schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card was considerably higher than the total state teacher turnover for the same period. The average teacher turnover rate for the twelve schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card was higher than the state teacher turnover average reported during the same period. However, the teacher turnover rate for the schools that received a letter grade of D or below was significantly higher than those school that received a letter grade of C or above. One out of six or 16.7% of the schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card did not meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Three out of twelve or 25.0% of the schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card did not meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction.

In 2017, six schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card issued by the NC Department of Public Instruction. In 2017, three schools in the CCS system did not meet their student growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction. The three schools that did not meet their growth targets received a letter grade of C on their school report card. The average teacher turnover rate for the six schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 24.4%. The average teacher turnover rate for the twelve schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 13.15%. The NC Department of Public Instruction

reported a state teacher turnover rate of 8.7% for the same 2017 period. The average turnover rate for the six schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card was considerably higher than the total state teacher turnover for the same period. The average teacher turnover rate for the twelve schools in the CCS system that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card was higher than the state teacher turnover average reported during the same period. However, the teacher turnover rate for the schools that received a letter grade of D or below was significantly higher than those schools that received a letter grade of C or above. All six or 100% of the schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card did meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction. Three out of twelve or 25.0% of the schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card did not meet the growth targets set by the NC Department of Public Instruction.

Principal and Teacher Face-to-Face Interviews

The principal and one teacher from each of the four schools in the CCS system that consistently over a three-year period recorded the lowest teacher turnover rate were interviewed. A questionnaire containing six questions was e-mailed to the principals and teachers who participated in the interviews three days prior to the interviews (see Appendix D and E). All the principals and teachers completed the questionnaire prior to the interview. During the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to explain and discuss the response's they provided on the questionnaire.

Both the principal and teacher were asked the question: Does low teacher turnover impact student academic performance at your school? Figure 6 contains the responses provided by the four principals and four teachers interviewed. One hundred percent of the four principals

interviewed responded that a low rate of teacher turnover does have an impact on student performance at their school (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). One hundred percent of the four teachers interviewed responded that a low teacher turnover rate at their school does impact student performance (teachers, personal communication, February 7, 2019).

Both principals and teachers highlighted that low teacher turnover allows teachers and students to develop strong relationships. A low teacher turnover also allows teachers to build relationships with each other which produces a sense of consistency among staff and students. The low teacher turnover at these schools helps the school fully implement programs and collect data to determine if the program implementation was successful. Figure 6 lists the exact response that both principals and teachers provided. Three common themes emerged from the data collected from both groups. Low teacher turnover provides schools with the opportunity to develop relationships, gain respect from students and other staff, and provide students with a sense of trust and consistency.

Summary

The majority or 86.5% of the stakeholders surveyed believe that teacher turnover does impact student performance at their school. Sometimes teacher turnover can have a positive impact on student performance depending on the individual circumstances surrounding the turnover. The data collected for this study suggest that teacher turnover has a negative impact on student performance.

In 2015, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 20.16%. In 2015, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 13.93%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had

Q6. Does low teacher turnover impact student academic performance at your school? Please explain.
P1. “Absolutely” “Consistent teachers/staff establishes trust” “Respect level of all student/staff”
P2. “Yes” “Bonds” “Relationships make the difference” “Fully implement programs”
P3. “Yes” “Consistency between co-workers, content/grade levels” “Get to know students”
P4. ‘Yes” “Consistency is very important when you have good teachers in place, so it’s important to find good teachers and keep them in place. This will build or maintain a strong school culture which will have a positive impact on scores”
T1. “Yes” “Students know the expectations of the teacher/word of mouth from older siblings” “The teachers are recognized by community members outside of the school” “Students appreciate knowing who teachers are year after year, learning personalities, respect each other” “Know that teachers love them”
T2. “Bonds” “Relationships” “Fully implement programs/data”
T3. “Yes” “Students are already familiar with the faces on campus” “Easier to transition to next grade” “Teachers build relationships and work together to benefit students”
T4. “I feel it does because teachers get to know their students on a personal but professional level”

Figure 6. Data collected on question six from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

an average teacher turnover rate 6.23 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below.

In 2016, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 24.7%. In 2016, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 11.17%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had an average teacher turnover rate 13.53 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below.

In 2017, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 24.4%. In 2017, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 13.15%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had an average teacher turnover rate 11.25 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below.

During the three-years reviewed which included 2015, 2016 and 2017 the teacher turnover rate for higher performing schools was considerably lower than that of lower performing schools. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter grade of D or below was 23.09%. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter grade of C or above was 12.93%. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card was 10.16 percentage points lower than schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card.

The data suggest that the teacher turnover rate has an impact on student performance. In general, schools that recorded a lower teacher turnover rate receive better ratings on overall state indicators. However, a conclusive determination could not be reached by the researcher because

in some cases in the CCS system, schools that had a high teacher turnover rate met or exceeded their growth targets. Likewise, some schools in the CCS that recorded a low teacher turnover rate did not meet their growth targets (see Table 2).

Study Question 4

Which actions can help minimize the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County?

The data collected from four stakeholder groups and face-to-face interviews with principals and teachers lead the researcher to believe that CCS has several programs in place to help with teacher satisfaction. The current systems are not fully deployed throughout the district. The majority of qualitative and quantitative data collected in the CCS system was positive. However, the data has helped the researcher distinguish some areas in the district that can be strengthened.

A larger than average number of teachers leave the profession during their first three years of their teaching career. During the 2014-2015 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed eighty-two teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Eighteen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 22%. During the 2015-2016 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed one hundred and three teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Thirty of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 29%. During the 2016-2017 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed seventy-nine teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Seventeen of the teacher did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 22%. The CCS systems beginning teacher turnover rate for the

Table 2

All Columbus County Schools Growth Status and NC Report Card Grade Compared to Their Teacher Turnover Rate

School	2015			2016			2017		
	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate
ADMS	F	NM	19.05	D	NM	35.00	D	M	55.56
ADES	D	M	14.58	C	M	5.88	C	M	23.08
CGES	C	M	12.50	C	M	8.51	C	NM	10.20
CMS	D	E	4.17	C	E	25.00	D	M	11.11
CES	D	M	30.00	D	M	30.00	C	M	23.81
ECHS	D	NM	30.30	C	M	25.71	C	M	24.62
EES	D	M	22.22	D	M	11.76	C	E	17.95
GES	F	M	16.67	C	M	33.33	B	E	10.00
HAES	D	M	27.08	D	M	19.15	D	M	21.28
HMS	D	M	20.69	C	E	16.13	D	M	22.58
NMS	C	NM	10.82	C	M	0	C	NM	4.00

Table 2 (continued)

School	2015			2016			2017		
	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Growth Status	Teacher Turnover Rate
ODES	C	E	5.88	B	M	0	B	M	5.56
SCHS	C	M	7.87	C	NM	4.55	C	M	11.36
TCES	D	NM	13.79	D	M	25.00	D	M	17.24
CCCA	C	M	28.57	B	NM	8.70	C	NM	8.33
TCMS	D	NM	22.58	D	M	27.59	D	M	18.52
WCHS	C	NM	24.32	C	NM	5.88	C	M	8.82
WTS	C	M	7.52	C	M	6.74	C	M	10.11
CCS LEA			17.25			14.21			15.83

three reporting periods listed above is considerably higher than the overall teacher turnover rate for the same reporting period.

Stakeholder Response

The implementation of a strong mentor program that meets the needs of beginning teachers is one area of focus that can help minimize teacher turnover in the CCS system. In a recent survey the principal stakeholder group was asked the question: Do you feel that the mentors at your school have received the proper training to be successful? Sixty percent of the principals responded that they feel mentors have received the proper training. Forty percent of principals responded that they felt mentors have not received the proper training. Although 60% of the principal stakeholder group responded that mentors have received the proper training, 40% is a considerable percentage of mentors who have not received the proper training. Proper mentor training would prepare mentors with the tools to help support mentees, therefore, potentially reducing teacher turnover.

The mentor stakeholder group was also surveyed to see if they received the proper training to excel with their current mentee assignment. Eighty-one percent of the mentors responded that they had received the proper training and 19% responded that they had not received the proper training to excel with their current mentee assignment. Consistent proper training for mentors could help reduce the teacher turnover rate, especially the teacher turnover rate of beginning teachers.

The principal stakeholder group was asked if they were able to provide teachers with enough supplies and resources to plan and implement the required lessons. Seventy-one percent of principals responded that they were able to provide the resources needed. Twenty-nine percent responded that they were not able to provide teachers with the needed resources to plan and

implement the required lessons. When asked the same question the all teacher stakeholder group responded slightly different than the principal stakeholder group. Sixty-seven percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they are provided with enough resources to plan and implement required lessons. Thirty-three percent responded that they are not provided with enough resources to implement lessons.

The all teacher stakeholder group was asked if their stress level was reduced by receiving support from their colleagues. Eighty-one percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that their stress level was reduced by receiving support from their colleagues. Nineteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group reported that their stress level was not reduced by support from colleagues.

All three teacher stakeholder groups were asked what the CCS system could provide to help them grow and remain in the teaching profession. The list below is a combined list of what all three teacher stakeholder groups reported would help them grow and remain in the teaching profession, therefore, reducing the teacher turnover rate.

- Central office support
- School Leadership support
- Provide time for collaboration among grade levels and subject areas
- Salary increase
- Recognition from administration
- Allow more involvement in decision-making related to curriculum
- Behavioral support
- Reinstate tenure tracks
- Masters level pay

- Increase technology available to students and teachers
- Provide tuition assistance
- Develop programs to increase parent support
- Provide support to attend conferences
- Provide content-specific professional development
- Rebuild schools

The above list was provided by the three teacher stakeholder groups who completed the surveys. The combined list represents the most common responses provided by the three stakeholder groups.

Summary

Although individual responses varied on the survey questions, the researcher was able to identify common areas among all stakeholder groups that would help minimize teacher turnover. The first common theme was the need for school leadership to create an environment that provides support and allows all stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process. Second, providing training to mentors and mentees on how to integrate into the education setting was another common theme. Third, provide all principals and teachers with the resources needed to plan and implement the curriculum. Fourth, schools could provide planning time for teachers to learn from each other and reflect on best practices. Based on the response given from the stakeholder groups these areas are important to minimizing teacher turnover.

Study Question 5

What current best practices are being utilized by schools in the Columbus County School System to promote teacher retention?

Stakeholder Response

The Columbus County school system does have some best practices in place to help reduce teacher turnover. The individual schools in the district vary widely in the approach they use to develop and retain teachers. Face-to-face interviews with teachers and principals from the four schools in the CCS system that consistently record the lowest teacher turnover were used to help determine the current best practices used in the CCS system to promote teacher retention. Data gained from surveys given to two stakeholder groups was also used to help determine some of the best practices that the CCS school system has in place.

Principal Stakeholder Response

In a survey conducted by the CCS school system, principals were asked to list the methods used at their school to promote teacher retention. All of the seventeen principals in the CCS system completed the survey. Listed below are the most common responses provided by the principal stakeholder group on how they promote teacher retention at their school.

- Identify and celebrate success continuously
- Provide behavioral support to teachers
- Provide leadership support
- Ensure a collaborative learning environment
- Provide opportunities for professional development
- Conduct weekly PLC's centered on instructional support
- Provide a working environment where staff members feel appreciated
- Ensure an open door policy and positive staff interactions

All Teacher Stakeholder Responses

In a survey conducted by the CCS school system, all CCS teachers were asked to list what is done at their school to promote teacher retention. The all teacher stakeholder group provided a total of one hundred and thirty-one responses. Fourteen or 10.7% of the all teacher stakeholder group that responded reported that they were not sure of any best practices that were used at their school to promote teacher retention. Forty-seven or 35.9% of the all teacher stakeholder group reported that nothing is currently being done at their school to promote teacher retention. Listed below are the most common responses provided by the all teacher stakeholder group on how their school promotes teacher retention.

- We are a family
- We respect each other
- Team support of staff and administration
- Principal support/positive leadership
- The school environment is inviting
- Mentor program for new teachers
- Quarterly teacher recognitions
- Cooperation between teachers and staff
- Adequate planning time
- Shared decision-making
- Community involvement
- Leadership understands the importance of family
- Established hiring process
- Teachers are treated with respect

The data indicated that 47% of the teachers who responded to the survey are not aware of retention activities or feel that nothing is being done at their school to promote teacher retention. However, teachers and principals did identify several best practices used in their schools to promote teacher retention.

Principal and Teacher Interviews

The principals from the four schools that consistently record the lowest teacher turnover rate in the CCS system participated in a face-to-face interview to help the researcher gain an understanding of best practices used at their school to promote teacher retention. A questionnaire containing six questions was e-mailed to the principals and teachers who participated in the interviews three days prior to the interviews. All the principals and teachers completed the questionnaire prior to the interview. During the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to explain and discuss the response's they provided on the questionnaire.

Principals were asked the question: Why do you think the teacher turnover rate at your school remains consistently low? Principals overall discussed four reasons why teacher turnover remains low at their selected schools. First, the school has established community ties and has a history of promoting student success. Second, the principal and staff have placed a focus on establishing professional and respectful relationships. Third, the principal provides the materials that teachers request to plan and implement lessons. Fourth, a strong mentor program is in place at the school to help new teachers adjust to the school environment (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 7 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Teachers were asked the question: Why do you think the teacher turnover rate at your school remains consistently low? The teachers discussed five reasons why they believe that

Q1. Why do you think the teacher turnover rate at your school remains consistently low?
P1. "Community ties to school" "Established respectful/professional relationships" "Materials provided to teachers."
P2. "Community/support" "Teachers attended same school" "Faith-based support"
P3. "Sense of community" "Administrative support" "Live local"
P4. "We hire local teachers when possible" "Family atmosphere" "Strong community support" " Strong mentor leadership for young teachers"
T1. "Positive attitudes" "Great community/family feel" "Most of the staff is from the area/went to school at Nakina High or have parents that did and/or children that do"
T2. "Community support" "3-5 grade teachers attend special dinners/bond" "Principal support/advice" "Constructive discussion/stronger understanding of ideas"
T3. "Great work environment" "Great team members" "Great supportive administration"
T4. " Hire teachers that teach for the love of teaching" "Family atmosphere"

Figure 7. Data collected on question one from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

teacher turnover remains low at their school. First, the school has a welcoming environment that promotes a family feeling. Second, the majority of the staff has community ties and they feel that they receive support from different areas of the community. Third, the teachers are free to participate in the decision-making process and they have constructive discussions with other staff members and the school leadership. Fourth, teachers at the school feel that they receive the proper support from school leadership. Fifth, a hiring process is created where teachers are allowed to participate. The schools try to hire teachers who are local and have community ties when possible. They also try to gauge the applicant's authenticity for teaching during the hiring process (teachers, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 7 lists the responses provided by the four teachers interviewed.

Principals were asked the question: Do you have a plan in place to combat teacher turnover? None of the four principals interviewed produced a written teacher retention plan for their school. However, all the principals did discuss unwritten plans at their school that help promote teacher retention. The principals overall discussed four components of an unwritten plan that they use to promote teacher retention at their schools. First, celebrations are planned throughout the school year to recognize teachers. Second, data is used from the NCTWC survey to help gauge the needs of staff members. Third, the principals provide flex-time for staff members who use their personal time to help improve the school. Fourth, the principal creates an environment that encourages staff members to be involved in the decision-making process (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 8 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Q2. Do you have a plan in place at your school to combat teacher turnover? If so, please explain.
P1. "Celebrations" "Staff Meals" "Spirit Wear" "TWC Survey"
P2. "Celebration of success" "Retirement party" "Flex time" "Cover Classes" "Had to become aware of others (grew over time)" "Growing process"
P3. "No - turnover has been limited to retirement each year for 3 previous years(minus one transfer to high school and one resignation"
P4. "Open door policy" "Strong teacher leaders" "Meet weekly with teachers during department meetings" "This allows teacher input and feedback" "Department heads report to Principal" "Builds strong communication from top to bottom" " Allows teachers to have a voice at school"
T1. "Yes" "Site based meetings/management" "Mentoring teachers" "PLC's" "SIT team" "Teacher satisfaction survey"
T2. "Cover classes" "Payback OG time" "Help/Get to know on a lot of levels" "Considerate of feelings" "Relationship over time" "Potluck" "Above and beyond"
T3. "Obvious effort to build morale" "Shout out board" "Coffee and donuts" "Salad bar/soup"
T4. "We have mentoring programs in place" "We offer incentives such as teacher of the month"

Figure 8. Data collected on question two from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

Teachers were asked the question: Are you aware of a plan in place at your school to combat teacher turnover? The responses teachers provided were similar to the one provided by principals on question two. All the teachers identified activities at their school that promotes teacher retention. None of the teachers produced a structured written plan that was presented to all staff members. The researcher was able to identify four common areas that teachers discussed during the interviews. First, the teachers feel that they are recognized for their work with celebrations throughout the school year. Second, staff members at the schools work as a team to accomplish goals. Third, teachers at the school have built relationships with co-workers, school leaders, and students. Fourth, teachers participate in the mentoring process to help each other and new teachers (teachers, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 8 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Principals were asked the question: What role does school culture play in the low teacher turnover rate at your school? Common responses were provided by the four principals. Principals believe that a school culture that provides an open-door policy that allows teachers to communicate with school leadership produces trustful relationships. The principals discussed a school culture where teachers and school leaders feel comfortable providing each other with praise and constructive criticism. The four principals have created a school culture that provides staff members with flex-time for activities that they participate in outside the normal school day. All four principals interviewed feel that the total school culture plays the leading role in the low teacher turnover rate at their school (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 9 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Teachers were asked the question: What role does school culture play in the low teacher turnover rate at your school? Teachers responded that the culture at their school creates a less-

Q3. What role does school culture play in the low teacher turnover rate at your school?
P1. “TOY Parking” “Cover Classes” “Provide flex-time” “Open door policy” “Constructive conversations/criticism”
P2. “Trust” “Drive health competition” “Provide a lot of school level PD” “ Expectation students and teachers” “Low number of behavior problems”
P3. “Faith based” “Supportive of peers” “Open discussions/honest dialogue” “No-blame zone”
P4. “A strong culture that teachers believe in and are proud of allows a sense of pride” “If teachers are proud of the workplace they are more likely to enjoy work and this, in turn, reduces turnover” “If you like your work you will never work a day in your life”
T1. “If you work in a less-stressed environment with people you enjoy working with, then the rate will be lower” “We are like one big family – we support each other” “Staff meals, teacher appreciation activities” “Positivity breeds positivity”
T2. “Bonds – Kids they know well at all levels” “Family – discussion” “Colleague Support”
T3. “Positive culture/environment” “Working together” “Nurturing” “Good parent support”
T4. “We have a family atmosphere here at our school. Also, our principal has an open door policy and we can easily come to him with concerns”

Figure 9. Data collected on question three from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

stressed environment for teachers, therefore, their schools have lower teacher turnover rates. The teachers interviewed believe a school culture where teachers, students and administrators build bonds help encourage teachers to remain in the profession. They also feel that a school culture that has built positive parent and community support helps reduce teacher turnover (teachers, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 9 lists the responses provided by the four teachers interviewed.

Principals were asked: Does community support have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover at your school? Three of the principals reported that community support has a positive impact on teacher turnover at this school. One principal reported that community support could have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover depending on the type of support provided. The schools have independent clubs in place made up of community members that support the school with monetary gifts and hold special events to recognize teachers. The schools have established several faith-based partnerships that focus on student support and total school support. The schools have also established several business partnerships in the community. Overall the four principals reported that community support does help keep teacher turnover low at their schools (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 10 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Teachers were asked: Does community support have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover at your school? All four of the teachers interviewed reported that community support has a positive impact at their school. Several reported that they feel that the school is the center of the community and that community members take pride in the school. They also discussed how they make an extra effort to include community members in school activities and how they ensure that community members feel welcome at their school (teachers, personal

Q4. Does community support have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover at your school?
P1. “Mustang club” “Faith-based support” “Parental support” “Business Partnerships”
P2. “Positive”
P3. “Neutral” “Day-to-Day” “Parents perception of teacher”
P4. “Positive” “Teachers that are treated like professionals and have support will not leave”
T1. “Positive Impact” “Community members feel comfortable when talking to staff members and feel welcomed at the school” “We have great community support and it positively affects our teacher satisfaction”
T2.”Positive” “Allowed to handle in class” “Trust”
T3. “Positive” “Active PTO – They handle fundraisers” “Support-Churches providing supplies, Parents grilled for field day, Parents are generally supportive of classrooms”
T4. “Our school seems to be the heart of our community, but I have seen a decline in community support over the years. This seems to be a trend all over the state, people do not value education as they once did”

Figure 10. Data collected on question four from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 10 lists the responses provided by the four teachers interviewed.

Summary

Best practices currently being used in schools in the CCS system to promote teacher retention vary among individual schools. The researcher was able to identify common practices used throughout the district. A respectful clean environment where teachers feel they can communicate their ideas freely was a best practice discussed in the principal and teacher interviews, as well as, on the stakeholder surveys. A plan that includes a component that recognizes that a teacher's family is important to them and that provides support in that area. A best practice that is common among the schools with low teacher turnover is shared decision-making that involves all stakeholders. A district-wide plan that includes best practices would help promote teacher retention. A district-wide plan would also help the large number of teachers in the district who feel that they are not currently being recognized for their work.

Study Question 6

How do low-performing and high-performing schools in Columbus County compare with regard to teacher turnover?

As of January 2018, the Columbus County School system operated a total of seventeen schools. At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the school system closed one school and relocated the students and staff to surrounding schools. However, the data used in this section will represent the eighteen schools that were open during the 2017-2018 school year. For the purpose of this study the designation of low-performing school will be assigned to those schools who received a letter grade of D or below consistently over a three-year period on their school report card issued by the state of North Carolina. Schools that received a letter grade of C or

above consistently over a three-year period on their school report card issued yearly by the state of North Carolina will be considered high-performing schools.

Low-Performing Schools

Four schools in the Columbus County School system received a letter grade of D or below consistently over the three-year period from 2015 to 2017. The highest rate of teacher turnover recorded by the four consistently low-performing schools was in 2017 at a rate of 55.56%. The lowest teacher turnover rate recorded by the four consistently low-performing schools was 13.79% in 2015. All the teacher turnover rates recorded by the four consistently low-performing schools were above the state average for the same year, with the exception of the teacher turnover rate recorded by TCES at 13.79 for 2015. The teacher turnover rate reported in 2015 by the state of North Carolina Department of Public Instruction was 14.84%.

ADMS in 2015, received report card grade of F and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 19.75%. In 2015, HAES received a report card grade of D and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 27.08. HAES recorded the highest rate of teacher turnover of the four low-performing schools in 2015. In 2015, TCES received a report card grade of D and recorded the lowest rate of teacher turnover of the four low-performing schools at 13.79. TCMS in 2015, received a report card grade of D and recorded the second highest teacher turnover rate of the four low-performing schools at 22.58%.

In 2016 ADMS received a report card grade of D and recorded the highest rate of teacher turnover of all the low-performing schools at 35%. HAES received a report card grade of D in 2016 and recorded the lowest teacher turnover rate at 19.15% of the low-performing schools for the year. TCES received a report grade of D and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 25% for the

2016 year. In 2016 TCMS recorded the second highest teacher turnover rate at 25% and received a report card grade of D.

In 2017, ADMS lost over half of its staff and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 55.56%. ADMS received a report card grade of D in 2017 and recorded the highest turnover rate of all four low-performing schools. HAES in 2017, received a report card grade of D and recorded the second highest teacher turnover rate of the four low-performing schools at 21.28%. In 2017, TCES recorded the lowest teacher turnover rate of the four low-performing schools at 17.24% and received a report card grade of D. TCMS in 2017, recorded a teacher turnover rate of 18.52% and received a report card grade of D. ADMS recorded the highest three-year teacher turnover average at 36.77 and TCES recorded the lowest teacher turnover three-year average at 18.68% (see Table 3).

High-Performing Schools

Seven schools in the Columbus County School system received a letter grade of C or above consistently over the three-year period from 2015 to 2017. The highest rate of teacher turnover recorded by the seven consistently high-performing schools was 24.32% in 2015. The lowest rate of teacher turnover recorded by the seven high-performing schools for the three-year period from 2015 to 2017 was 0%. NMS and ODES both reported zero teacher turnover for the 2016 school year.

In 2015, CGES received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 12.5%. The same year NMS received a report card grade of C and reported a teacher turnover rate of 10.82%. In 2015, ODES recorded the lowest teacher turnover rate of the seven high-performing schools and received a report card grade of C. SCHS received a report card grade of C in 2015 and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 7.87%. In 2015, CCCA recorded the highest

Table 3

Schools Identified as Low-Performing Three-Year NC Report Card Grade and Teacher Turnover Comparison

School	2015		2016		2017		Three-Year Turnover Average
	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	
ADMS	F	19.75	D	35.00	D	55.56	36.77
HAES	D	27.08	D	19.15	D	21.28	22.50
TCES	D	13.79	D	25.00	D	17.24	18.68
TCMS	D	22.58	D	27.59	D	18.52	22.89

teacher turnover rate at 28.57% of the seven high-performing schools and received a report card grade of C. In 2015, WCHS received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 24.32% which was the second highest turnover rate recorded by the seven high-performing schools in 2015. In 2015, WTS received a report card grade of C and recorded the second lowest teacher turnover rate of the seven high-performing schools at 7.52%.

In 2016, CGES received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 8.51%. In the same year, NMS received a report card grade of C and reported no teacher turnover. ODES in 2016 received a report card grade of B and also reported no teacher turnover. NMS and ODES had the lowest teacher turnover rate of the seven high-performing schools in 2016. Both schools reported no teacher turnover for 2016. SCHS reported the second lowest teacher turnover rate of the seven high-performing schools in 2016 at 4.55% and received a report card grade of C. In 2016 CCCA recorded the highest teacher turnover rate of the seven high-performing schools at 8.70% and received a report card grade of B. WCHS in the same year received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 5.88%. In 2016, WTS received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 6.74%.

In 2017, CGES received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 10.2%. NMS recorded the lowest teacher turnover rate for 2017 at 4%. The same year NMS received a report card grade of C. ODES in 2017 received a report card grade of B and reported a teacher turnover rate of 5.56%. SCHS recorded the highest teacher turnover in 2017 of the seven high-performing schools at 11.36% and received a report card grade of C. In 2017, CCCA received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 8.33%. In the same year, WCHS received a report card grade of C and recorded a teacher turnover rate of 8.82%. In 2017, WTS recorded a teacher turnover rate of 10.11% and received a report card grade of C.

ODES had the lowest three-year teacher turnover average of the seven high-performing schools at 3.81%. CCCA had the highest three-year teacher turnover average of the seven high-performing schools at 15.2% (see Table 4).

Summary

The combined teacher turnover rate three-year average for the four low-performing schools was 25.21%. The combined teacher turnover rate three-year average for the seven high-performing schools was 9.06%. The difference between the combined average of the four low-performing schools and the seven high-performing schools in regards to teacher turnover was 16.15%. Over a three-year period, low-performing schools recorded a 16.15% higher teacher turnover rate than high-performing schools. Based on the data schools that have a lower teacher turnover rate record higher student performance grades.

Study Question 7

What major components should be included in the teacher retention plan according to CCS stakeholders?

The surveys sent to stakeholders in the CCS system during the fall of 2018, included questions related to what components of a teacher retention plan would benefit all stakeholders the most. The responses varied depending on the group surveyed, however, several common themes emerged. All four surveys sent to stakeholders included the question: In your opinion what is the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan? Survey participants were asked to rank the mentor program, professional development, school leadership, teacher assignment, or self-reflection from most important to least important.

Table 4

Schools Identified as High-Performing Three-Year NC Report Card Grade and Teacher Turnover Comparison

School	2015		2016		2017		Three-Year Turnover Average
	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	
CGES	C	12.50	C	8.51	C	10.20	10.40
NMS	C	10.82	C	0	C	4.00	4.94
ODES	C	5.88	B	0	B	5.56	3.81
SCHS	C	7.87	C	4.55	C	11.36	7.93
CCCA	C	28.57	B	8.70	C	8.33	15.20
WCHS	C	24.32	C	5.88	C	8.82	13.00
WTS	C	7.52	C	6.74	C	10.11	8.12

School Leadership

Participants from all four surveys including principals ranked school leadership as the most important factor in developing a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Principals ranked school leadership as most important with 46.7% responding that it was the most important. Forty percent of beginning teachers ranked school leadership as the most important aspect of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Teachers who currently serve as mentors ranked school leadership as most important with 47.3% responding that it was the most important. The ranking was higher when all CCS teachers were surveyed. They ranked school leadership as the most important with 57.0% ranking it as the most important aspect of a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

Mentor Program

Overall the need for a strong mentor program ranked as the second most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Forty-three percent of principals ranked the mentor program as the number one component of a teacher retention plan and 14.0% ranked it as the second most important. The principal stakeholder group combined total of principals who either ranked the mentor program as the first or second most important was 57%. Beginning teachers when asked to rank the same aspects of a comprehensive teacher retention plan responded similarly to other stakeholder groups when asked the same question. Seventeen percent of beginning teachers ranked the mentor program as the number one component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Thirty-three percent of beginning teachers ranked the mentor program as the second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan. The combined total for beginning teachers either ranking the mentor program as the first or second most important part of a teacher retention plan was 50%.

Teachers who serve as mentors, when asked the same question responded slightly different. Thirty-two percent ranked the mentor program as the most important component of a teacher retention plan and 15.7% ranked it as the second most important component of a teacher retention plan. The combined total of mentors either ranking the mentor program as the first or second most important component of a teacher retention plan 47.3%. A larger percent of the mentors ranked the mentor program as the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan when compared to other groups. Thirty-two percent of mentors ranked the mentor program as the most important aspect as compared to 16.6% of beginning teachers, 14.2% of all teachers and 42.8% of principals.

When the all CCS teacher stakeholder group was asked to rank the most important components of a teacher retention plan, 14.2% ranked the mentor program as the most important and 25.7% ranked the mentor program as the second most important part of the plan. The combined total of all teachers ranking the mentor program as the most important or second most important was 40%. Although the numbers varied across the groups surveyed, the mentor program ranked overall as the second most important component of a teacher retention plan.

Professional Development

Professional development ranked as the third most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Although some groups ranked teachers assignment as a more important component of a teacher retention plan, professional development emerged as the third component, when all survey data was combined. The percent of principals who ranked professional development as the number one component of a teacher retention plan was 6.6%. Forty percent of principals ranked professional development as the second most important aspect

of a teacher retention plan. The combined total of principals either ranking professional development as the first or second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan was 46.6%.

Beginning teachers overall ranked professional development less important than teacher assignment. Twelve percent of beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked professional development as the number one component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan and 8% ranked it as the second most important component. The combined total of beginning teachers either ranking professional development as the first or second component was 20%. The beginning teachers ranking on professional development to the survey given in the fall of 2018, was different in regards to professional development from the responses beginning teachers provided on a preliminary survey given in September 2017. In September 2017, nineteen out of forty-seven or 40% of beginning teachers responded that they needed a different type or increased professional development. The change in attitude towards professional development may be related to the change of individual teachers participating in the beginning teacher program. When teachers successfully complete three years of teaching they exit the beginning teacher program and new hires are placed into the program. The change could also be as simple as beginning teachers truly feel other areas are more important to a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

Fifteen percent of mentors ranked professional development as the most important aspect of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Ten percent of mentors ranked professional development as the second most important aspect. The combined total of mentors either ranking professional development as the first or second most important part of a comprehensive teacher retention plan was 25%.

When the all teachers stakeholder group ranked professional development, the ranking was very similar to that of the rankings given by mentors. Six and one-half percent of all teachers surveyed ranked professional development as the number one component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Thirteen percent ranked professional development as the second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan. When combined, 19.5% of the all teachers stakeholder group either ranked professional development as the first or second most important component of a teacher retention plan. After the data from all the surveys given in the fall of 2018, was combined, professional development ranked as the third most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

Teacher Assignment

Although some groups ranked teacher assignment as a more important aspect of a teacher retention plan than professional development, when the data was combined from all groups surveyed, teacher assignment ranked as the fourth most important aspect of a teacher retention plan. Out of all the stakeholder groups surveyed, principals ranked teacher assignment less important to a teacher retention plan than other groups. The ranking given to teacher assignment by principals as being the most important component of a teacher retention plan was 6.6%. Twenty percent of principals responded that teacher assignment should be considered the second most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The combined percent of principals who ranked teacher assignment as either the most important or second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan was 26.6%.

In contrast to the rankings given by principals on the importance of teacher assignment, beginning teachers ranked teacher assignment as a more important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Nineteen percent of beginning teachers ranked teacher

assignment as the most important part of a teacher retention plan. Twenty-seven percent of beginning teachers ranked teacher assignment as the second most important part of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The combined percent of beginning teachers who either ranked teacher assignment as the first or second most important part of a comprehensive teacher retention plan was 46%.

The rankings provided by mentors in regards to teacher assignment were similar to those provided by beginning teachers. Ten percent of mentors ranked teacher assignment as the most important component of a teacher retention plan. Thirty percent of mentors ranked teacher assignment as the second most important part of a teacher retention plan. The combined percent of mentors who ranked teacher assignment as the most important or second most important part of a teacher retention plan was 40%.

The rankings provided by the all teacher stakeholder group were similar to the rankings provided by beginning teacher and mentor stakeholder groups. Fourteen percent of all teachers ranked teacher assignment as the most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Thirty percent ranked teacher assignment as the second most important component of a teacher retention plan. The combined total of all teachers who ranked teacher assignment as the first or second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan was 44%. After combining all the rankings provided by the four stakeholders groups, teacher assignment ranked fourth in the list of components that should be included in a comprehensive teacher retention plan. However, the data indicates that the beginning teacher stakeholder group, mentor stakeholder group and the all teacher stakeholder group felt that teacher assignment should be ranked higher.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection was ranked fifth in importance by all stakeholder groups as a component that should be included in a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Seventeen out of the seventeen principals surveyed did not rank self-reflection as the most important part of a teacher retention plan. Thirteen percent of principals ranked self-reflection as the second most important component of a teacher retention plan. The combined total of principals who ranked self-reflection as the most important or second most important was 13.3%.

Beginning teachers also ranked self-reflection fifth with 7.4% ranking it as the most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Eleven percent of beginning teachers ranked self-reflection as the second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan. The combined total of beginning teachers either ranking self-reflection as the most important or second most important was 18.5%. Although the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked self-reflection fifth, the rankings they provided were slightly higher than that of principals.

As a whole, the mentor stakeholder group ranked self-reflection as the fifth most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. None of the respondents in the mentor stakeholder group ranked self-reflection as the most important component of a teacher retention plan. Twenty-five percent of the mentor group ranked self-reflection as the second most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The combined total of the mentor stakeholder group ranking self-reflection as either the first or second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan was 25%. However, the mentor stakeholder group did rank self-reflection the highest of all stakeholder groups as being the first or second most important aspect of a teacher retention plan.

The all teacher stakeholder group also ranked self-reflection as the fifth most important aspect of a teacher retention plan. Eight percent ranked self-reflection as the most important component of a teacher retention plan. Thirteen percent of the all teacher stakeholder group ranked self-reflection as the second most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The combined total of the all teacher stakeholder group who ranked self-reflection as either the first or second most important component of a teacher retention plan was 21.4%. The rankings given to self-reflection by the all teacher stakeholder group was similar to the rankings given by other stakeholder groups.

Although overall self-reflection was ranked as the fifth most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan, in a different section of the surveys given, all stakeholder groups responded that self-reflection was a valuable aspect of a teacher's professional growth. All stakeholder groups were asked the question: How important is self-reflection to a teachers' professional growth? Stakeholder groups were asked to rank the value of self-reflection as extremely valuable, very valuable, somewhat valuable, not so valuable or not at all valuable. All the responses from the four stakeholder groups fell into three of the five-choice categories; extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable.

Eighty percent of principals respond that self-reflection is extremely valuable to a teacher's professional growth. Twenty percent of principals responded that self-reflection is very valuable to the professional growth of a teacher. The combined total of principals who either responded that professional development was extremely valuable or very valuable was 100%. The responses provided by the beginning stakeholder group varied slightly from those provided by principals. However, all the responses provided by beginning teachers were in the categories of extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable. Thirty-nine percent of beginning

teachers responded that self-reflection was extremely valuable to their professional growth. Forty-seven percent of beginning teachers responded that self-reflection is very valuable to their professional growth. Fourteen percent of beginning teachers responded that self-reflection is somewhat valuable to their professional growth. The combined total of beginning teachers responding that self-reflection was extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable was 100%.

The responses provided by the mentor stakeholder group were similar to those of the beginning teacher stakeholder group, with all the responses being in the extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable. Forty-three percent of mentors responded that self-reflection was extremely valuable to a teacher's professional growth. Forty-three percent of the mentor stakeholder group responded that self-reflection was very valuable to a teacher's professional growth. Fourteen percent of the mentor stakeholder group responded that self-reflection is somewhat valuable to a teacher's professional growth. The combined responses of the mentor stakeholder group either responding that self-reflection was extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable was 100%.

When asked the same question, the all teacher stakeholder group responded similarly to the beginning teacher and mentor stakeholder groups. The all teacher stakeholder group did respond slightly higher in the extremely valuable category. However, all the responses fell into the categories of extremely valuable, very valuable or somewhat valuable, as did the responses from the three other stakeholder groups. Forty-eight percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that self-reflection was extremely valuable to their professional growth. Forty-two percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that self-reflection was very valuable to

their professional growth. Ten percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded the self-reflection was somewhat valuable to their professional growth (see Figure 11).

Principal and Teacher Interviews

The principals from the four schools that consistently record the lowest teacher turnover rate in the CCS system participated in a face-to-face interview to help the researcher gain an understanding of best practices used at their school to promote teacher retention. A questionnaire containing six questions was e-mailed to the principals and teachers who participated in the interviews three days prior to the interviews. All the principals and teachers completed the questionnaire prior to the interview. During the interviews, the researcher asked the participants to explain and discuss the response's they provided on the questionnaire.

Principals were asked: In your opinion what three major concepts should be included in a teacher retention plan? Principals reported that school-level administrative support in all areas such as student behavior and curriculum/instruction should be included in a teacher retention plan. Principals suggested that a retention plan should include components that provided flex-time and other incentives. Principals also suggested that a teacher retention plan should include a professional development component and a strong mentor program (principals, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 12 lists the responses provided by the four principals interviewed.

Teachers were asked: In your opinion what three major concepts should be included in a teacher retention plan? Teachers reported that planning with colleagues should be included in a teacher retention plan. They also discussed several types of teacher appreciation activities that goes on at their school and that appreciation activities should be a major part of a teacher retention plan. All four teachers also discussed principal support as a concept that should be



Figure 11. Four stakeholder group’s response to the value of self-reflection

Q5. In your opinion what three major concepts should be included in a teacher retention plan?
P1. "PD" "Discipline Support" "Principal Support/Student behavior" "Flex time/ Family #1"
P2. "District planning and professional development" "Board regulation of special events" "Top 10% - attendance/policy"
P3. "Beginning teacher support" "Adequate planning/PLC time" "Assurance of administration support to maximum extent possible"
P4. "Strong mentor program for new teachers" "Open Communication between teachers and administration" " Support – Community, Administrative, Central Office"
T1. "Activities such as Fiesta Friday, teacher appreciation week, drawings for perfect attendance that make teachers feel appreciated" "Open communication" "Student behavior – excellent" "Respect"
T2. "Planning with other schools" "Recognition for growth"
T3. "Positive work environment" "Supportive administration" "Team building – we aren't competing with each other, we are all in this together"
T4. "Mentoring" "Incentives" "Respect"

Figure 12. Data collected on question five from principals and teachers during face-to-face interviews.

included in a teacher retention plan. Teachers also felt that a component should be included to encourage open communication and team building training at the school level (teachers, personal communication, February 7, 2019). Figure 12 lists the responses provided by the four teachers interviewed.

Summary

The combined rankings provided by all four stakeholder groups indicates that school leadership is the most important component when developing a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The three teacher stakeholder groups all ranked school leadership as the number one component. The principal stakeholder group ranked the mentor program as the most important aspect and school leadership as the second most important component. The second most important component when all the stakeholder groups' responses were combined was the development and implementation of a mentor program that meets the needs of beginning teachers. When the data from all four stakeholder groups were combined, professional development was ranked as the third most important component of a teacher retention plan. The ratings for professional development varied among the individual groups with the principal and mentor stakeholder groups ranking professional development as the third most important component. The all teacher and beginning teacher stakeholder groups ranked professional development as the fourth most important component. The overall ranking for professional development was third. Teacher assignment emerged as the fourth most important component of a teacher retention plan when the ranking from all four stakeholder groups were combined. The all teacher stakeholder group and the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the third most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. However, when all the rankings were combined professional development ranked fourth. All

four stakeholder groups ranked self-reflection as the fifth most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Although self-reflection ranked as the fifth most important component of a teacher retention plan, the data indicates that all stakeholder groups feel that self-reflection is important to professional growth (see Table 5).

Study Question 8

Is the current mentor program producing the desired results?

The current mentor program used by CCS is designed to provide beginning teachers with support by matching them with a qualified mentor during the first three-years of their teaching career. Beginning teachers are assigned a mentor by the principal of the school at which the mentee is employed. Teachers are eligible to become mentors if they have completed five years of teaching and performed at an acceptable level. In order to become a mentor, a teacher must complete an application, be recommended by the school principal and approved by the district office.

Beginning Teacher Classifications

During the fall of 2018, at the time this study was conducted, CCS had sixty-one beginning teachers. The CCS system defines a beginning teacher as a teacher who has completed a teacher preparation program at an accredited university and qualifies for a North Carolina teaching license and is in years one through three of a teaching career. The CCS system defines a lateral entry teacher as an individual who has completed a college degree program at an accredited university and meets the requirement for a provisional teaching license issued by the state of North Carolina. Both lateral entry and regular beginning teachers are provided a mentor during their first three years of teaching. The CCS system currently has thirty-seven lateral entry teachers and twenty-four traditional beginning teachers (see Table 6).

Table 5

Combined Stakeholder Rankings: Most Important Aspect of a Teacher Retention Plan

Stakeholder Group	Mentor Program	Professional Development	School Leadership	Teacher Assignment	Self-reflection
Principal	3.93	3.20	3.80	2.20	2.00
Beginning Teacher	3.29	2.48	3.68	3.20	2.11
Mentor	3.42	2.95	4.00	2.55	2.05
All Teacher	3.07	2.50	4.04	3.00	2.42
Overall Ranking	3.43 (2)	2.78 (3)	3.88 (1)	2.73 (4)	2.14 (5)

Table 6

Beginning Teacher Classification by School as of February, 2019

School	BT 1	BT 2	BT 3	LE 1	LE 2	LE 3	Total
ADES	1	1	1	1	0	0	4
ADMS	0	0	1	1	2	0	4
CCCA	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
CES	0	1	0	3	0	2	6
CGES	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
DO	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ECHS	1	0	1	1	2	3	8
EES	0	2	0	0	1	2	5
GES	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
HAES	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
HMS	0	2	0	0	0	1	3
NMS	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
ODES	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
SCHS	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
TCES	1	1	0	0	2	1	5
TCMS	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
WCHS	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
WTS	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	7	11	6	11	14	12	61

In the fall of 2018, the Columbus County School's Human Resource Office invited all sixty-one beginning teachers to participate in a survey. The purpose of the survey was to gain data from the beginning teachers about how well the current mentee program was working to address their needs as new teachers. Similar surveys were sent to teachers who serve as mentors and school principals. The invitation was sent to sixty-one teachers who were classified as beginning teachers at the time the survey was conducted. Twenty-eight out of sixty-one teachers who were invited completed the survey. The response rate for the beginning teacher survey was 45.9%. Out of the twenty-eight beginning teachers that responded, nine (32.1%) were in the first year of their teaching career, ten (35.7%) were between year one and two, eight (28.5%) were between year two and three and one (3.5%) was between year three and four of a teaching career. When asked if they felt like they were properly matched to their mentor, 88% responded they were properly matched and 11.5% responded they were not properly matched. When mentors were asked the same question, 80.9% reported that they were properly matched to their mentee and 19% reported that they were not properly matched to their mentee. Principals, when asked if mentees and mentors were properly matched at their school, 64.2% reported that mentees and mentors were properly matched and 35.7% reported the mentees and mentors were not properly matched at their school. When teachers and mentors were asked if they were matched based on their teaching schedule so they could meet during the school day, 68% of beginning teachers reported that they did have similar schedules and 32% reported they did not. The information reported by mentors was closely aligned with 66% reporting that they did have the same schedule and 33.3% reporting that they did not.

Professional Learning Communities

During the last decade, professional learning communities in the education setting have become vital to the success of teachers and students. During professional learning community meetings teachers discuss student data, new strategies, reflect on teaching techniques, and discuss a variety of topics important to the educational process. In an ideal situation, mentors and mentees would attend the same professional learning communities. This would serve as another avenue for beginning teachers to integrate into the school environment and learn from veteran teachers. Sixty-four percent of beginning teachers in the CCS system reported that they attend the same professional learning community meetings as their mentor. Thirty-six percent of beginning teachers reported that they did not attend the same professional learning community meetings as their mentor. Forty-two percent of mentors reported that they attended the same professional learning community meetings as their mentees and 57.1% reported they did not. Principals reported that 53.3% of their beginning teachers attended the same professional learning community meetings as their assigned mentor and 46.6 percent said their beginning teachers did not attend the same meetings. Principal, beginning teachers, and mentors were asked if mentors and mentees taught the same grade level or subject; the responses varied. Principals reported that only 13.3% of the beginning teachers and mentors were matched according to the grade level taught and that 86.6% did not teach the same grade level. Fifty percent of beginning teachers reported that they did teach the same grade level as their mentor and 57.1% of mentors reported that they taught the same grade level as their mentee. The data collected from principals, beginning teachers, and mentors also varied when asked if beginning teachers and mentors taught the same subject. Fifty percent of beginning teachers reported that they did teach the same subject and 38.1% of mentors reported that they did teach the same subject. However,

only 20% of principals reported that beginning teachers and mentors taught the same subject at their school.

Mentor Selection

Currently, the CCS system does not have a procedure in place for principals to follow when selecting mentors. Each principal in the district selects mentors based on available personnel at their school and work qualities demonstrated by the individual that the principal has observed over time. Beginning teachers and mentors were asked if they were aware of the selection criteria used to match them. Seventy-four percent of beginning teachers reported that they were not aware of the selection criteria used and 66.6% of mentors reported that they were not aware of the selection criteria used. Principals in the district reported a wide range of criteria that they use when deciding to place beginning teachers and mentors. Listed below is a summary list of the criteria reported by principals.

- Experience
- Classroom performance
- Performance-based on EVASS data
- Common subjects taught
- Assistant principal mentors all new teachers
- Willingness to serve as a mentor
- Compatible personalities
- Grade level and subject taught (not always possible)
- Veteran high performing teachers

The current selection criteria used by principals varies from school to school. The principal at each school makes the decision to match beginning teachers and mentors based on the information present at the time the selection is made.

Mentor/Mentee Meetings

The current mentor program used in the CCS system requires mentors to meet with the beginning teacher they are assigned to at least once every two weeks. The meetings are recorded in a google document and shared with the school principal and the beginning teacher coordinator at the district level. In the process of reviewing the effectiveness of the current mentor program, mentees and mentors were asked how often they meet. Beginning teachers reported that 26.9% of them meet daily, 50% meet weekly, 7.6% meet bi-weekly, 7.6% meet monthly and 7.6% meet less than once per month. Mentors reported that 33.3% meet daily, 61.9% meet weekly and 4.7% meet bi-weekly. None of the mentors reported meeting monthly and none reported meeting less than once per month.

Summary

Based on the data collected from the principal, mentor, all teacher and beginning teacher stakeholder groups along with other data, the current mentor program used by the CCS system is not fully producing the desired results. During the 2014-2015 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed eighty-two teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Eighteen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 22%. During the 2015-2016 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed one hundred and three teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Thirty of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016

reporting period was 29%. During the 2016-2017 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed seventy-nine teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Seventeen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 22%. The CCS systems beginning teacher turnover rate for the three reporting periods listed above is considerably higher than the overall teacher turnover rate for the same reporting period.

Principals across the district do not have a structured system in place to select mentors and properly match them with mentees. Mentors and mentees do not consistently attend the same professional learning community meetings. Mentees and mentors are not fully matched according to the grade level or subject they teach in the CCS system. In order to reduce early stage teacher turnover in the CCS system, the CCS system will need to design and implement a beginning teacher support program that is consistently implemented at all the schools in the system.

Study Question 9

Does the Columbus County School system need a comprehensive teacher retention plan?

In order to determine if the CCS system needed a comprehensive teacher retention plan, several areas were reviewed. The areas include stakeholder survey data, NC school report card data, and state and local teacher turnover data.

Stakeholder Response

In the fall of 2018, four stakeholder groups were surveyed and asked the question: Do you feel that CCS needs a comprehensive plan to help promote teacher retention? The stakeholder groups surveyed included principals, beginning teachers, mentors, and all teachers. The responses varied slightly among the individual groups. However, over 80% of the survey

participants in each group responded that they feel the CCS system does need a comprehensive plan to help promote teacher retention. Eighty-seven percent of the principal stakeholder group responded that CCS does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Thirteen percent of the principal stakeholder group responded that they did not feel that CCS needs a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

The response given by the beginning teacher stakeholder group was very similar to the responses given by the principal stakeholder group. Eighty-five percent of beginning teachers responded that they feel that CCS does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Fifteen percent of the beginning teacher stakeholder group responded that they do not feel that CCS needs a comprehensive teacher retention plan.

When the mentor stakeholder group was asked the same question, 80.9% of the group responded that they feel like CCS does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The mentor stakeholder group had the highest percentage of all the stakeholder groups responding that they did not feel the CCS system needed a teacher retention plan, with 19.05% responding no.

Eighty-two percent of the all teacher stakeholder group responded that they feel CCS does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Eighteen percent of the same stakeholder group responded that they do not feel that CCS needs a comprehensive teacher retention plan. With the majority (80% or above) of each stakeholder group responding that they feel CCS needs a comprehensive teacher retention plan, it is evident that CCS stakeholders support the development and implementation of a comprehensive teacher retention plan (see Table 7).

NC School Report Card Data

In 2015, the CCS school system had seven schools that received a NC School Report Card letter grade of C. Thirty-nine percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter

Table 7

Stakeholder Response to the Need for a Comprehensive Teacher Retention Plan in the CCS

System

Response Choice	Principal	Beginning Teacher	Mentor	All Teachers
YES	86.67%	85.19%	80.95%	82.05%
NO	13.33%	14.81%	19.05%	17.95%

grade of C. Thirty-nine percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of C on their school report card issued by the state of NC. Nine schools in the CCS school system received a letter grade of D on their school report card in 2015. Fifty percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D on their school report card issued by the state of NC in 2015. In 2015, two schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of F on their school report card. Eleven percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of F on their school report issued by the state of NC in 2015.

Two schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of B on their school report card issued by the state of NC in 2016. Eleven percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of B on their report card in 2016. In 2016, the CCS school system had ten schools that received a NC School Report Card letter grade of C. Fifty-five percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of C on their school report card issued by the state of NC. Six schools in the CCS school system received a letter grade of D on their school report card in 2016. Thirty-three percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D on their school report card issued by the state of NC in 2016. In 2016, none of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of F on their school report card.

Two schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of B on their school report card issued by the state of NC in 2017. Eleven percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of B on their report card in 2017. In 2017, the CCS school system had ten schools that received a NC School Report Card letter grade of C. Fifty-five percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of C on their school report card issued by the state of NC. Six schools in the CCS school system received a letter grade of D on their school report card in 2017. Thirty-three percent of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of D on their

school report card issued by the state of NC in 2017. In 2017, none of the schools in the CCS system received a letter grade of F on their school report card

The school report card grades issued by the state of NC did improve over the three-year period measured. However, no school received a B or above rating in 2015. Only two schools received a B rating in 2016 and 2017. During the three-year period, none of the schools received a letter grade rating of A on their school report card issued by the state of NC (see Table 8).

State and Local Teacher Turnover Data

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the state of NC recorded a teacher turnover rate of 14.84%. During the same period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate of 17.25%. During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate 2.4 percentage points higher than the state. During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the state of NC recorded a teacher turnover rate of 9.04%. During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate of 14.21%. During the 2015-2016 reporting period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate 5.2 percentage points higher than the state. The NC state teacher turnover rate recorded for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 8.07%. During the same period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate of 15.73%. During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate 7.7 percentage points higher than the state (see Table 8).

During the 2014-2015 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed eighty-two teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Eighteen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 22%. During the 2015-2016 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed one hundred and three teachers who were in years one through three

Table 8

CCS Report Card Grades and Teacher Turnover Rated: Three-Year Reporting Period 2014-2017

School	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate
ADMS	F	19.05	D	35.00	D	55.56
ADES	D	14.58	C	5.88	C	23.08
CGES	C	12.50	C	8.51	C	10.20
CMS	D	4.17	C	25.00	D	11.11
CES	D	30.00	D	30.0	C	23.81
ECHS	D	30.30	C	25.71	C	24.62
EES	D	22.22	D	11.76	C	17.95
GES	F	16.67	C	33.33	B	10.00
HAES	D	27.08	D	19.15	D	21.28
HMS	D	20.69	C	16.13	D	22.58
NMS	C	10.82	C	0	C	4.00
ODES	C	5.88	B	0	B	5.56
SCHS	C	7.87	C	4.55	C	11.36
TCES	D	13.79	D	25.00	D	17.24
CCCA	C	28.57	B	8.70	C	8.33
TCMS	D	22.58	D	27.59	D	18.52
WCHS	C	24.32	C	5.88	C	8.82

Table 8 (continued)

School	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate	NC Report Card Grade	Teacher Turnover Rate
WTS	C	7.52	C	6.74	C	10.11
CCS LEA		17.25		14.21		15.83

of their teaching career. Thirty of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 29%. During the 2016-2017 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed seventy-nine teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Seventeen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 22%. The CCS systems beginning teacher turnover rate for the three reporting periods (2014-2017) is considerably higher than the overall teacher turnover rate for the same reporting period.

Summary

The Columbus County school system needs to implement a comprehensive plan to reduce teacher turnover and increase student performance. When surveyed the majority of stakeholders in the CCS system indicated that the CCS system does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan to combat teacher turnover. Over the three-year period that the researcher reviewed student performance in the CCS system, a slight increase in student performance occurred. However, several schools in the district are still performing lower than expected. The CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate higher than the state average each year from 2014 to 2017. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the reporting period from 2014 to 2017 was considerably higher than the district teacher turnover rate and well above the overall state teacher turnover rate. Based on the information collected in regards to stakeholder needs, student performance, state teacher turnover data, CCS teacher turnover data, and CCS beginning teacher turnover data the CCS system does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan to combat teacher turnover.

Conclusion

The preliminary data collected from a group of beginning teachers in 2017, indicated that the CCS system needed to conduct a review of the current mentor program used in the system because of the higher than average relationship the beginning teacher subgroup has to the overall teacher turnover rate recorded for the school system. After the preliminary survey was given a series of four surveys were administered to help the district gain a better understanding of the many factors that contribute to teacher turnover.

The teacher turnover rate for the CCS system is consistently higher than the state average. The teacher turnover rate for the CCS system is also consistently higher than the surrounding school districts. The Bladen County school system was the only school system of the four systems reviewed to record a higher teacher turnover rate.

Career teachers in the CCS system reported that they remain in the system because of family and community ties. Younger teachers reported that they would base their decision to continue teaching with the CCS system more on the teaching position and teacher assignment they received. Overall the four stakeholder groups reported that salary, district reputation, and spouse transfer are not major determining factors when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS system. Principal support was the leading factor for all teacher stakeholder groups when deciding to continue teaching in the CCS system.

The CCS system is considered a low-wealth district by the state of NC and receives low-wealth funds provided by the state. The data indicated that schools who have higher student performance rates, record lower teacher turnover rates. Therefore, the data also suggested that a school that consistently records a high rate of teacher turnover has a lower student performance rate.

The data suggest that the CCS system can reduce teacher turnover by training principals to create an environment that allows all stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process. The district can also help reduce teacher turnover by fully providing all stakeholders with the necessary resources to plan and implement the curriculum. Based on the stakeholder responses the district can further reduce teacher turnover by providing time for teachers and other stakeholder groups to collaborate and reflect on best practices.

The overall data collected in the CCS system indicated that the CCS system does need a comprehensive teacher retention plan to help reduce the teacher turnover rate in the system. The plan should include best practices already identified by stakeholders in the district. The plan should also address the implementation of a district-wide mentor program that meets the needs of the mentor, mentee and the school system.

The district already has some best practices in place scattered throughout the district. Some schools already provide a respectful clean environment where teachers feel that they can communicate freely. Some schools in the district have a culture that includes the community. However, based on the feedback provided by all stakeholders the district as a whole does not have the same best practices in place at all the schools.

The overall data collected from stakeholders and other sources indicated that the CCS system does need to develop and implement a comprehensive teacher retention plan that includes a strong mentor program, increased professional development opportunities, stronger school leadership, adjusted teacher assignments, and a critical self-reflection component.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The introduction to Chapter 5 provides the reader with information related to the background, the purpose, review of related literature, and the methodology used in the study. The introduction to Chapter 5 also contains the nine study questions used in this study and a summary of results for each question. This chapter includes a comprehensive teacher retention plan designed using data collected in the CCS school system. The comprehensive teacher retention plan design contains five components. The components are derived from a combination of proven best practices for retaining teachers and the data provided by the stakeholders of the Columbus County School system. Each component is divided into five sub-sections. The five sub-sections contain action statements that individual stakeholder groups will need to implement to combat teacher turnover in the CCS system.

Although the comprehensive teacher retention plan was developed to address the needs of the CCS system, other districts across the state and nation could adjust the plan to fit their needs. Chapter 5 also includes recommendations for superintendents and district leaders, principals and school leaders, teacher stakeholder groups and state educational leaders. The intent of the recommendation section is to share ideas and best practices that could help the state as a whole and individual school districts retain teachers. Retaining teachers in the education field for longer periods of time allows the teacher to foster relationships with students, other teachers, and community members

The data collected in the CCS system suggest that the establishment of positive relationships among all stakeholders in the educational setting increases teacher retention. The data collected in the CCS system also suggest that teachers who build positive relationships and

remain in the system for longer periods of time produce students who demonstrate better academic performance. Chapter 5 contains an implications section that addresses schools, districts, teacher stakeholder groups and the state of NC. Lastly, Chapter 5 contains a conclusion section.

Introduction

This study was conducted using data collected in the Columbus County School system. Columbus County is a rural county in the southeastern part of North Carolina. According to the United States Census Bureau the population of Columbus County as of July 1, 2017, was approximately 55,936. The Columbus County School (CCS) district is a public school system located in southeastern North Carolina. The district consists of seventeen schools that serve approximately 5,700 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The school system has nine elementary schools, four middle schools, three traditional high schools, and one early college high school. The CCS system employed approximately four hundred teachers at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. In 2017, twenty percent of the teachers in the CCS system had three years of experience or less. Like other districts across the nation and state, CCS has experienced a large increase in its teacher turnover rate during the past eight years. Since 2010, the CCS system teacher turnover rate has increased each year, and growth is higher than the North Carolina state average over the same eight-year period.

In the fall of 2016, the superintendent of the CCS system recognized that the school district was losing teachers. The superintendent also recognized that the selection pool of available teachers was decreasing and positions were becoming harder to fill. The superintendent of the CCS system asked the researcher and other team members to review the districts teacher

turnover rates. During the 2016-2017 school year, the researcher started the process of studying teacher turnover across the state and in the CCS system.

The review of existing literature for this study is divided into two sections. The first section is a review of traditional research related to teacher turnover. The literature in the first section also examines salary and teacher characteristics, teacher working conditions, the human capital approach, the theory of incomplete information when hiring, employment life-cycle factors, job satisfaction theory, characteristics of the teacher labor market and other theories related to teacher turnover. The second section of the review of existing literature explores sociological and psychological theories to gauge the success rates of best practices in teacher retention. The second chapter sets the parameters for the best practices used in the field of education to help promote teacher retention. The components examined in the literature review section for developing a support model for teachers in Columbus County schools include mentorship, supportive seminars and professional development, principal support, and collegiality. These evidence-based approaches were reviewed to help create a comprehensive teacher retention plan that would help CCS leaders, administrators, and teachers counter the rising trend of teacher turnover in the school district.

This study used improvement science methodology, and a blend of qualitative and quantitative techniques to help the researcher better understand the issues of teacher turnover and teacher retention in the CCS system. Quantitative data refers to the collection of objective information that is strictly structured and based on statistical evidence. This type of information is valuable for showing descriptive statistics related to the CCS teacher turnover rate and student performance scores.

Qualitative data consists of information collected, which includes various viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, all of which are subjective and dependent on the individual respondent's personal feelings. This type of data helped establish trends and perspectives among the local CCS staff members who face the triumphs and pitfalls of the education system each and every day in Columbus County. Since personal reasons are often given for teachers who leave the profession, the insight gained from qualitative data helped the researcher gain a better understanding of the needs and wants of teachers in the CCS system.

The quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from a series of surveys administered by Columbus County Schools to educators from 2017 to 2019. The existing data results from four separate surveys, each containing twenty questions, were used in this study. The questions in the surveys were designed and administered by the CCS Human Resource Officer, the BT/Mentor coordinator and the researcher. Surveys were distributed to four stakeholder groups, which included principals, beginning teachers, mentors, and all CCS teachers. Survey Monkey was used to house and collect the data. Some of the data used for this study came from existing public knowledge, along with existing data collected by the researcher. The surveys were distributed using the Columbus County Schools email system and Survey Monkey. Furthermore, the district protected the data and housed it in a secure location within Survey Monkey's database. The CCS system ensured that all surveys were anonymous to preserve the honesty and integrity of the data collected. In addition to the existing survey results, this study utilized in-person interviews with teachers and principals from four schools the CCS system that record a consistently low teacher turnover rate.

By combining the research behind teacher turnover with the satisfaction level, happiness, needs, and confidence of educators, this study examined the problem of teacher turnover and the

impact it has on student performance in the CCS system. Surveys that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative questions provided the most insight into which best practices for retaining teachers are successful, as well as what additional measures need to be implemented to ensure a better experience for educators, students, and administrators in the CCS system.

This study was guided by nine study questions. The study questions were designed to gain a better understanding of why teacher turnover occurs in the CCS school system. The nine study questions also helped the researcher explore what impact teacher turnover has on student performance in the CCS system and what best practices should be used to help combat teacher turnover in the CCS system.

Study question 1: What is the status of teacher attrition and turnover in the State of North Carolina public schools, Columbus County Schools and surrounding districts in terms of data and trends? During the three reporting periods from 2014 till 2017, the CCS system recorded the highest or second highest teacher turnover rate of the four surrounding districts. During the 2014-2015 reporting period, the CCS system recorded the second highest teacher turnover rate when compared to the four surrounding districts. The Bladen County School system recorded the highest teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period. The CCS system reported the highest teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period. The Bladen County School system recorded the highest teacher turnover rate of the four surrounding districts for the 2016-2017 reporting period. The CCS system reported the second highest of the four surrounding districts for the 2016-2017 reporting period.

Overall the five districts recorded similar percentages each year in the number of teachers who remained in the education field after leaving their respective district. The NC teacher turnover reason category percentages for the five districts were also similar during the three-year

period. The NC state average teacher turnover rate for the three-year period from 2014 till 2017 was 10.86%. For the same three-year period the average teacher turnover rate for the five districts reviewed was: (1) CCS 16.12%, (2) WCS 12.51, (3) Bladen 16.92, (4) BCS 14.19%, and (5) PSRC 12.99%. The CCS system ranked as the school system with the second overall highest teacher turnover average for the three-year period reviewed.

Study question 2: What are the major reasons teachers continue to work in CCS?

Community and family ties play a leading role in the decision-making process for teachers who are deciding to work in the CCS system. However, although family ties are important, the younger teachers place more emphasis on the position/assignment they have with the school system. This may be because younger teachers have not developed family ties in the area or they are more open to accepting a position that is not located close to family members. All three teacher stakeholder groups reported that salary, district reputation, and spouse transfer are not a major factor when deciding to teach with the CCS system. All three teacher stakeholder groups reported that principal support is a major determining factor when deciding to continue teaching with the CCS school system. All three stakeholder groups' ranked professional development and teacher recognition as the least two important factors when deciding to continue with the CCS system. Younger teachers in the CCS system placed more emphasis on behavioral support as a reason to continue teaching in the system. More experienced teachers in the system ranked teacher position/assignment and salary as more important factors than behavioral support when deciding to continue to teach with the CCS system. Some factors, such as principal support, play major roles across all three teacher stakeholder groups. The data collected from all three teacher stakeholder groups indicates that age and experience level contribute to the decision-making process when teachers are deciding if they want to continue teaching the CCS system.

Study question 3: What is the impact of teacher turnover on the academic performance of low-income public school students in Columbus County School district? The majority or 86.5% of the stakeholders surveyed believe that teacher turnover does impact student performance at their school. Sometimes teacher turnover can have a positive impact on student performance depending on the individual circumstances surrounding the turnover. The data collected for this study suggest that teacher turnover has a negative impact on student performance.

In 2015, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their NC report card (NCRC) was 20.16%. In 2015, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their NCRC was 13.93%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had an average teacher turnover rate 6.23 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below. In 2016, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their NCRC was 24.7%. In 2016, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their NCRC was 11.17%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had an average teacher turnover rate 13.53 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below. In 2017, the average teacher turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their NCRC was 24.4%. In 2017, the average turnover rate for schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their NCRC was 13.15%. The schools that received a C or better on their report card had an average teacher turnover rate 11.25 percentage points lower than the schools that received a letter grade of D or below.

During the three-years reviewed which included 2015, 2016 and 2017 the teacher turnover rate for higher performing schools was considerably lower than that of lower performing schools. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter

grade of D or below on their NCRC was 23.09%. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter grade of C or above their NCRC was 12.93%. The three-year teacher turnover average for schools that received a letter grade of C or above on their school report card was 10.16 percentage points lower than schools that received a letter grade of D or below on their school report card.

The data suggest that the teacher turnover rate has an impact on student performance. In general, schools that recorded a lower teacher turnover rate receive better ratings on overall state indicators. However, a conclusive determination could not be reached by the researcher because in some cases in the CCS system, schools that had a high teacher turnover rate met or exceeded their growth targets. Likewise, some schools in the CCS that recorded a low teacher turnover rate did not meet their growth targets.

Study question 4: Which actions can help minimize the problem of teacher turnover in Columbus County? Although individual responses varied on the survey questions, the researcher was able to identify common areas among all stakeholder groups that would help minimize teacher turnover. The first common theme was the need for school leadership to create an environment that provides support and allows all stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process. Second, providing training to mentors and mentees on how to integrate into the education setting was another common theme. Third, provide all principals and teachers with the resources needed to plan and implement the curriculum. Fourth, schools could provide planning time for teachers to learn from each other and reflect on best practices. Based on the response given from the stakeholder groups these four areas are important to minimizing teacher turnover.

Study question 5: What current best practices are being utilized by schools in the Columbus County School System to promote teacher retention?

Best practices currently being used in schools in the CCS system to promote teacher retention vary among individual schools. The researcher was able to identify common practices used throughout the district. A respectful clean environment where teachers feel they can communicate their ideas freely was a best practice discussed in the principal and teacher interviews, as well as on the stakeholder surveys. A plan that includes a component that recognizes that a teacher's family is important to them and that provides support in that area. A best practice that is common among the schools with low teacher turnover is an established culture of shared decision-making that involves all stakeholders. A district-wide plan that includes best practices would help promote teacher retention. A district-wide plan would also help the large number of teachers in the district who feel that they are not currently being recognized for their work.

Study question 6: How do low-performing and high-performing schools in Columbus County compare with regard to teacher turnover? The combined teacher turnover rate three-year average for the four low-performing schools was 25.21%. The combined teacher turnover rate three-year average for the seven high-performing schools was 9.06%. The difference between the combined average of the four low-performing schools and the seven high-performing schools in regards to teacher turnover was 16.15%. Over a three-year period, low-performing schools recorded a 16.15% higher teacher turnover rate than high-performing schools. Based on the data schools that have a lower teacher turnover rate record higher student performance.

Study question 7: What major components should be included in the teacher retention plan according to CCS stakeholders? The combined rankings provided by all four stakeholder groups indicates that school leadership is the most important component when developing a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The three teacher stakeholder groups all ranked school

leadership as the number one component. The principal stakeholder group ranked the mentor program as the most important aspect and school leadership as the second most important component. The second most important component when all the stakeholder groups' responses were combined was the development and implementation of a mentor program that meets the needs of beginning teachers. When the data from all four stakeholder groups was combined, professional development was ranked as the third most important component of a teacher retention plan. The ratings for professional development varied among the individual groups with the principal and mentor stakeholder groups ranking professional development as the third most important component. The all teacher and beginning teacher stakeholder groups ranked professional development as the fourth most important component. The overall ranking for professional development was third. Teacher assignment emerged as the fourth most important component of a teacher retention plan when the ranking from all four stakeholder groups were combined. The all teacher stakeholder group and the beginning teacher stakeholder group ranked teacher assignment as the third most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. However, when all the rankings were combined professional development ranked fourth. All four stakeholder groups ranked self-reflection as the fifth most important component of a comprehensive teacher retention plan. Although self-reflection ranked as the fifth most important component of a teacher retention plan, the data indicates that all stakeholder groups feel that self-reflection is important to professional growth.

Study question 8: Is the current mentor program producing the desired results? Based on the data collected from the principal, mentor, all teacher and beginning teacher stakeholder groups along with other data, the current mentor program used by the CCS system is not fully producing the desired results. During the 2014-2015 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS

system employed eighty-two teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Eighteen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2014-2015 reporting period was 22%. During the 2015-2016 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed one hundred and three teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Thirty of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2015-2016 reporting period was 29%. During the 2016-2017 teacher turnover reporting period the CCS system employed seventy-nine teachers who were in years one through three of their teaching career. Seventeen of the teachers did not return to teach in the CCS system. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the 2016-2017 reporting period was 22%. The CCS systems beginning teacher turnover rate for the three reporting periods listed above is considerably higher than the overall teacher turnover rate for the same reporting period.

Principals across the district do not have a structured system in place to select mentors and properly match them with mentees. Mentors and mentees do not consistently attend the same professional learning community meetings. Mentees and mentors are not fully matched according to the grade level or subject they teach in the CCS system. In order to reduce early stage teacher turnover in the CCS system, the CCS system will need to design and implement a beginning teacher support program that is consistently implemented at all the schools within the system.

Study question 9: Does the Columbus County School system need a comprehensive teacher retention plan? The Columbus County school system needs to implement a comprehensive plan to reduce teacher turnover and increase student performance. When surveyed the majority of stakeholders in the CCS system indicated that the CCS system does

need a comprehensive teacher retention plan to combat teacher turnover. Over the three-year period that the researcher reviewed student performance in the CCS system, a slight increase in student performance occurred. However, several schools in the district are still performing lower than expected. The CCS system recorded a teacher turnover rate higher than the state average each year from 2014 to 2017. The beginning teacher turnover rate for the reporting period from 2014 to 2017 was considerably higher than the district teacher turnover rate and well above the overall state teacher turnover rate. Based on the information collected in regards to stakeholder needs, student performance, state teacher turnover data, CCS teacher turnover data, and CCS beginning teacher turnover data the CCS system does need a comprehensive teacher turnover plan to combat teacher turnover.

Comprehensive Teacher Retention Plan

The teacher retention plan designed to be implemented in the CCS school system is a comprehensive plan that includes all stakeholder groups. The plan contains five components that were developed based on input from CCS stakeholders. The first component of the plan is developing strong school leadership that promotes teacher retention and student growth. The second component is the full implementation of the current mentor program with fidelity in all the schools in the CCS system. The current mentor program will also be adjusted to include aspects that CCS stakeholders reported were critical to the success of the mentor program. The third component of the plan is a professional development component that addresses all stakeholder groups. The fourth component of the plan is teacher assignment. Based on the data collected in the CCS system younger teachers place more importance on their teaching assignment than teachers with experience. The final component of the plan is self-reflection. The CCS comprehensive teacher retention plan below is organized by the components that CCS

stakeholders felt were important to the plan. Each component contains five sub-sections that describes the responsibilities of each stakeholder group and the actions to take when implementing the plan.

The district leadership consists of the superintendent, the human resource department, the beginning teacher coordinator and other district leaders that the superintendent appoints to implement the program. The school leadership or principal stakeholder group consists of the seventeen principals employed with the CCS system at the time of the implementation of the CCS system comprehensive teacher retention plan. The beginning teacher stakeholder group consists of teachers who are in years one through three of a teaching career at the time the plan is implemented. The mentor stakeholder group consists of the teachers who serve as mentors at the time the plan is implemented. The all teacher stakeholder group consists of all the CCS system teachers who are employed at the time the CCS comprehensive teacher retention plan is implemented.

Mission

The CCS teacher retention plan mission is to inspire each teacher to achieve job satisfaction, achieve professional growth and to remain a productive teacher in the CCS system.

Vision

The CCS teacher retention plan vision is to place a powerful focus on teacher retention that helps promote learning experiences for students that prepare them for college, career and life success in a global society.

Action Steps for Superintendents and District Leaders

In order to fully implement the comprehensive teacher retention plan designed for Columbus County schools, each stakeholder group must participate. Figure 13 shows the action

Component 1: Strong School Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District leadership will provide training to school leaders on the teacher hiring process and provide them with some indicators of what qualities a candidate should possess. ➤ District leadership will work with principals to implement strategies with the same fidelity at all schools in the district. ➤ District leadership will develop/maintain a district culture that provides recognition for productive teachers. ➤ District leadership will develop a district office culture that emphasizes the importance of the beginning teacher program. ➤ District leaders will encourage principals to utilize the North Carolina Teaching Conditions survey conducted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to help gauge teacher satisfaction at the school level.
Component 2: Implementation of the Mentor Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District leaders will develop a district office culture that recognizes the importance of a strong mentor program. ➤ District leaders will set requirements that the current mentor program is completely implemented in a consistent manner across the district. ➤ District leaders will establish guidelines for principals who are in charge of selecting mentors. ➤ District leaders will develop and maintain a database of all beginning teachers and mentors. ➤ District leaders will conduct a county-wide professional learning community meeting with beginning teachers once every three month period. ➤ District leaders will monitor the participation of beginning teachers and mentors in the beginning teacher support program. ➤ District leaders will establish and maintain partnerships with outside agencies, such as NC universities, that enrich the mentor program.
Component 3: Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District leaders will secure funding for group and individual professional development opportunities. ➤ District leaders will provide an online platform for individual professional development. ➤ District leaders will create a policy that allows teachers to self-select one half of their professional development. ➤ District leaders will maintain a record of credits teachers receive from attending professional development activities. ➤ District leaders will provide regional professional development opportunities for teachers and principals. ➤ District leaders will provide professional development that meets individual teacher needs.
Component 4: Teacher Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District leadership will provide training to school leaders on best practice scheduling. ➤ District leadership will require school leaders to develop a master schedule that fosters collaboration among teacher.
Component 5: Self-Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ District leaders will provide training to school leaders about the self-reflection process and best practices for using the data collected. ➤ District leaders will design one process to be used by all stakeholder groups to reflect on district growth, teacher growth, and student growth. ➤ District leaders will hold monthly PLC meetings with the human resource department and the beginning teacher coordinator to reflect on progress. ➤ District leaders will ensure the central office has a culture that promotes the importance of self-reflection on professional growth. ➤ District leaders will require school leaders to reflect on the overall school progress during the check-out process.

Figure 13. Action steps for superintendents and district leaders.

steps superintendents and district leaders will follow under each component during the implementation process.

Action Steps for Principals and School Leaders

In order to fully implement the comprehensive teacher retention plan designed for Columbus County schools, each stakeholder group must participate. Figure 14 shows the action steps principals and school leaders will follow under each component during the implementation process.

Action Steps for Beginning Teachers

In order to fully implement the comprehensive teacher retention plan designed for Columbus County schools, each stakeholder group must participate. Figure 15 shows the action steps beginning teachers will follow under each component during the implementation process.

Action Steps for Mentors

In order to fully implement the comprehensive teacher retention plan designed for Columbus County schools, each stakeholder group must participate. Figure 16 shows the action steps mentors will follow under each component during the implementation process.

Action Steps for All Teachers

In order to fully implement the comprehensive teacher retention plan designed for Columbus County schools, each stakeholder group must participate. Figure 17 shows the action steps all teachers will follow under each component during the implementation process.

The plan was designed for the CCS school system and incorporates aspects of programs currently in place within the district. The CCS system's comprehensive teacher retention plan was developed using input and suggestions from all stakeholder groups in the CCS system. In the summer of 2018, the CCS system created a new position to help place a focus on teacher

Component 1: Strong School Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leaders will work to create a culture that values teachers and recognizes them as individuals and as a group. ➤ Schools leaders will develop and attend PLC meetings with teacher representatives from each stakeholder group. ➤ School leaders will develop a process that will help determine the school’s culture. ➤ School leaders will be accessible and maintain open communications with all stakeholders. ➤ School leaders will provide opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process. ➤ School leaders will provide flex-time for employees when they spend additional time working on improvement efforts or complete additional duties. ➤ School leaders will utilize the North Carolina Teaching Conditions survey conducted by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to help gauge teacher satisfaction at the school level. ➤ School leaders will support district leaders by ensuring teachers attend all district level professional learning community meetings and professional development activities. ➤ School leaders will create an environment that allows all stakeholders to provide honest input about school business.
Component 2: Implementation of the Mentor Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leadership will provide data desegregation and problem-solving professional development to all beginning teachers. ➤ School leaders will provide a comprehensive school orientation to the beginning teacher before they receive students. ➤ School leaders will provide classroom management training for all beginning teachers. ➤ School leaders will provide additional student behavior support to beginning teachers. ➤ School leaders will assign mentors to beginning teachers based on the criteria put in place by the district office. ➤ School leaders will match mentors and mentees based on subject area taught or grade level when possible.
Component 3: Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leaders will suggest professional development activities based on the teacher’s performance. ➤ School leaders will ensure that teachers in good standing are allowed to self-select one-half of their professional development. ➤ School leaders will develop and implement consistent professional learning communities that foster collaboration among teachers. ➤ School leaders will provide opportunities for teachers to lead professional development activities. ➤ School leaders will provide regional professional development for teachers. ➤ School leaders will provide professional development in action by scheduling and allowing district peer visits.
Component 4: Teacher Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leaders will develop a master schedule that fosters collaboration among teacher. ➤ School leaders will actively assign students to teachers based on the needs of the student and the teacher’s ability to meet their needs.
Component 5: Self-Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School leaders will participate in self-reflection training provided by the district. ➤ School leaders will ensure that all staff members are trained in the self-reflection process. ➤ School leadership will incorporate time in the school schedule to hold weekly professional learning community meetings. ➤ School leadership will require each teacher to complete a self-reflection activity once monthly. ➤ School leadership will design a self-reflection process that encourages teachers to reflect on their growth, student growth, school culture and other items that are important to the individual school.

Figure 14. Action steps for principals and school leaders.

Component 1: Strong School Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning teachers will openly work with school and district leaders to identify areas in which they can provide support. ➤ Beginning teachers will provide honest input about school business to school leaders.
Component 2: Implementation of the Mentor Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning teachers will adhere to policies in place that have been developed at the state, district and school levels. ➤ Beginning teachers will meet with mentors a minimum of one hour per week. ➤ Beginning teachers will attend a professional learning community meeting with district leaders once every three months. ➤ Beginning teachers will complete online courses designed to help them integrate into the education profession. Examples include evaluation, code of ethics and classroom management courses.
Component 3: Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning teachers will discuss professional development needs with mentors and school leadership. ➤ Beginning teachers will actively participate in professional development opportunities. ➤ Beginning teachers will participate in digital literacy training. ➤ Beginning teachers will recognize areas of need and seek the appropriate professional development.
Component 4: Teacher Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning teachers will provide honest feedback to school leaders about their teaching assignment. ➤ Beginning teachers will maintain flexibility.
Component 5: Self-Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Beginning teachers will complete a self-reflection activity once monthly. ➤ Beginning teachers will review and reflect on the performance of students. ➤ Beginning teachers will maintain an open mindset and accept new ideas that promote student learning and the school's best interest. ➤ Beginning teachers will reflect on student behavior and tools that promote positive student behavior.

Figure 15. Action steps for beginning teachers.

Component 1: Strong School Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors will serve as a liaison between school leaders and beginning teachers. ➤ Mentors will actively participate in professional learning community meetings.
Component 2: Implementation of the Mentor Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors will meet a minimum of once per week for one hour with the beginning teacher they are assigned to. ➤ Mentors will participate in ongoing training to advance their knowledge and skills. ➤ Mentors will serve as a support person for beginning teachers. ➤ Mentors will model appropriate professional behavior for beginning teachers. ➤ Mentors will lead or participate in school orientation for beginning teachers. ➤ Mentors will arrange or provide beginning teachers with training related to diverse learners.
Component 3: Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors will discuss professional development needs with beginning teachers. ➤ Mentors will allow and encourage other teachers to visit their classrooms to view model lessons. ➤ Mentors will make beginning teachers aware of professional development opportunities.
Component 4: Teacher Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors will serve as liaisons for beginning teachers and school leaders in regards to best teacher placement. ➤ Mentors will provided beginning teachers with resources to help them with their teaching assignment.
Component 5: Self-Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mentors will complete the self-reflection process with mentees once per month. ➤ Mentors will encourage participation in the self-reflection process. ➤ Mentors will serve as an example to all teachers by demonstrating full participation in the self-reflection process.

Figure 16. Action steps for mentors.

Component 1: Strong School Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All teachers will communicate with school leaders about best practices at the school level. ➤ All teachers will actively attend professional learning community meetings. ➤ All teachers will maintain a team mindset. ➤ All teachers will promote student and school growth, and maintain a growth mindset. ➤ All teachers will model flexibility.
Component 2: Implementation of the Mentor Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All teachers will actively attend professional learning community meetings with beginning teachers. ➤ All teachers will openly share resources with beginning teachers. ➤ All teachers will openly welcome peer visits from beginning teachers to their classrooms.
Component 3: Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All teachers will openly model academic lessons to other teachers, especially beginning teachers. ➤ All teachers will openly accept and encourage classroom visits. ➤ All teachers will self-select one half of their professional development based on their individual needs.
Component 4: Teacher Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All teachers will work as a team to meet the needs of students. ➤ All teachers will foster a team environment that includes beginning teachers.
Component 5: Self-Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All teachers will reflect on their progress in the classroom and school at least once per month. ➤ All teachers will provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their academic progress. ➤ All teachers will complete a self-reflection activity monthly to determine if they are meeting core instruction goals.

Figure 17. Action steps for all teachers.

retention in the CCS system especially in the early stages of a teacher's career. The new position is a beginning teacher coordinator position. The new position is the first step taken by the CCS systems leadership in the process of implementing the CCS system's comprehensive teacher retention plan.

Recommendations

This section of the study contains recommendations for superintendents and district leaders, principals and school leaders, teacher stakeholder groups, principal preparation programs, and state leaders. The recommendations are based on information gained from surveys, in-person interviews, and state and local data reviewed and interpreted by the researcher while studying teacher turnover in the CCS system. The purpose of the recommendations section is to provide suggestions to stakeholder groups that will help them create a culture that actively works to reduce teacher turnover and increase student performance.

Recommendations for Superintendents and District Leaders

Reducing teacher turnover is a continuous process that requires district leaders to create a culture that promotes teacher retention. It is imperative that district leaders continuously monitor teacher turnover in their districts. Because each school district is unique, superintendents and districts leaders would benefit from developing a system to gauge teacher turnover and the reasons associated with the turnover in their district. Superintendents and district leaders play a vital role in establishing the atmosphere and culture of the individual school district. It is important that superintendents and district leaders work to establish a culture that values teachers and is concerned about their professional growth.

Although teacher salary was not a major focus in this particular study, several of the stakeholders discussed North Carolina's teacher pay scale being sub-par in relation to teacher

salaries in other states. District leaders could create unity in their districts by encouraging teachers and other groups to lobby at the state level to increase teacher salaries to match or exceed the national average. District leaders would benefit from encouraging teachers and other groups to lobby at the state level to provide incentives for teachers that would in turn help promote teacher satisfaction. According to the data collected in the CCS system teachers feel that school leadership is the determining factor when they are making the decision to continue to teach in a district. Superintendents and district leaders must implement procedures for principals that would help them create a cultural assessment to use at their schools. Superintendents and district leaders would benefit from providing training on how to be a strong school leader.

Recommendations for Principals and School Leaders

The data collected in the CCS system indicates that the school principal is the main factor when determining a teacher's success and reducing teacher turnover. School leaders would benefit from conducting a comprehensive review of their school's culture. Principals and school leaders who strive to create a culture that promotes teacher and student success stand a better chance of recording higher student performance and lower teacher turnover. It is important for school leaders to develop a plan that promotes the involvement of community members in the school. The data collected in the CCS system suggest that schools with increased community support have less teacher turnover and increased student performance.

Successful principals and school leaders establish an open-door policy that allows teachers to freely communicate ideas with other teachers and the school leadership. The data collected in the CCS district suggest that schools where the principal has created an open-door communication environment, produce better student results and record less teacher turnover. When possible principals can provide flex-time to staff members who complete additional duties.

Providing flex-time gives the teacher the impression that their time and needs are important to school leadership. The principal that involves school stakeholders in the hiring process creates a team culture at their school. The four schools in the CCS system that recorded the lowest teacher turnover reported that they try to hire teachers who have community ties. Principals who consider hiring members of the community when possible establish relationships with the community that encourage a positive school experience. Principals can support teachers by reviewing unsuccessful state and district policies. Great principals serve as change agents and lobby for the promotion of best practices that help retain teachers and increase student academic performance. Principals must seek outside support when necessary to help encourage teacher retention.

Recommendations for Teacher Stakeholder Groups

All teachers. Teachers who actively participate in the education system as a whole stand a better chance of experiencing job satisfaction. It is important that teachers maintain a team mindset and work with all stakeholders to improve the entire educational organization. Teachers benefit from providing honest feedback to all stakeholder groups about the educational process. It is imperative that teachers become involved and lobby at the local and state levels to help promote overall better working conditions for teachers. Teachers must actively complete the self-reflection process and advise district and school leaders about areas of needed support.

Beginning teachers. In addition to the recommendations above, the beginning teachers must adhere to the guidelines of the beginning teacher program. Beginning teachers would greatly benefit from participating in all beginning district level meetings provided for beginning teachers. This study recommends that beginning teachers actively participate in all professional development provided through the beginning teacher program. Sometimes other teachers and

school leaders assume that beginning teachers are comfortable and have the resources they need to complete their job. Beginning teachers would benefit from openly communicating their needs and suggestions with school leaders and other teachers. Beginning teachers must maintain a growth mindset that fosters accepting new ideas and challenges.

Mentor teachers. A mentor holds an important position in the educational process. Mentor teachers are seasoned teachers who know best practices and the everyday mechanics of school business. Mentor teachers must actively share their knowledge and skills with beginning teachers. This study suggests that positive relationships are important to teacher's and student's growth. In order to produce great teachers mentors must establish positive relationships with mentees. It is important for mentors to serve as advocates for beginning teachers and share their needs with school leadership and other teachers. Mentees develop their teaching skills based on what they experience. It is important that mentors stay actively involved with their mentee because in some part the beginning teacher is a reflection of the mentor.

Recommendations for Principal Preparation Programs

Like beginning teachers, new principals enter the field with a wide range of experiences, backgrounds, personalities, and experience levels. Principal preparation programs provide training to principals based on a curriculum set by the institution providing the training. Some programs included internship programs in the hopes that aspiring principals can have the opportunity to practice what they have learned in a work setting. The training received by potential principals depends on the guidelines set by the institution they attend and the requirements set by the state in which the institution is based.

An aspiring principal would benefit from attending a program that offers practical training in the areas of building trustful relationships, building positive community support,

creating an inclusive culture, shared decision-making, and authentic leadership. The data gained by the researcher while reviewing teacher turnover in the CCS school system suggest that the principal of a school is the determining factor when a teacher is deciding to continue teaching in a district. Successful principals understand their school culture and work to build positive relationships with stakeholders.

Recommendations for State Leaders

NC Teacher Preparatory Pipeline. The state of North Carolina is beginning to see a teacher shortage across the state. Positions in the subject areas of Math, Science, and Special Education are hard for school districts in the state to fill. According to Public Schools First NC, enrollment in undergraduate education programs across the UNC system is down 41% since 2010. The decline in enrollment for all levels of education majors, including master's level, is 25%. There are 15 UNC system schools with teacher preparation programs, and all are reporting declines in enrollment in their degree and licensure programs. The severe shortage of math and science teachers and middle school teachers for all subjects is a critical and growing problem ("The Facts on NC's Teacher Pipeline," 2018). The state must develop and implement a teacher retention plan to address the growing teacher shortage in NC.

NC State Reporting. During the process of conducting this study in the CCS system, the researcher realized that teacher data reported by the LEA and the state vary slightly in regards to the number of teaching positions and the number of teachers who left the LEA during a particular reporting period. The state of NC would benefit from designing and implement one process to be used across the state for recording teacher turnover. LEA data is reported in a different manner than state data. For example, local turnover rates do not make an adjustment for teachers who remain in the state in the education profession. State reporting standards do not

count teachers who leave one NC school district and go to work in others within the state. In order to help promote teacher retention, the state must develop a standardized process to be used for the state and the LEA.

Beginning Teacher Support Funding. The state of NC requires all LEAs to develop and implement a beginning teacher mentor program. However, the state does not provide additional funding for the implementation of this program. The LEAs in NC decide how they are going to fund the program at the district level. Funding for the beginning teacher mentor program is normally taken out of federal pots of money issued to the LEA such as Title II funds. A fully funded beginning teacher induction program would benefit the state, LEAs, teachers, and the students who attend the schools in the North Carolina public school system.

Salary. According to *The News & Observer* (Raleigh), North Carolina currently ranks thirty-seven in the nation for teacher pay (Keung Hui, 2018). State leaders need to develop a pay scale for NC teachers that more reflects the pay that other teachers receive across the nation. In 2013, the state of NC stopped paying teachers extra for receiving a master's degree. The state of NC needs to reinstate master's level pay for all teachers who have a master's degree. The state should conduct a serious review of current policies and funding practices.

Implications for Districts

Districts that conduct a study about teacher turnover in their district will benefit from the data collected. A teacher turnover study would allow districts to identify the causes of teacher turnover in their district and give insight into possible solutions. A district-wide comprehensive teacher retention plan would promote consistency among the schools and teachers within the district. The implementation of a comprehensive teacher retention plan would reduce professional development cost associated with training new teachers. The monies saved could be

used to improve services provided to students. The implementation of a district-wide comprehensive teacher retention plan would over time help produce better student performance and a higher rate of teacher satisfaction.

Implications for Schools

Schools that fully realign their culture to promote teacher retention, produce a better environment for students, teachers and all stakeholders to build trustful relationships. Schools that develop a culture that involves the community and implements a comprehensive teacher retention plan will see a reduction in teacher turnover. Less teacher turnover allows teachers to develop relationships with the students and the community. Schools that have developed these relationships record less teacher turnover and student achievement is higher.

Implications for Teacher Stakeholder Groups

This study and the comprehensive teacher retention plan developed from data collected in the CCS system will have a positive impact on the teacher stakeholder groups if it is implemented consistently and correctly. The teacher stakeholder group will have an increased voice in the decision-making process. The teacher stakeholder group will benefit from incentives offered by the district. The plan will increase the teacher stakeholder group's satisfaction level with their current teaching position.

Implications for the State of North Carolina

The NC public education system should adopt a teacher retention plan that covers a wide range of areas to help address teacher turnover across the state. By adopting a plan the state would place an emphasis on the problem of teacher turnover and districts across the state would be more inclined to study and address the issue. A reduction in teacher turnover across the state would save school districts thousands of dollars in professional development cost. The money

saved could be better spent on programs that help NC students achieve academic success. A reduction in teacher turnover would also allow NC students the opportunity to build relationships with teachers. A solid student-teacher relationship would promote better student academic performance.

Conclusion

Teacher turnover is a complex issue to solve and involves many dynamics. A teacher's decision to stop teaching is an individual choice and each individual makes the choice based on factors that are present in their life when they make the decision. This study endeavored to review teacher turnover in the state of NC and especially in the Columbus County School system. The data collected in the Columbus County School system suggest that teacher turnover does impact student academic achievement. The data also suggest that the CCS system can reduce teacher turnover by implementing programs that address the concerns that stakeholder groups have across the district.

The stakeholders in the CCS system identified five components that they feel are important to a comprehensive teacher retention plan. The plan developed for the CCS system contains the five components suggested by stakeholders. Educational agencies across the state and nation that promote positive communication with all stakeholder groups can expect to see an increase in student performance. The data collected in the CCS system suggest that educational agencies who place a focus on teacher retention and develop a plan that includes the best practices of a mentorship program, targeted professional development, recruiting and building strong leadership, adjusting teacher assignments and implementing a critical self-reflection program will produce higher rates of teacher satisfaction and student performance. The CCS system already has practices in place to address some of the concerns, however, the practices are

not implemented with the same fidelity at all the schools in the system. The data collected in the CCS system also indicates that schools in the system who receive positive community support have less teacher turnover.

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APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

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

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [William Norris](#)
CC: [Hal Holloman](#)
Date: 2/4/2019
Re: [UMCIRB 18-001577](#)
Teacher Turnover In Columbus County Schools

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 2/1/2019. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #2ab & 4b.

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

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

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

APPENDIX B: COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER TURNOVER

LEA	Sch	LEA Name	School Name	March		
				2014 Teachers	Teachers Left	Turnover Percent
240	304	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Middle	10.50	4.50	42.86
240	308	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Elementary	22.00	4.00	18.18
240	328	Columbus County Schools	Cerro Gordo Elementary	22.00	1.00	4.55
240	330	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Middle	13.00	1.50	11.54
240	332	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Elementary	19.00	2.00	10.53
240	334	Columbus County Schools	East Columbus High	35.00	12.00	34.29
240	344	Columbus County Schools	Evergreen Elementary	19.00	6.00	31.58
240	352	Columbus County Schools	Guideway Elementary	14.00	2.00	14.29
240	354	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	22.00	3.00	13.64
240	356	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro Middle	15.50	2.50	16.13
240	368	Columbus County Schools	Nakina Middle	12.50	-	-
240	370	Columbus County Schools	Old Dock Elementary	15.00	1.00	6.67
240	371	Columbus County Schools	South Columbus High	45.00	9.00	20.00
240	372	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Elementary	27.00	4.00	14.81
240	373	Columbus County Schools	CCCA - Fair Bluff /Southeastern Campuses	11.50	2.00	17.39
240	376	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Middle	16.50	3.50	21.21
240	380	Columbus County Schools	West Columbus High	37.00	6.00	16.22
240	388	Columbus County Schools	Williams Township	40.50	4.00	9.88
LEA Totals				397.00	68.00	17.13

LEA	Sch	LEA Name	School Name	March		
				2015 Teachers	Teachers Left	Turnover Percent
240	304	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Middle	10.50	2.00	19.05
240	308	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Elementary	24.00	3.50	14.58
240	328	Columbus County Schools	Cerro Gordo Elementary	24.00	3.00	12.50
240	330	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Middle	12.00	0.50	4.17
240	332	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Elementary	20.00	6.00	30.00
240	334	Columbus County Schools	East Columbus High	33.00	10.00	30.30
240	344	Columbus County Schools	Evergreen Elementary	18.00	4.00	22.22
240	352	Columbus County Schools	Guideway Elementary	12.00	2.00	16.67
240	354	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	24.00	6.50	27.08
240	356	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro Middle	14.50	3.00	20.69
240	368	Columbus County Schools	Nakina Middle	12.33	1.33	10.82
240	370	Columbus County Schools	Old Dock Elementary	17.00	1.00	5.88
240	371	Columbus County Schools	South Columbus High	42.33	3.33	7.87
240	372	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Elementary	29.00	4.00	13.79
240	373	Columbus County Schools	CCCA - Fair Bluff /Southeastern Campuses	10.50	3.00	28.57
240	376	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Middle	15.50	3.50	22.58
240	380	Columbus County Schools	West Columbus High	37.00	9.00	24.32
240	388	Columbus County Schools	Williams Township	44.33	3.33	7.52
LEA Totals				400.00	69.00	17.25

LEA Sch	LEA Name	School Name	March		
			2016 Teachers	Teachers Left	Turnover Percent
240 304	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Middle	10.00	3.50	35.00
240 308	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Elementary	25.50	1.50	5.88
240 328	Columbus County Schools	Cerro Gordo Elementary	23.50	2.00	8.51
240 330	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Middle	12.00	3.00	25.00
240 332	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Elementary	20.00	6.00	30.00
240 334	Columbus County Schools	East Columbus High	35.00	9.00	25.71
240 344	Columbus County Schools	Evergreen Elementary	17.00	2.00	11.76
240 352	Columbus County Schools	Guideway Elementary	12.00	4.00	33.33
240 354	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	23.50	4.50	19.15
240 356	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro Middle	15.50	2.50	16.13
240 368	Columbus County Schools	Nakina Middle	12.50	-	-
240 370	Columbus County Schools	Old Dock Elementary	18.00	-	-
240 371	Columbus County Schools	South Columbus High	44.00	2.00	4.55
240 372	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Elementary	28.00	7.00	25.00
240 373	Columbus County Schools	CCCA - Fair Bluff /Southeastern Campuses	11.50	1.00	8.70
240 376	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Middle	14.50	4.00	27.59
240 380	Columbus County Schools	West Columbus High	34.00	2.00	5.88
240 388	Columbus County Schools	Williams Township	44.50	3.00	6.74
LEA Totals			401.00	57.00	14.21

LEA Sch	LEA Name	School Name	March		Turnover Percent
			2017 Teacher	Teachers Left	
240 304	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Middle	9.00	5.00	55.56
240 308	Columbus County Schools	Acme Delco Elementary	26.00	6.00	23.08
240 328	Columbus County Schools	Cerro Gordo Elementary	24.50	2.50	10.20
240 330	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Middle	9.00	1.00	11.11
240 332	Columbus County Schools	Chadbourn Elementary	21.00	5.00	23.81
240 334	Columbus County Schools	East Columbus High	32.50	8.00	24.62
240 344	Columbus County Schools	Evergreen Elementary	19.50	3.50	17.95
240 352	Columbus County Schools	Guideway Elementary	10.00	1.00	10.00
240 354	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary	23.50	5.00	21.28
240 356	Columbus County Schools	Hallsboro Middle	15.50	3.50	22.58
240 368	Columbus County Schools	Nakina Middle	12.50	0.50	4.00
240 370	Columbus County Schools	Old Dock Elementary	18.00	1.00	5.56
240 371	Columbus County Schools	South Columbus High	44.00	5.00	11.36
240 372	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Elementary	29.00	5.00	17.24
240 373	Columbus County Schools	CCCA - Fair Bluff /Southeastern Campuses	12.00	1.00	8.33
240 376	Columbus County Schools	Tabor City Middle	13.50	2.50	18.52
240 380	Columbus County Schools	West Columbus High	34.00	3.00	8.82
240 388	Columbus County Schools	Williams Township	44.50	4.50	10.11
LEA Totals			398	63.00	15.83

**APPENDIX C: SEPTEMBER PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF BEGINNING TEACHERS
IN COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS**

BT Meeting

September 21, 2017

1. Is this your first year teaching school: YES/NO. If this year is not your first year, how many years have you been a classroom teacher? _____
2. Why did you decide to start teaching?
3. Have you considered changing your career? If so, please explain why.
4. What can CCS do to make you want to continue in the teaching profession?
5. What can we do in the BT program to better support you as a new teacher?

APPENDIX D: FACE-TO-FACE CCS PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

CCS Principal Questionnaire

1. Why do you think the teacher turnover rate at your school remains consistently low?
2. Do you have a plan in place at your school to combat teacher turnover? If so, please explain.
3. What role does school culture play in the low teacher turnover rate at your school? How would you describe your school culture? Please explain.
4. Does community support have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover at your school?
5. In your opinion what three major concepts should be included in a teacher retention plan?
6. Does low teacher turnover impact student academic performance at your school? Please explain.

APPENDIX E: FACE-TO-FACE CCS TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Questions

1. Why do you think the teacher turnover rate at your school remains consistently low?
2. Are you aware of a plan in place at your school to combat teacher turnover? If so, please explain.
3. What role does school culture play in the low teacher turnover rate at your school?
4. Does community support have a positive or negative impact on teacher turnover at your school?
5. In your opinion what three major concepts should be included in a teacher retention plan?
6. Does low teacher turnover impact student academic performance at your school? Please explain.

APPENDIX F: COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS PRINCIPAL SURVEY

1. How long have you been a principal with CCS?
0-5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15 or more years.
2. Does the state of NC/Department of Public Instruction provide enough support to produce a successful mentoring program? Yes or No
3. Do you have enough qualified mentors at your school? Yes or No
4. Are mentors properly matched with mentees at your school? Yes or No
5. Do mentors and mentees attend the same professional learning community meetings at your school? Yes or No
6. Are mentees and mentors matched according to the grade level they teach? Yes or No
7. Do you match mentors and mentees based on the subject they teach? Yes or No
8. Please explain the selection criteria you use to match mentees and mentors?
9. How important are the areas listed below in developing a teacher retention plan? Please rank from most important to least important.

Professional Development, Salary, Teacher Assignment, Principal Support, Teacher Recognition, Behavioral Support.
10. Do you feel CCS needs a comprehensive plan to promote teacher retention? Yes or No
11. What is your current principal assignment?

Elementary, Elementary/Middle, Middle, High School
12. How important do you feel self-reflection is to a teacher's professional growth?

Extremely valuable, Very valuable, Somewhat valuable, Not so valuable, Not at all valuable

13. Please list the methods used at your school to promote teacher retention.
14. Does teacher turnover have an impact on student performance at your school? Yes or No
15. In your opinion what is the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan? Please rank from most important to least important.
Mentor Program, Professional Development, School Leadership, Teacher Assignment, Self-Reflection.
16. Do you feel that your mentors have received the proper training to be successful? Yes or No
17. How can CCS help you grow and retain the teachers at your school?
18. How often do mentors and mentees meet at your school?
Daily, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Less than once a month.
19. Briefly describe the process you use to create and assign classes to teachers.
20. Are you able to provide teachers with enough supplies and resources to plan and implement the required lessons? Yes or No

APPENDIX G: COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS BEGINNING TEACHER SURVEY

1. How long have you been a teacher with CCS?
0-1 year, 1-2 years, 2-3 years, 3-4 years
2. Are you properly matched with your mentor? Yes or No
3. Are you properly matched with your mentor as far as teaching schedules? Yes or No
4. Do you and your mentor have professional learning community meetings at the same time? Yes or No
5. Do you teach the same subject as your mentor? Yes or No
6. Do you teach the same grade level as your mentor? Yes or No
7. Are you aware of the selection criteria used to match you with your mentor? Yes or No
8. When deciding to continue teaching with CCS, how important are the areas listed below?
Please rank the list below from most important to least important.
Professional Development, Salary, Teacher Assignment, Principal Support, Teacher Recognition, Behavioral Support.
9. Do you feel CCS needs a comprehensive plan to help promote teacher retention? Yes or No
10. My courses in college prepared me to teach the curriculum for the courses I have been assigned. Yes or No
11. At which school level do you currently work?
Elementary, Middle, High School
12. What is your age group?
Under 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-over
13. What is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system?

District Reputation, Spouse Transferred, Geographic Location, Close to Family, Your Position/Assignment, Salary

14. How often do you meet with your mentor?

Daily, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Less than once a month.

15. Are you comfortable with your current grade level/subject assignment? Yes or No

16. Have you received the proper training to excel with your current class/student assignment? Yes or No

17. The majority of my assigned students are performing: on grade level, below grade level or above grade level.

18. In your opinion what is the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan? Please rank from most important to least important.

Mentor Program, Professional Development, School Leadership, Teacher Assignment, Self-Reflection.

19. How important do you feel self-reflection is to your professional growth?

Extremely valuable, Very valuable, Somewhat valuable, Not so valuable, Not valuable at all.

20. What can CCS provide to help you grow and remain in the teaching profession?

APPENDIX H: COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS' MENTOR SURVEY

1. How long have you been a teacher with CCS?
0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, 30 plus years
2. Are you properly matched with your mentee? Yes or No
3. Are you properly matched with your mentee as far as teaching schedules? Yes or No
4. Do you and your mentee have professional learning community meetings at the same time? Yes or No
5. Do you teach the same subject as your mentee? Yes or No
6. Do you teach the same grade level as your mentee? Yes or No
7. Are you aware of the selection criteria used to match you with your mentee? Yes or No
8. When deciding to continue teaching with CCS, how important are the areas listed below?
Please rank the list below from most important to least important.
Professional Development, Salary, Teacher Assignment, Principal Support, Teacher Recognition, Behavioral Support.
9. Do you feel CCS needs a comprehensive plan to help promote teacher retention? Yes or No
10. My courses in college prepared me to teach the curriculum for the courses I have been assigned. Yes or No
11. At which school lever do you currently work?
Elementary, Middle, High School
12. What is your age group?
Under 30, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60 –over

13. What is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system?

District Reputation, Spouse Transferred, Geographic Location, Close to Family, Your Position/Assignment, Salary

14. How often do you meet with your mentee?

Daily, Weekly, Bi-Weekly, Monthly, Less than once a month.

15. Are you comfortable with your current grade level/subject assignment? Yes or No

16. Have you received the proper training to excel with your current mentee assignment? Yes or No

17. The majority of my assigned student are performing: on grade level, below grade level or above grade level.

18. In your opinion with is the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan? Please rank from most important to least important.

Mentor Program, Professional Development, School Leadership, Teacher Assignment, Self-Reflection

19. How important do you feel self-reflection is to your professional growth?

Extremely valuable, Very valuable, Somewhat valuable, Not so valuable, Not at all valuable.

20. What can CCS provide to help you grow and remain in the teaching profession?

APPENDIX I: COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS ALL-TEACHER SURVEY

1. How long have you been a teacher?

0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, 31 or more years.

2. How long have you been a teacher with CCS?

0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, 26-30 years, 31 or more years.

3. What is your current teaching assignment?

Elementary, Elementary/Middle, Middle or High School.

4. Do you feel like you are properly recognized for your work? Yes or No

5. How important is building administration support in your decision to continue teaching in CCS?

Extremely Important, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not so important, Not at all important.

6. Does teacher turnover have an impact on student performance at your school? Yes or No

7. What is done at your school to promote teacher retention?

8. Are you provided with enough resources to plan and implement the required lessons?

Yes or No

9. How important do you feel self-reflection is to a teacher's professional growth?

Extremely valuable, Very valuable, Somewhat valuable, Not so valuable, Not at all valuable.

10. Do you feel CCS needs a comprehensive plan to help promote teacher retention? Yes or No.
11. What is the reason you decided to teach in the CCS system?
District Reputation, Spouse Transferred, Geographic Location, Close to Family, Your Position/Assignment, Salary
12. When deciding to continue teaching with CCS, how important are the areas listed below? Please rank the list below from most important to least important.
Professional Development, Salary, Teacher Assignment, Principal Support, Teacher Recognition, Behavioral Support.
13. In your opinion what is the most important aspect of a teacher retention plan? Please rank from most to least important.
Mentor Program, Professional Development, School Leadership, Teacher Assignment, Self-Reflection.
14. The majority of my assigned students are performing: on grade level, below grade level, above grade level.
15. Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession? No, I never considered leaving, Yes, I often consider leaving, Yes, I sometimes consider leaving, Yes, I have considered it once or twice.
16. Are there any incentives that would encourage you to keep teaching? Please list.
17. My stress level is reduced by the support of my colleagues. Yes or No
18. Have you ever considered teaching in another state because of a pay difference? Yes or No

19. Other than salary, please list what CCS can do to help you grow and remain in the teaching profession.

20. Do you intend to retire from the teaching profession? Yes or No

