


2017

# Overcoming the Challenges of Retaining Novice Teachers in a County Public School by Ernst Albert

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Walden University  
2017

Abstract

Overcoming the Challenges of Retaining Novice Teachers in a County Public School

by

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MA, University of Central Florida, 1998

BS, York College, 1981

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Higher Ed and Adult Learning

Walden University

June 2017

## Abstract

Retaining novice teachers in a Northeast Florida county public school is an ongoing challenge. Research indicates that 14% of new teachers will leave the field within 5 years. The purpose of this case study was to investigate the major factors that contributed to this unique group of novice teachers' decisions to continue to teach at the school during their first 5 years in the field. The societal model served as the conceptual framework for this study of factors affecting teacher turnover, with emphasis on teacher and school characteristics in relation to teacher attrition. Data collected from 9 interviews and an observation and analyzed inductively were used to answer the key research question about what factors contributed to new teachers' retention. The findings of this study indicated that teacher preparation, administrative support, school environment, working conditions, and student characteristics influenced teacher retention at the local site. Recommendations that stemmed from the findings were formulated into a proposal for a new teacher professional development series that the participating school can use to improve new teacher retention rates. This study promotes positive social change by implementing measures to stabilize new teacher retention rates, which will improve student learning and promote academic success by creating stability in the learning environment.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my father Andre Albert, my mother Quetcia Bogat, and my uncle Smith Albert. Thank you for always believing in me to complete this part of my education.

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I want to thank the people who have encouraged me to complete my educational dream. This journey could not have been possible without the unselfish understanding of my wife, Margaret; and my children, Derrick, Savannah, and Stephen. The support I received from my dear brother Reynald, my sister Sabine, my uncle Dr. Lucien Albert, my cousins Yanick and Jesse Gourdet; Antonio Bogat, Philippe Hall, Dr. Harry Beauvais, Alain Beauvais, Joel Joseph, Jesnaire Loiseau; and my good friends Marcaisse Baptist, Sheila Knighton and Paul Mercado cannot be left unnoticed. Thank you! Thank you Carlos Patino for your great support. You are the greatest!

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## Section 1: The Problem

### **Introduction**

Almost a quarter of new public school teachers leave the profession within the first three years (US Department of Education, 2014). The public schools of North Carolina State Board of Education Department of Public Instruction (2016) reported a 12.78% rate of departing teachers in their first five years of teaching. Ingersoll and May (2012) indicated that teacher attrition is an important problem in the United States. According to Wushishi, Fooi, Basri, and Baki (2016), teacher attrition is strongly affected by students' underperformance and heavy workload. The Minnesota Department of Education (2017) also reported that an average of 15.1 % of first year teachers leave the profession and more than a quarter (25.9%) of the teachers depart from the field after three years. According to Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, and Thomas (2016), the attrition level in the workforce in the United States is estimated to be close to 8% annually.

New teachers have left the profession for many reasons. Researchers have investigated some of these reasons to have a better understanding of the factors affecting teacher retention or attrition. Sutchter et al. (2016) identified four major factors that influence the rising teacher deficit: (a) weak enrollments in teacher preservice training, (b) poor district incentives to renew prerecession pupil-teacher ratios, (c) increasing enrollment of students, and (d) elevated teacher attrition. The New Teacher Project (2012) indicated that the most qualified teachers are more likely to depart from the field, although they are the most needed for the improvement of student academic performance. The Na-

tional Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014) acknowledged the significance of teacher attrition in the current teacher shortage.

According to the NCES (2014), 8% of teachers changed professions during the 2011–2012 school year, and 8% transferred to a different school. According to the latest statistics from Florida Department of Education (2013), out of 171,868 teachers who worked in 2012–2013, 9,040 of those teachers left their jobs. Such research provided a global understanding of the new teacher attrition rates in American schools. According to a report from the NCES (2015), teachers leave the profession at a lower rate than previously believed. About 30% of public school teachers moved from one institution to another in 2012–2013. Nearly 10% of the teachers who left public school were teachers who unwillingly left the teaching profession totally in 2012–2013. Approximately 51% of the teachers who left the profession of teaching in 2012–2013 described a more manageable workload in their present position than in teaching. In addition, 53% of public school leavers reported overall better working conditions in their present position compared to teaching (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles 2014). Therefore, the problem of teacher attrition in U.S. public schools has been an existing one that should not be ignored. In this study, I explore some of the reasons for this new-teacher attrition phenomenon in the public school sector.

Understanding the reasons behind these high rates has been a subject of study for many researchers, and these researchers have identified systematic problems at the local level related to teachers' assignments, teaching loads, and preparation and working conditions (Carpenter, 2014; Kopkowski, 2008; Simon & Johnson, 2013). Kopkowski (2008) described several reasons for teacher attrition including testing mandates from federal

legislation such as No Child Left Behind, lack of support, student discipline, poorly funded programs, lack of control and respect, and underpay. Simon and Johnson (2013) indicated that the culture of the school, the leadership of the school, and colleague relationships are contributing factors to teacher attrition. Carpenter (2014) indicated that teachers left their career as a result of strife between themselves and administration.

Other researchers have indicated that administrative support played a major role in teacher retention (Ikemoto, Taliaferro, & Adams, 2012). Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo (2009) reported that teachers' decisions to leave or to stay are influenced by the working conditions and administrative support at their schools. In their research, Allensworth et al. also found that teachers mostly remain in schools where a climate of mutual respect exists among colleagues, as well as collective responsibility, innovation, and trusting relationships with each other.

Schleicher (2012) suggested that student achievement will improve with the empowerment of talented teachers to develop school leadership skills, and teacher retention will be easier with the implementation of effective programs and resources. Molloy and Allen (2007) suggested that the nurturer's concept enhances teacher retention. When teachers are provided with support that promotes the understanding of the strategies that assist them in becoming proficient as educators, their decision to remain in the field is more likely.

Researchers have explored some of the factors that contribute to teacher turnover in the public schools (Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). In their research in Chicago and New York City, Allensworth et al. (2009) and Boyd et al. (2009) have reported that the turnover rates are significantly higher in underperforming, financially deprived

schools. Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) have reported that the correlation between high poverty and underperforming schools is significant in Chicago as well as in Milwaukee public schools. The attrition of new teachers remains an important area of concern, especially in a large number of urban high-poverty school areas. McKinney, Berry, Dickerson, and Campbell-Whately (2007) indicated that recruiting and retaining quality teachers in high poverty school areas is a national concern.

According to Haynes (2014), Florida teachers are leaving the classroom at a faster rate than the national average. About 8% of Florida teachers left the classroom from 2008 to 2009 (Haynes, 2014). The national average of teachers leaving the classroom during the same period was 6.8% (Haynes, 2014). Haynes also indicated that nationwide, approximately 13% of teachers transfer or give up the profession each year. The rate is reported to be higher recently in Florida, with 15% or more of novice teachers leaving (Haynes, 2014). This attrition problem should be investigated to gain insight into the factors that result in the continued departure of novice teachers in rural and urban public schools.

Establishing a better understanding of what influences attrition among new teachers may assist school districts in efforts to develop effective retention programs for novice teachers. These programs could be based on the research results that address specific concerns among teachers affected by this attrition problem. In the following section, I will address the attrition problem at a particular school in Northeast Florida and explain the rationale for this project study.

### **Definition of the Problem**

The turnover rates for new teachers at Joan School (pseudonym) have been constant for the past six years; an average of four teachers out of 20 per year leave the school. According to the school's staff roster for 2009-2013, novice teachers usually lasted between 1 to 3 years at this Florida public school. For example, as one second-year fourth grade teacher noted, "I do not think that I will be a teacher for long. I don't know that I can do this" (personal communication, December 14, 2015). Haynes' (2014) reported that within the two years mark, novice teachers leave their first school in an average of two out of five times. This was a typical trend at Joan School.

Teacher attrition has implications for student achievement in public schools (Barnes et al., 2007). Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2012) indicated that higher turnover in grade level negatively impacted students' performance in English language arts and math, and this impact was more significant in underperforming and African American students. Teachers at Joan School sometimes left the school in the middle of the school year, replaced by a number of substitute teachers who might not have enough experience or classroom-management skills to regain control of the classroom or teach effectively; this affects students' stability in discipline and in academic progress. Academic achievement was negatively reflected in students' grades or standardized tests scores, such as on the 2012 Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test where 73% of 8th grade students scored 3.0 and above on the reading compared to the state scores of 78% for students of the same grade state (Florida Department of Education, 2013). Attrition of new teachers affected Joan School in different ways and for different reasons. The school needed to



find new approaches to reduce teacher turnover and minimize breakdown in student services.

One goal of this study was to offer data to help understand the major factors that contributed to teacher retention at Joan School so that the school could begin to explore steps to curtail the attrition rates among its new teachers. With such steps, Joan School could effectively train and create a climate of encouragement for first year teachers and those new to the school who may have been transferred from another school or another district. Schools need to assist new teachers in their efforts to understand the environment in which they are teaching. This assistance could play a major role in minimizing certain discomforts, such as high student populations, parental expectations, limited access to classroom materials, and unfamiliarity with the general culture and goals of the school. Teachers are then free to focus on teaching to help students meet their academic needs.

Factors specific to Joan School could be explored to find the appropriate solutions that may reduce its new teacher-attrition rates, increase retention, and improve student performance. According to the Illinois Education Research Council (DeAngelis, & Presley, 2007), “36% of new teachers remain in the highest achieving schools through their first five years compared to only 22% of new teachers in the lowest performing schools” (p. 4). Unfortunately, the Florida Department of Education does not have comparable information. The difference in retention between new teachers in the highest achieving schools and new teachers in the lowest performing schools is a gap in practice that could be better addressed by understanding the reasons the attrition of new teachers continues to dominate in low-income, low-performance schools.

This problem affects the foundation and the growth of new and potentially great

teachers. Teacher attrition also affects students who are denied the privilege of a stable learning environment. The present study gave me insight into the major reasons novice teachers at Joan School wanted to continue to teach within their first five years of teaching or wanted to continue to teach beyond their initial years in the field. I have explored systemic issues related to low-income schools as well as teacher readiness for highly challenging school environments, administrative support, and other possible teaching conditions that may affect teachers' willingness to stay in the profession of teaching. This study provides a foundation on which other solutions can be built to assist school stakeholders in improving retention rates among new teachers in a hard-to-staff school.

## **Rationale**

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

Joan School is located in an average middle class socioeconomic area of a North-east county in Florida. Its student population was 16% Black, 11% Hispanic, 64% White, and 9% other. The demographic composition of the instructional staff was as follows: 4% Black, 3% Hispanic, 92% White, and 1% other. A noticeably low level of parental involvement existed at the school level (fourth-year 8th grade teacher, personal communication, April 9, 2015). The student population could be a challenge for teachers with weak classroom management, as a large number of parents support their children regardless of behavior issues. This was also a challenge to teachers who did not yet possess the conflict resolution skills that allowed them to deal with confrontational or difficult parents.

Though most parents were supportive of their child's teachers, some challenged everything of which they did not approve. Teachers at this school sometimes got con-

fronted about the grades they gave to students, which some parents did not like. Many veteran teachers still felt some discomfort responding to these parents' aggressive approaches (fifth-year 10th grade teacher, personal communication, April 8th, 2015). It was also very intimidating to some new teachers who were not trained to respond to aggression.

New teachers faced many other challenges. For example, according to a first-year 10th grade teacher, "I have great difficulty getting the cooperation needed from most of my students' parents. Some blame me for their kids' behavior" (first-year 10th grade teacher, personal communication, March, 2015). A need clearly existed for Joan School to explore solutions for better rapport between parents and teachers in order to mitigate a potential factor negatively affecting teacher retention.

Despite these challenges, in four out of the past five years, Joan School has earned a rating of A in the state accountability rating. According to the district county's executive summary report (2013), 78% (7 of 9) of county's traditional schools earned a grade of A, as compared to statewide rate of 47% of schools earning an A. The results of these tests had a significant effect on teachers' evaluations and on the school's rating. Nevertheless, constant new-teacher turnover could affect student stability in behavior, academics, and especially on the state standardized tests such as the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test. According to the school principal at Joan School, "Turnovers of new teachers can create disruption and inconsistency in the quality of instruction at our school" (school principal, personal communication, March 24, 2015). The inclusion of Special Education Students in the regular classrooms also increased the challenges new teachers faced with discipline issues.

Joan School suffered a yearly loss of four novice teachers who left the school within their first two years of teaching; in a school with 20 teachers, this was a 20% turnover rate, and this number is not necessarily unusual. More than two in five (40%) new teachers in the state of Florida leave their initial schools within their first two years, and 67% leave their initial schools within five years (Florida Department of Education, 2014). According to the Florida Department of Education (2013), all cohorts retained 78% to 85% of their instructional staff after their first year, and the percentage steadily declined with each passing year from 2005 to 2012. The same report indicated that approximately 40% of first-year teachers have left the classroom after their fifth year in the Florida Public School system (Florida Department of Education, 2013).

In addition, the Florida Department of Education Data Report (2013) indicated that Joan School retained 58% of its first year teachers for the 2011–2012 school year. According to Florida Department of Education (2016) turnaround recommendations, during the 2015-2016 school year, Joan opened with 12 vacancies in the middle school. Additionally, teacher turnover rates were 18%-73% higher than the district average from 2012-2015. Attrition of new teachers at Joan was a reflection of the statistics presented in this paragraph. This was an alarming rate that needed to be further explored. I focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of the problems that were specifically generated by the systematic, environmental, or socioeconomic climate of the school under study. Joan School needed to find appropriate solutions that may curtail new-teacher attrition rates to retain and groom competent teachers for the next generation of students. This gap could be better understood by exploring factors that motivated teacher retention.

### **Special Terms and Definitions**

*Attrition:* In this study, the term attrition is used to describe teachers who are leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 2001).

*New teacher:* According to the New Teacher Induction Program of the Ontario Ministry of Education (2010), a *new teacher* is defined as a certified teacher who is permanently employed in a full time or part time position who begins to teach for the first time.

*Novice teacher:* The Arkansas Department of Education (2013) defined a *novice teacher* as any licensed teacher of record with less than one school year of classroom teaching experience in a public school.

*Retention:* According to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2010), if new teachers return to the public-education system, then they are coded as being retained for any year they are in public education.

*Turnover:* Ingersoll (2001) described turnover as "the departure of teachers from their teaching jobs" (p. 500).

### **Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature**

Researchers have investigated the rates of teacher turnover in high-poverty urban schools in an effort to understand the contributing factors to this problem. Gagnon and Mattingly (2012) reported that large urban districts that are poor and diverse are the most likely to have a critically high percentage of beginning teachers. According to Gimbert, Desai, and Kerka (2010), 30% to 50% of new teachers leave their urban schools within their first 5 years. Adnot, Dee, Katz and Wyckoff (2016) indicated that students' performance and school reform are affected by the constant hiring of new teachers because of

novice teacher turnover.

Neiman and DeVoe (2009) reported that disrespect and threats are more prevalent at urban schools, where teachers report verbal abuse and insolence twice as often as other schools, often on a daily basis or at a minimum of once a week. In a recent study, Steinberg, Allensworth, and Johnson (2012) indicated that school safety is a major concern that affects both students' performance and teachers' efficiency in urban schools. Allensworth et al. (2009) indicated that teachers are most likely to stop teaching in schools where problems with student discipline decrease the school's capacity for effective instruction.

High-quality teachers are not eager to teach in urban schools, which need them the most (Watson, 2011). DeAngelis and Presley (2011) suggested that policymakers should approach the shortage of new teachers first as a problem unique to their school instead of looking at it as principally a problem unique to schools in urban or disadvantaged areas. It should be noted I found no case study that could provide better insight into why new teachers contemplate leaving or staying in this Florida County public school system. The absence of systematic centralized data focusing on this issue further highlights the gap in practice and the value of this study in offering some foundational insights into the problem of teacher retention in this school.

### **Significance of the Problem**

In a study on the subject of new-teacher attrition, Boyd et al. (2008) found that there is a correlation between math teachers in elementary and middle schools in New York who quit teaching before their second year and lower achievement gains for their students than for students who had teachers who did not leave. In addition to the teachers

and students who are affected, attrition affects school districts financially through the re-training of newer teachers. Hiring and retraining expenses of new teachers is estimated to cost between \$2.6 billion and \$7.3 billion annually in the United States (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The total cost of turnover in public schools is estimated to be higher than \$86 million per year in the United States (Barnes et al., 2007). A recent report from the Alliance for Excellent Education (2014) indicated that teacher attrition costs the United States up to 2.2 billion annually. Haynes (2014) estimated that teacher attrition cost the state of Florida \$133 million per year.

Nevertheless, the cost of lost learning opportunities for students due to the loss of teachers is also significant (Ingersoll & May, 2012). Daughtrey (2010) indicated that because of the extreme attrition problems in high-need schools, these costs are excessively absorbed by school districts that can least afford them. It would financially benefit stakeholders to find solutions to curtail the cost of teacher turnover in their districts. Some of the solutions can begin with the continued exploration of the major factors that affect local teachers' turnover.

Researchers have also investigated the effect of gender and ethnicity on teacher attrition. Quartz et al. (2008) indicated that female teachers are more likely to leave early than male teachers. The significance of new-teacher attrition is also extended to the working conditions of new teachers in the schools that have, in some cases, influenced the short careers of new teachers in the field of education. Brown and Schainker (2008) suggested that new teachers are characteristically employed in the least suitable schools, with poor room conditions, poor student discipline, and the least suitable teaching assignments.

High teacher attrition can cause problems with educational quality. According to Sutchter et al. (2016), teacher shortages often have an unequal impact on the disadvantaged students. This is a significant problem area for many schools in the United States (Allensworth et al., 2009). According to Allensworth et al. (2009), schools that mainly serve students from other races have higher rates of stability than schools that serve mainly low-income Black students. This problem also affected the targeted local school where I conducted this study, which has experienced no decrease in teachers' turnover rates for the past 10 years.

Analysis of data from the school staffing records at Joan School (2006–2012) indicated a total of 13 teachers left within their first two years (Florida Department of Education, Open Public Records, 2012). Three teachers left in the middle of a school year and were replaced by substitute teachers for the remainder of the school year. The turnover rates have unfavorable effects on students' learning progress as measured by students' test scores and grades during the past six years at Joan School. According to Allensworth et al. (2009), declining enrollment in some school causes certain teachers to leave; large schools have lower mobility rates than small schools.

According to Adrianzen (2012), "Regardless of the overage of teachers schools and districts struggle to retain quality teachers in the classrooms" (p. 12). Joan School lost four teachers because of budget cuts and program closures beginning in July 2013. This trend can be curtailed with the appropriate professional development retention programs by educating the educating the teachers who remain in the field. This is another reason for exploring some of the factors that affect teacher retention at Joan School.

In addition, Ozoglu (2015) found that teacher turnover has strong negative influ-



ences over teacher enthusiasm and dedication, instructional preparation, managerial procedures, school environment, and student achievement. Retention measures that would allow new teachers to grow and mature in the field of education can be derived directly from answers to questions that focus on reasons for teacher attrition at this urban school. Solutions that would increase the retention of new teachers are necessary to help stabilize the overall academic progress of both teachers and students. The depth of the attrition problem among new teachers has many layers that continue to motivate researchers to seek understandings of the problem for appropriate solutions in prevention and intervention in order to help reduce the loss of new teachers on a local level and nationally in the United States.

### **Guiding/Research Question**

The varieties of sources that I used to understand the new-teacher attrition problem for this study have provided strong insight into the problem. The sources have provided rates of turnover and retention among new teachers, as well as possible reasons for teachers' staying in, moving from, or leaving the profession. Establishing an understanding of what encourages persistence among new teachers may provide a basis for supportive efforts that can enhance overall teacher retention. They have inspired this researcher to ask the guiding research question:

RQ: What major factors contribute to novice teachers' decisions to continue to teach at a selected Northeast Florida public school during their first five years in the field?

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of factors affecting teacher turnover in this study focus on teacher characteristics and school characteristics as part of a societal theory. Sher (1983), and Youngs (2013) have used teacher characteristics and school characteristics to guide their studies on attrition and retention of teachers. Sher's (1983) societal theory suggested that characteristics consist of background, preparation, and individual experience of a teacher. Sher's theory indicated that teacher attrition and retention rates are influenced by the conditions of the job and the place. Sher also suggested that conditions refer to state of the school, and surrounding influences, like cultural setting, opportunities for leisure times, accommodations, family and friends. This theory indicates that the rate of teacher retention and attrition is influenced by their characteristics (Sher, 1983).

Sher (1983) proposed. The results of that research, like Sher's, indicated that the state and the neighboring environment of the job influenced each situation for either attrition or retention. In her study, Youngs (2013) used teacher characteristics, school characteristics, working conditions, and route to certification as the framework of factors that influence retention/mobility or attrition of beginning teachers in her research. Teacher characteristics and working conditions in exploring teacher attrition/retention also played an important role in framing the work for this new study.

As I focused on the local problem unique to the school under study, systemic issues such as school conditions, and teacher characteristics that may affect new teachers' decisions to leave or continue to work at the school were analyzed using guidance from Sher's (1983) theory. Furthermore, the theoretical perspective of Dauter, Fuller, Newton,

and Rivero (2011) conceptualized that individual behavior such as deciding to leave a school, is expected to be influenced by administrative dynamics and environmental factors. Such theory combines economical and sociological perspectives on the premise that to completely understand teachers' behavior in school establishments, it is necessary to observe the individualities of both the teacher and the school.

Orientation of new teachers to their new teaching environment may assist them in their efforts to understand and accept their new assignment as educators. The support of a mentor and the administration as a new teacher seemed to have a positive effect on teachers' abilities to adjust to their new teaching environment. This adjustment may play a major role in new teachers' decisions to continue to teach at their initial schools. It is not uncommon for some teachers to get into the field for the wrong reasons. They may struggle no matter what, or they may face a different reality that inspires them to continue to teach. This case study should provide new insight into this new teacher turnover problem at Joan School.

A variety of studies by agencies, such as NCAT and IERC, have indicated that turnover in urban high-need schools is higher than in lower-need schools. These factors were important to understand to bring about the changes that were needed to improve retention at the urban school that this study will focus on. I have also investigated the systemic effect of the urban school on teacher attrition and retention. This study centered on the contextual and organizational factors that may contribute to the retention of new teachers. The purpose of this research study was to examine the major factors that have contributed to new-teacher retention at Joan School.

### **Teacher Attrition on a National Level**

The problem of teacher attrition, especially new teacher attrition, has been internationally recorded (Hong, 2012). The attrition of teachers has been nationally investigated by researchers who are looking for answers to this crisis among teachers. According to the US Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2014), of the 3,77,900 public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011–2012 school year, 84% remained at the same school, 8% moved to a different school, and another 8% left the profession during the following year. Among the 487,300 private-school teachers who were teaching the 2007–2008 school year, 79.2% were stayers, 4.9% were movers, and 15.9% were leavers. Among public school teachers with one to three years of experience, 9.1% left teaching in 2008–2009. Among private-school teachers with one to three years of teaching, 20.6% left teaching in 2008–2009. This national survey incorporated the private-school sector to give a larger picture of the magnitude of the attrition problem in our nation's schools.

Lochmiller, Adachi, Chesnut, and Johnson (2016) reported an average of 0.9 % of teachers and 1.2% of administrators moved to a different district in the West Virginia public school system each year. Teachers with no experience who began teaching in the West Virginia public school system in 2008/09, 32.0 % had left by 2012/13. An average of 9.0 % of teachers and 11.1 % of administrators left the West Virginia public school system each year.

However, Schaefer, Long, and Clandinin (2012) suggested the necessity to change the dialog to maintaining teachers instead of solely emphasize on retaining teachers that provides new awareness regarding teacher education and the type of room re-

quired on school environment to maintain and sustain new teachers. The efforts to understand new-teacher attrition and retention continue in areas with different approaches, as I will indicate in the following subsections of this literature review.

### **Attrition in Special Areas**

The teacher shortage in special education (SE) has also been investigated in recent years. Great concern arose among researchers who have explored the supply-and-demand context for SE teachers. There is a relation between the demand for SE teachers and the shortage of new faculty. According to Robb, Smith, and Montrosse (2012), the “shortage of faculty contributes to a shortage of teachers because the faculty produces the supply “ (p. 130). The study indicated that no more than 46% of new SE teachers had fulfilled broad teacher training with major degrees in their main areas of teaching (i.e., special education), compared to the number of 81.9% for regular education (Robb et al., 2012). Robb et al (2012) also indicated only 28% of new SE teachers have been properly trained to teach in their major in this deficit of SE teachers.

Hampton (2013) explored attrition among SE teachers to find the importance of administrative support, good working conditions, adequate time to complete assigned duties, and salaries as contributing factors to retention. Connelly and Graham (2009) found that new SE teachers with considerable preservice student teaching training are more likely to continue to teach the following year. Connelly and Graham also indicated that the increased rate of growth of SE student enrollment has multiplied the problem of new-teacher attrition. However, VanCise (2013) found that attrition among highly qualified SE teachers did not change for the past 10 years despite their credentials. Guerra, Hernandez, Hector, and Crosby (2015) found that new SE teachers are more likely to remain

in the field when they can show more dynamic, self-guided type of self-awareness in their practice. Shurr, Hirth, Jasper, McCollow, and Heroux (2014) identified isolation from coworkers within the occupation for teachers of students with mild and severe disabilities as a special challenge to teacher retention. Cobb (2015) indicated that principals also play a major role to promote inclusion: visionary, coach, conflict resolver, organizer in their democratic efforts to support their special education programs to reduce new teacher attrition. Study by Cancio, Albrecht, and Johns (2013) also indicated that there is correlation between teachers' intent to stay in the field and specific administration behaviors. Researchers can also explore these factors in studies that specifically address attrition in SE.

Although most researchers have focused their attention on reasons and consequences of teacher attrition in public schools, researchers (Gardner, 2010; Hancock, 2009; Pirkle, 2011) have also investigated the turnover rates of teachers in specific subjects and areas, such as music, math, and SE, for a more in-depth understanding of the attrition crisis. Holman (2016) investigated attrition among music teachers to find that doctoral music education teachers left the profession because of stress on the job, scheduling conflicts, lack of administrative support, poor diversity preparation. In a recent study, Lewis (2016) indicated that SE teachers leave their positions because of excessive workloads, stresses caused by the position requests, student attitudes and behavior, in addition to poor administrative encouragement and leadership. According to Quezada (2013), factors affecting SE teachers include insufficient information about special education regulations, the referral process of special education, the individualized education plan (IEP) process, and insufficient grasp of numerous disabilities. Swanson (2012) indi-

cated that self- efficacy plays a part in new language teachers' choices to continue to teach or move out of the field within their first three years of practice. Farrell (2012) investigated language art teacher preparation to suggest that the gap between preservice and in-service teacher education has been recognized as major motif for teacher attrition. Mason, and Payotas Matas (2016) found that foreign language teachers with professional appreciation, healthy connections with their coworkers and administrators are most likely to remain in the field. Makela, Hirvensalo, Laakso and Whipp (2014) investigated attrition rates among physical education teachers to find new teachers left because of students, working conditions, administration, coworkers, respect and benefits, and assignments.

Kim and Barg (2010) reported that among different factors, noncompetitive starting salaries, increasing demands for expended skills without commensurate rewards, and the retirement of baby boomers have contributed to the low retention of music teachers in public education. The factors that affect music teachers' decisions to continue to teach or to leave the field should provide quality information that can assist in the development of effective retention programs for new teachers in the field. The staffing problem in public schools has also affected the math and science teacher population.

According to Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2012), inexperienced science teachers specifically were more prone not to have received adequate preparation in pedagogical methods and skills. Ingersoll and May (2012) also indicated that the strongest factor of teacher attrition for mathematics teachers was the degree of individual classroom autonomy teachers held. Again, some of the factors that may contribute to a reduction in science teachers can be used as a foundation, or a base, for improving retention of new

teachers in the field. This widespread attrition problem among teachers has affected a variety of areas in education that need to be investigated to reduce the continuous loss of teachers in our public school systems.

Solutions that can help increase the retention rates among new teachers can only be created with the identification and understanding of the contributing factors to the problem of attrition among teachers. Shortages of well-qualified teachers may compromise school quality and students' academic performances.

This literature review is a collection of research that provided me with insight and data into the diverse issues surrounding teacher attrition and retention. I paid particular attention to the national teacher turnover trends, as well as the local trends for this study. It was important to know what some researchers have said about the effect of attrition on students' learning in their research findings. I also reviewed articles on major reasons for new-teacher attrition in urban public schools, as well as literature on teacher attrition in critical specialty teaching areas, such as music, mathematics, science, and SE. However, despite the detailed information the research findings provided that were represented in this literature review, the systemic influence of individual schools on teacher attrition or retention needs to be further explored as an area of concern. Specific problems related to a particular school in a specific area need to be analyzed for in depth understanding of the causes of attrition or retention.

### **Major Components Influencing Teacher Attrition**

Researchers continue to explore components that will qualify the trends in excessive teacher turnover. Harfitt (2015) looked into the contextual and personal effects that have contributed to new teacher attrition. Menon (2012) examined the problems novice



teachers faced in Nicosia, Cyprus and to which degree head teachers are entrusted to give sufficient encouragement to them. Lindqvist, Nordanger, and Carlsson (2014) reported that teacher attrition is triggered by overworked, too much documentation, and the idea of changed professional goals. Brenneman (2015) reported that teachers are leaving the profession for personal reasons, a relatively new term in the factors that influence attrition among teachers. Donaldson (2008) provided an in-depth examination of the effect of highly challenging assignments and multiple subject assignments on new teachers' risk levels for attrition in their early years of teaching. Adding to the worry concerning the yearly percentage for all teachers, the constant increase in the percentage loss of new teachers has been mainly problematic in the education field (Boe et al., 2008). The problem of attrition with novice teachers is seen as primarily an individual school's problem rather than primarily an urban or disadvantaged school's problem (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011).

This concern is also reflected in a study that indicated that the conditions required to assist novice teachers in their progressive learning, development, and professional growth including mutual choices on essential subjects, cooperative work with others to attain objectives, and used-up teacher leadership ability (Brown & Schainker, 2008). Dowling (2008) indicated that retirement has no major part in teacher attrition, which is contrary to earlier research findings. The conditions that contribute to teacher retention or attrition continue to be investigated with different approaches from many researchers.

Some researchers have investigated the influence that a lack of support from the stakeholders may have on teachers' decisions to continue to teach or not in the public school. In a study exploring the support that new teachers receive during their first five

years of teaching, Menon (2011) indicated that respondents pointed to the necessity for lead teachers to improve their support via enhanced and frequent opened communication in the organizational environment. New teachers in their relationships with their head teachers also presented the lack of proper and consistent orientation and support as a major concern in their formative years of teaching (Menon, 2011).

Other factors that affect teacher attrition may be the result of teacher isolation and lack of collegial support (Afolabi, 2013). Afolabi (2013) also explained that some teacher attrition is inevitable because some teachers leave the profession for personal or family reasons, such as starting or expanding a family, or because of relocation. According to Greiner and Smith (2009), important factors influencing teacher attrition include sufficient teacher training, positive preservice practices, and primary school residency. I looked into these areas in the appropriate subsections in the literature search.

### **Teaching Assignments and Teacher Attrition**

The attrition of new teachers goes beyond the expected orientation support that novice teachers receive from their school districts, which may be insufficient. The preparation and the appropriateness of their teaching assignments need to be explored for possible cause of discomfort to new teachers who are unprepared to teach their assigned subjects. According to Donaldson and Johnson (2010), “Teachers who have more challenging assignments, split grades, multiple subjects, or out-of-field classes are greater risk of leaving their schools or resigning from teaching than those with single-grade, single-subject, or in-field assignments” (p. 318). In this study, I did not study teachers’ assignments in depth. Teachers’ assignments are still an area of great concern that should be further investigated. Teachers’ qualifications and their decisions to leave the profession

seem to also play a major role in novice teachers' decisions to leave the profession of teaching early.

According to Beteille, Klogridges, and Loeb (2012), inexperienced, minority, and female teachers are appointed to classes with unsuccessful students than are veteran, White, and male coworkers. The authors at the middle- and high-school levels explored the effects of these patterns on teacher attrition and achievement gaps. In their study on teacher assignments and attrition, Donaldson and Johnson (2010) also indicated that the main reason for leaving teachers who transfer often express is a sense of failure caused by their inability to efficiently teach their assigned subjects they feel do not correspond to their abilities. This assignment process would influence what subjects or grades teachers select to concentrate in. It seems that more effective teachers (as assessed by the data) are more prone to remain in the field, but are also more likely to remain in the schools (Boyd et al., 2008). This concern was further explored in this new study of teacher retention in a rural low- and mid-income school, which leads us to look into the minority teacher shortage in the public schools.

### **Attrition and Minority Teachers**

The minority teacher shortage is also important to understand in this study of attrition and retention of new teachers. Insight into the major components that affect minority teachers in their decisions to leave or to continue to teach may continue to provide valuable information for the foundation of this research. According to Kokka (2016), the longevity of teachers of color in urban schools is positively impacted by their intrinsic social emotional benefits earned from interactions with students as well as familiarity with the community. Lynch (2012) found that the majority of minority teachers who

leave the profession are affected by school curriculum and instruction, poor resources availability and facilities, and compensations. O’Harroll (2016) found that organizational factors to be a major contributors of attrition. According to Ingersoll and May (2011), data analyses in their study showed that there is a tenacious disparity exists between the proportion of minority students and the proportion of minority teachers in the US school system. Ingersoll and May also reported an overwhelming employment of minority teachers in public schools serving high-poverty, high-minority, and urban communities, which results in significantly higher turnover rates of minority teachers compared to White teachers.

However, according to Shirrell (2014), black teachers may be more affected by score policies when they work with higher percentages of black students. Karp (2014) also indicated that poor resources and low student achievement are major contributors to high teacher turnover among minority teachers. This is significant and valuable information that school policymakers can use in their efforts to develop appropriate working conditions that can positively influence minority teachers’ retention programs in the public schools that most need it.

### **Influence of Working Conditions on Teacher Attrition**

According to Dupiez, Delvaux, and Lothaire (2016), job conditions were demonstrated to have major influences over the first year in the field and the attrition rates. High-poverty urban schools have been the interest of a high number of researchers who continue to investigate the factors that contribute to teacher attrition in these types of schools. The National Academy of Education (2009) indicated that schools with higher teacher attrition also have poorer working situations (i.e., poorer administrative support,

training support facilities, teaching appointments, etc.). Boyd, Grossman, Ing, and Lankford (2010) investigated the influence of school administrators on teacher retention. This study utilized information on working situations from new teachers to obtain the influence of working conditions on the other teachers' turnover activities in the school.

Urban school systems are likely to have specific structural challenges that inhibit their abilities to effectively educate the most vulnerable students (Ahram, Stenbridge, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011). According to Almy and Tooley (2012), their research showed that among teachers working in high-poverty schools, the work environment, the quality of school leadership, and staff cohesion play greater roles in teacher attrition than students' behavior.

In addition, Buchanan (2009) indicated that negative attitudes and isolation of teachers new to the field have largely contributed to attrition among new teachers in the field. The failures of working conditions at school such as occupational health and safety problems, in addition to senior staff encouragement, were among worries Buchanan reported in this study. Buchanan also indicated that low hopes for promotion seem to be a barrier for teachers remaining in the field. The effect of school conditions seems to be a continuous important concern that needs newer exploration as conditions may have changed in the past few years. Newer information may bring new understanding of factors that currently affect teacher attrition or retention in the public school systems.

### **Contextual Factors of Teacher Attrition**

Other contributors to teacher attrition include relationships between school environmental issues and teacher retention decisions in poor, low-performing schools. While considerable research literature has recorded this phenomenon, fewer research attempt

was spent into understanding what characteristics of the working circumstances in these schools motivate these comparatively greater turnover rates (Boyd et al., 2009). The contextual factors also include interpersonal relationships at the school level that encourage trust and a sense of encouragement and belonging. Interaction between principals and teachers, for example, can play a decisive role in teachers' decisions to continue to work at a school. Research has shown that principals in particular have control over the structural environment of the schools where feedback from staff is welcome to create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Lupescu, & Easton, 2010).

Price (2012) explored how negative schools' climates appear in some schools and not others to discover that rapport between principals' and teachers influence satisfaction, unity, and dedication levels of teachers. School climates contributions are areas that should be explored for a realistic background on this exploration of teacher attrition and school context, as well as teacher preparation. Sass, Flores, Claeys, and Perez (2012) found that low performing schools have a higher rate of teacher turnover during testing. Hammerness and Matsko (2012) explored ways of addressing features of context that may help new teachers better understand and maintain commitment to urban teaching (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012).

The contextual influences on teacher attrition might include student issues as one of the factors of concern. Classroom management is often the root of many affecting issues in most studies. Schaefer, Long and Clandinin (2012) also investigated early career teacher attrition and retention to find that contextual factors like support, salary, and burnout to be of great influence on new teachers' decision to remain in the field. Po-

dolsky, Kini, Bishop and Darling-Hammond (2016) indicated that teaching conditions are major indicators of teachers' choices to remain or to leave the field of teaching. According to Borman and Dowling (2008), attrition rates are greater in schools with higher percentages of minority groups of students from low socioeconomic background.

Ewart (2009) indicated that the most common challenge for beginning teachers was classroom management and evaluation of students. Torres's (2011) recent findings suggested that teachers' knowledge, dedication, beliefs and standards, in addition to their distinct school's cultures affected their career decisions. Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2011) revealed that the strongest disruptional effects associated with teacher attrition are found in schools with large populations of low-performing and minority students. The contextual factor of teacher attrition is an important component that may provide different insights into the motivational factors behind the high turnover rates of new teachers. Insights that can be the foundation to future retention measures are most needed to improve the turnover rates among new teachers.

### **Teacher Preparation and Attrition**

Teacher preparation is a factor that plays an important role in teacher attrition, as well. The ability to teach with good pedagogical skills is reported to have a significant effect on new teachers' decisions to stay in the field. Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2012) indicated that there was a significant relation between attrition and pedagogy. New teachers who had been trained in teaching techniques and strategies, learning concept or child psychology, or supplies selection were most likely to remain in the field (Ingersoll et al., 2012). Findings from study by Allen (2013) indicated that some aspects of teacher development and retention might be positively affected by university encouragement of gradu-

ates around curriculum writing development during the training years. Lovett and Davey (2009) questioned the need for a one-size-fits-all approach to teacher preparation. According to Linek et al (2012), the majority of teachers who join the profession untraditionally are more likely to stop teaching within three years. However, retention rates among teachers who complete traditional four-year preservice training are significantly higher. DeAngelis, Wall, and Che (2013) found a direct correlation between preservice preparation quality and leaving the profession of teaching.

Forseille and Raptis (2016) explored the role for Future Teachers Clubs as an important influence in teacher induction and teacher retention. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), higher quality, more comprehensive, or intensive induction programs seem to have a greater effect on teacher-retention rates than lower quality programs. Results from a recent study by DeAngelis et al (2013) suggested that comprehensive support diminishes the correlation between preservice training and intention to leave. Reeves and Lowenhaupt (2016) found that even before formally arriving in the classroom, numerous teachers believe they will get leadership positions. Zhang and Zeller (2016) indicated that only type of preparation seems to have clear valid retention predictability in the teaching profession. The preparation of new teachers seems to play an important role in teacher retention. This area could also be further explored to gain newer insight into its effect on Joan School's teacher retention.

In a study on the subject of new-teacher attrition, Boyd et al. (2008) found that the academic failures of students in New York are generally associated with early departure of their middle school math teachers and their teachers in elementary school, compare to their colleagues who stay. This problem is also affecting schools across the country with



a similar type of turnovers. The attrition of teachers is not only affecting the teachers who are leaving the public school system, but it is also financially affecting school districts with the retraining of newer teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Currently, this is the most up to date information regarding expenditures related to hiring and retraining new teachers at least by national statistic. According to Florida Department of Education (2016) Data Report, no new data have been collected at the school level either.

Daughtrey (2010) indicated that because high-needs schools have more severe attrition problem, these costs are disproportionately absorbed by the school districts that can least afford them. The loss of teachers from affected schools can have a high financial cost and negative influence on students and teachers (Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011). According to Ronfeldt et al. (2011), “Though there may be cases where turnover is actually helpful to students’ achievement, on average, it is harmful” (p. 18). Teacher shortage has also affected specific personal and backgrounds characteristics that led some researchers to seek understanding on the effect of attrition on teachers’ genders and ethnicity.

This problem was also affecting the targeted local school where this study was conducted. No decrease has occurred in teachers’ turnover rates for the past 10 years at the school with an unfavorable effect on students’ learning progress, as measured by the students’ Florida Achievement Test scores and grades (Florida Department of Education, (2013) Data Report). There is no new data collected by the school, according to Florida Department of Education Data Report (2016). Because of their early departure from Joan School, a number of new teachers have not had the opportunity to grow professionally beyond two years. This trend could be curtailed with the understanding of the reasons for

the turnover at Joan School.

**Major reasons for teacher retention.**

Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) indicated that the poor retention rates between teachers and administrators have an unfavorable influence on student success in urban and economically deprived schools and is one of the reasons that policy-makers and educators concentrate on increasing retention rates among administrators and teachers. Beteille, Kalogrides, and Loeb (2012) also indicated there is a need for policy-makers and educators to improve teacher retention rates because of negative effect of teacher attrition on students performance. Retention measures that would allow these new teachers to grow and mature in the field of education could derive directly from answers to questions that focused on reasons for teachers' retention at this rural school. Solutions that would increase the retention of new teachers are necessary to help stabilize the overall academic progress of both teachers and students.

Williams, Edwards, Kuhel and Lim (2016) found that if positive cultural tendencies were nurtured in teacher candidates, they most likely would continue to teach in cultural school settings. Ronfeldt (2012) reported that teacher retention and student academic success are more attainable in easier-to-staff field placement schools. The problem of teacher retention in high-poverty urban schools has caught the interest of a number of researchers who have explored the solutions to the problem. Their findings continue to expose school officials to a variety of themes teachers report are essential to keeping them at their schools.

According to Lemons et al. (2015), teacher attrition is influenced by passion for the occupation, other prospects, hopes, worrying, people. In their investigation of reasons

for teacher attrition Struyen and Vanthournout (2014) found job gratification, school guidelines, assignments, future opportunities and relationships with parents to occupy an important role in teacher attrition. In addition, Swars, Meyers, Mays, and Lack (2009) registered five themes that teachers reported in their study on retention that were important to retaining them at their schools. These themes were (a) common standards, (b) exceptional student population, (c) administrative relations with teachers, (d) daily experiences of teachers, and (e) teachers' relationships with colleagues. These themes were fundamentally part of the Joan School culture.

The depth of the attrition problem among new teachers has many layers that continue to motivate researchers to seek understanding of the problem for appropriate solutions in prevention and intervention that can help reduce the loss of new teachers nationally and on a local level in the United States. Mittapalli (2008) also found that when autonomy in the classroom, job satisfaction, class sizes, and student discipline were not a problem, younger teachers are most likely to remain in the profession. The researchers of the same study also noted that student motivation and parent support play a major role in new teachers' decisions to continue to teach.

A reduction in teacher turnover may also decrease potential teacher shortages at the local school level. The need to further investigate some of the factors that contribute to teacher retention seem to be essential for the creation of effective measures of reduction in teacher attrition both on national and local levels. Effective intervention strategies that can successfully reduce attrition or simply increase the retention rates at one school may be applied in other schools with similar background and criteria. The study at Joan School might provide valuable information from which prevention programs could be

developed to continue to curtail attrition among new teachers.

### **Implications**

Research indicates that the path to mature and effective teaching is a process new teachers move toward gradually. Effective teaching positively affects students' learning. Students benefit from classroom stability with retention of effective new teachers, and the development of new teachers is important in the grooming process of new teachers. Factors such as personal characteristics of teachers, attributes of teachers' schools, student body composition, and resources have caused the crisis of teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008). School stakeholders should reduce these factors in their efforts to increase retention in schools nationwide.

Given the high rate of attrition during the first five years of teachers' careers, more proactive policies improve this attrition, from teacher preparation programs to the real world of schools and classroom (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Because teacher preparation seems to play a major role in new teachers' decisions to leave the profession early, as suggested by Ingersoll et al. (2012), better preparation should be put in place for novice teachers before entering classrooms. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggested that giving superior encouragement to novice teachers in their initial years of teaching is to additionally improve the teaching skills they have acquired during their preservice preparation and to help strengthen weaknesses that might influence them to leave the profession.

Serious attention must be paid to the problem of attrition among teachers in our public schools. Too many careers and talents are lost because appropriate solutions to the high turnover rates of novice teachers are not in place yet. The new generation of teachers that will teach the new generation of students must be prepared. New approaches to

teachers' preparation and retention should be developed in accordance with the factors presented by research findings.

### **Summary**

The attrition of new teachers in America has the attention of many researchers and is the concern of many high officials in the education systems across the country. Particular attention is given to urban public schools where the highest turnover rates have been recorded. According to State Impact (2014), Florida schools with a high percentage of low-income or minority students have a higher rate of teacher turnover.

Teacher attrition is caused by factors that can be improved with the appropriate solutions. Researchers have identified major factors that contribute to teacher attrition. Gonzalez, Brown, and Slate (2008) found lack of administrative support, difficulties with student discipline, and low salary level as the three most influential factors teachers reported for leaving. Price (2012) also found that principals' relationships with their teachers affected principals' and teachers' satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment levels. There is much more work that needs to be done to significantly reduce the high rates of new-teacher attrition. The attrition problem in public schools can be improved with the right approach to teacher retention programs. In Section 2, I describe the methodology for the study and introduce the project and the design of the research.

## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

A great number of researchers have studied attrition among new teachers. The goal of this study was to explore specific factors that contribute to the attrition of new teachers at a specific school. I used a qualitative case study approach that included interviews and observation. The original design of the study at the time of the proposal included the intention to review school district documents related to teacher retention. However, the collection of documents was not available to me because of school board policy. I interviewed nine participants and reviewed typed transcripts of collected data using member checking to confirm the accuracy of the data collected, comparing responses for differences in perspective. This section includes the research design and implementation.

### **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

This study used a qualitative case study design. The purpose of this study was to investigate the major factors that contribute to novice teachers' decisions to continue to teach at a selected Northeast Florida county public school during their first five years in the field. A qualitative design allowed for me to gather in-depth, comprehensive information for this research. This method supported the exploration of the guiding research question:

RQ: What major factors contribute to novice teachers' decisions to continue to teach at a selected Northeast Florida public school during their first five years in the field?

According to Merriam (2009), qualitative researchers are concerned with under-

standing how people explain their experiences, how they built their worlds, and what significance they attach to their experiences. I developed this study to identify and understand the major factors that may contribute to teacher retention at a particular Northeast Florida public school. Teachers were able to voice their opinions and concerns about their school's environments and administrative supports important to their growth as educators.

Because the qualitative research design uses questions that are about understanding participants' experiences, detailed information was collected to complete this study. Qualitative design uses inductive reasoning. According to Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010), "Inductive reasoning usually leads to inductive methods of data collection where the researcher systematically observes the phenomena under investigation, searches for patterns or themes in the observations, and develops a generalization from the analysis of those themes" (p. 5). Quantitative design, in contrast, is mostly associated with the hypothetic-deductive method. Hypotheses and methods of data collection in quantitative research are created before research begins (Lodico et al., 2010).

I selected a qualitative design as the appropriate design for this study because it allowed me to investigate the problem in its context. Because I aimed to create social change with this research, the participants' perspectives were important to understand. With this study, I was focused on teachers' points of view regarding what motivated them to continue to teach at their particular school.

### **Case Study**

According to Yin (2003), a case study is the method of choice when the fact under study is not easily noticeable from its context. According to Merriam (1998), qualitative

case study can be described as the real act of investigating, the component analysis (the bounded system, the case), or the result. Case studies allow researchers to have a deeper understanding of situations from those concerned. Merriam (2009a) suggested that awareness gathered from case studies could have a direct influence on policy, procedures, and research. According to Merriam (2009a), a case study is an extensive account and examination of a bounded set of principles. In a case study, data are usually derived from interviews, field observations, and documents. Merriam further indicated that making sense of these data could be challenging for the case study researcher. The author suggested that attention to data management is particularly important under these circumstances (Merriam, 2009a).

Merriam (1998) reported that educational research utilizes case study so that particular matters and problems of practice can be recognized and clarified. This is why qualitative case study was the most appropriate design for this study. Merriam (2009) also explained that the more intensive phase of case study begins with bringing all the data concerning the case together: interviews, records or transcripts, field notes, reports, records, the researcher's individual documents, physical traces, and insightful notes. All these materials need to be organized in a way that make data easily retrievable. Yin (2008) called this organized material the case study database. Patton (2002) looked at the case records as the compilation of all the major information that is used in case analysis and case study.

Researchers have studied attrition among new teachers for years. In 2015, the reasons for some teachers leaving the profession early in their careers may have changed because of new environmental, financial, and social conditions that may affect teacher



attrition. Given the changing nature of teacher concerns, a basis exists for exploration to determine the influential conditions at the local site; thus, there are no well-defined variables to be developed into hypotheses and tested within a quantitative context. According to Merriam (2009), “The hypotheses are not set out at the beginning of the study to be tested as in quantitative research” (p. 31). The identification of the major factors that support teacher retention are best identified within the bounded system of the local site, using a qualitative approach that supports the emergence of recurring patterns and themes among those who are experiencing the conditions under study. The exploration and identification of the factors that support teacher retention can provide a foundational base in the development of appropriate measures that can improve the overall retention of new teachers at that school. This investigation started with institutional review board (IRB) approval from Walden University.

### **Participants**

In this study, I collected data from Joan School. Joan School is the pseudonym chosen for this Northeast Florida public school where I conducted the study. It was a pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 school. Most participants were interviewed in their classrooms after school hours. Although the original design of the study incorporated the use of classroom observations of the participants, eight of the nine subjects did not consent to the observation component of the study.

Merriam (2009) indicated, “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 77). Researchers must determine specific selection criteria to assemble a sample of participants (Merriam, 2009). According to

Merriam, a list of certain attributes is necessary to accomplish a purposeful sampling procedure. The purposeful procedure is determined by the purpose of the study. Researchers must consider not only the criteria by which they select a certain sample, but also the reasons why certain attributes are required in the sample (Merriam, 2009). According to Creswell (2010), “Purposeful sampling is when researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (p. 206). In this study, participants were selected among teachers who had been teaching between one and five years at Joan School. Because all participants needed to meet eligibility criteria to participate in the study, purposeful sampling was the appropriate sampling technique for this research.

I selected the sample based on criterion-based selection. According to Merriam (2009), in criterion-based selection, a list of characteristics important to the study is created before the researcher continues to obtain a unit similar to the list cases. This method allowed teachers in this study to be selected based on their years of service. I selected the teachers because they were novice teachers in their fifth year of teaching. The participants consisted of nine new teachers who began their teaching career at the school, as well as teachers who transferred from another Florida public school or school system in their fifth year of teaching. This sample size allowed me to obtain more detailed and in-depth information about the phenomenon that was investigated. It was also a small school, so a sample size of 8–10 teachers who met the criteria to participate in the study was justifiable. The final study included data from nine teachers.

I selected the participants for this study among identified new teachers in the regular population, SE teachers, and teachers who transferred from another school or school

system who had been teaching between one and five years at the school where the study was conducted. These teachers were from Grades 3, 4, 7, and 11. Table 1 lists the demographic descriptions of the participants:

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Participant	Years teaching	Grade level taught	Gender	Race	Type of interview
Participant 1	2 years	7th grade	Male	Caucasian	Unrecorded phone
Participant 2	4 years	7th grade	Female	Caucasian	Unrecorded phone
Participant 3	4 years	8th grade	Male	Caucasian	Unrecorded face-to-face
Participant 4	1 year	5th grade	Female	Hispanic	Unrecorded face-to-face
Participant 5	4 years	5th grade	Female	Caucasian	Recorded face-to-face
Participant 6	4 years	4th grade	Male	Caucasian	Recorded face-to-face
Participant 7	1 year	3rd grade	Female	Caucasian	Unrecorded phone
Participant 8	1 year	10th grade	Female	Caucasian	Recorded face-to-face
Participant 9	5 years	11th grade	Female	Caucasian	Recorded face-to-face

*Note:* Participant 9 was the only person who agreed to a classroom observation.

**Access to Participants**

The participants who were eligible for inclusion in the study were identified by the school district of Joan School after I provided a letter of introduction to the school. I

sent a letter describing my study and the criteria for participation in the study to the stakeholder in charge of research and development. A copy of the informed consent and the interview guide forms were also attached to my introduction letter. The stakeholder authorized his department to provide me with a list of teachers who met the criteria for participating in the study, with emphasis on the voluntary aspect of the study. I had direct access to all potential candidates. I contacted all potential participants via email after IRB approval from Walden University (10-09-14-0231762) to introduce the project with an informed consent form. I then met with six of the potential participants for approximately 30 minutes to introduce the study and review the informed consent form. I scheduled all interviews a week later with these participants. These participants were interviewed face-to-face. Three of the nine participants contacted me via phone to discuss the purpose of the study and the consent forms. I conducted phone interviews with these three participants a week later.

I conducted all interviews after reviewing the signed consent form with each participant. I made sure that participants understood the purpose of the study, their risks, their rights and the voluntary aspect of their participation. Participants had the right to withdraw and not answer questions they did not feel comfortable to answer. Four participants agreed to be audio recorded out of the nine who were interviewed; the other five requested that only notes be taken during the interviews. For those who agreed to be recorded, audio recording was completed with a hard disk recorder; a transcript was prepared from each audio recording with the help of Dragon Naturally Speaking speech-to-text software and later reviewed with each participant for accuracy of the data collected. The interviews for the other five participants were handwritten and also reviewed with

participants after transcripts were typed for accuracy.

Although the original design of the study included multiple classroom observations of the participants, only one teacher agreed to be observed. The observation was completed to align with the original design. This observation generated only a limited amount of data for the purposes of triangulation, and the identified themes were extracted almost entirely from the interview data.

I made sure that participants understood what the study was about and how their privacy would be respected. All one-on-one interviews were conducted after school hours in the participants' classrooms. No interruptions occurred during the interviews. All recording gears were set up before the interviews. All interviews were also conducted in the rear of the classroom to avoid any outside distraction. Phone interviews were conducted on weekends. I emphasized on the voluntary nature of participation in the research. I also showed respect and sensitivity to the culture and context from which participants were recruited.

Participants in this study were healthy individuals. The participants in the study included nine teachers, three from the middle school, five from the high school, and one from the elementary school. All gathered data remained confidential throughout the duration of the study and were secured in my home office under lock and key. Data will be destroyed five years after the study is completed. The potential risks for participating in this study were unlikely and overall low. There was no prospective physical risk as a result of participation in this research study. There were no questions in this research study with potential influence on participants' mental wellbeing. Participants were only asked about their years of service. These questions had a small likelihood of low psychological

risk.

All participants were given a formal Statement of Consent Form to review and the interviewer also verbally explained the form before conducting interviews. All participants signed the forms to indicate that they understood the terms of their participation in the research study, that they have the right to refuse to answer any question with which they are not comfortable, and that the information collected from them would be kept strictly confidential. The informed consent also provided participants with the understanding that their employment status would not be affected as a result of participating in this research study.

Participants were free to refuse to respond to any question that may result in psychological disruption. Information I collected was only used for research purposes, and will never become part the school's personnel records. These precautions were strictly reinforced and clearly communicated to participants to successfully remove risks linked to their participation in this research study. I also explained confidentiality; "In this study we did not anticipate a situation where confidentiality could not be guaranteed at the school setting where yearly surveys are always confidential" (J. Gordon, 7th grade teacher, personal communication, April 7, 2015). Collected data was secured to avoid breach of confidentiality, even though participants' real names were not used in the research.

No identifying information from participants was attached to participants' responses during preparation for data analysis. Prior to data analysis, all names and other identifying information collected from interviews and observations of participants were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Information is stored on my password-protected personal computer hard drive and will be destroyed after five years.

The participants were not exposed to risks greater than the ones they encounter in their regular daily lifestyles. Participants were asked about factors in the procedure that might be risky to them so proper measures could be in place to avoid risk. Researcher contact information and contact information for the Walden IRB was provided to participants in case questions rose. The data-collection process took two weeks to complete. Data collected were stored on a desktop computer in my home office and will be backed up in an external drive.

### **Data Collection**

For this qualitative research study, data were collected via interviews and observation. Though the initial design of the study included observation data for each participant, the collection of observation data was not possible for most of the participants because of the timing of the data collection and unwillingness on the part of the participants to consent to this aspect of data collection. In addition, the original design had to be modified to remove the review of school documentation, as there was no school documentation available to me. It was clearly indicated by the stakeholders in charge of school research and accountability that the school district would not provide any document that might identify the district, the school, or its teachers. This restricted the design to interviews and a single observation.

According to Merriam (2009), data are simply ordinary small portions of information found in the setting. The researcher uses data collection techniques and the precise information considered to be data in a study that are decided by his theoretical orientation, the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected” (p. 86). The data collection process for this study began after IRB approval was granted by Walden

University (10-09-14-0231762) and the school's stakeholders have granted permission to provide access to study participants.

Participants were informed of the data collection procedure during the briefing and the informed consent session. I scheduled a meeting with all participants after permission to do so was granted by individuals in authority at the school to discuss the purpose of the study, ethical protection of the participants, type of measures for protection of participants' rights, confidentiality issues, informed consent, and protection from harm. All participants were informed of the objectives of the investigation, as well as all aspects of the research. Participants were informed of the duration of the study. All other aspects of the research were explained to participants who inquire about such information including criteria for selection in the study.

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

Merriam (2009) suggested that in education and in most applied fields, interviewing might be the most common data-collection method used in qualitative studies. Interviewing is a tool that allows for understanding behavior that cannot be observed, as well as feelings and how people understand the world around them. The interview process began after participants signed all consent forms and a specific time and place were agreed upon between participants and myself.

Selected participants (teachers) were interviewed individually for a period of 30 to 45 minutes about their decisions to continue to teach beyond their fifth years at this particular school. Some interviews took place in teachers' classrooms during teachers' prep time at a mutually agreed upon time. Some interviews were conducted via telephone. The interview process was used to gather first-hand detailed information of the



participants' feelings about factors that may contribute to their decisions to continue to teach at this particular school.

Materials used during the data collection process included the informed consent form, interview guide (Appendix B), and observation checklist (Appendix C). Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes. I conducted four interviews with a digital recorder, complimented with handwritten notes. Data were collected from the other five interviews using only my handwritten notes, as the participants did not agree to be recorded. Trustworthiness was implemented using member checking. I allowed participants to look over typed transcripts and summaries of the interviews in the case of those without transcripts to assure that my recording was accurate and complete, and to make any corrections or additions following their review. Out of the four audio-recorded participants, corrections were made by two during the member checking process who deleted words they felt were inappropriate and incorrect in their response to the role of administrative support on teacher retention. The observation took place after the interviews using the Classroom Observation Checklist (Appendix C). Data from the interviews were digitally recorded and were stored on a computer hard drive. Notes were handwritten in a notebook and on the interview guide.

Interviews were audio recorded only with the permission of the participant. Collected audio data were transcribed using transcriber software and reviewed daily with notes after each interview. A follow-up session was scheduled to review typed transcripts to clarify any discrepancy or unclear data collected during the audio-recorded interviews with the participants. I informed participants of this procedure during the briefing and the informed-consent session. Transcribed data collected were stored on a desktop computer

at my home office and were backed up in an external drive for additional security.

The participants' interactions with students, classroom-management skills, and classroom environment were intended be observed in their classrooms for first-hand information about their environments. The primary goal of observation was to collect information that are precise and naturalistic and reproduce the authenticity of the situation as seen by the participants (Lodico et al., 2010). The raw data the observations produced were anticipated to contribute to the basis for the results and conclusions for the study established by the interviews.

Though the original design of the study included observations for all participants, permissions were not given for this element of data collection, and only one observation took place. The observation took place in the classroom after the participant was interviewed. The observation was a follow-up session to compare participants' responses to questions that could be observed in the classroom environment. The classroom observation lasted 50 minutes, or the duration of a class period. I developed an observation list to provide guidelines during the observation based on Creswell's (2010) process of observation (see Appendix C).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I had a nonparticipant observer role as the researcher in this study. I had no authority over any potential participants. I was an outsider who was granted permission to collect data from teachers on major factors that contributed to teacher retention. Because I was not familiar with these individuals or their motivations for teaching, I was able to avoid bias. I also made a conscious effort throughout the data collection and analysis process to avoid anticipating the outcome (Pannucci & Wilkins, 2010).

As noted in the instrumentation section, I encountered barriers during the execution of this study. The original site selected for this study did not ultimately grant approval for the data collection. The site selected in its place supported the interview component of the design, but district policy did not allow access to documents that could have provided additional information about the school to contribute to this study. In addition, the teachers at the local site were not comfortable with observations, and only one teacher agreed to participate in this element of the study. These restrictions required flexibility and responsiveness as the researcher, demanding an ability to adapt to the barriers that were encountered once data collection began at the site.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis of data occurred throughout the study as I collected the data. I carefully collected pieces of data that were labeled, and organized to facilitate the ongoing analysis. The sources of data included in the analysis were interviews and a classroom observation. Creswell (2009) suggested that by completely reading all the data to gain the information, data could be organized for data analysis. This involved coding and the identification of themes. The procedures described in the subsequent sections will be used to describe the process of data analysis in this study.

The data analysis process involved inductive data analysis. Thomas (2006) referred to inductive data analysis as approaches that mainly employ in depth readings of raw data to develop concepts, themes, or a model through interpretations created from the raw data by an evaluator or researcher. A particular strength of this data analysis method is the fact that the process is inductive with the results emerging from the gathered data (Tracy, 2013). In addition, this type of analysis is not fixed with a specific beginning and

end to each stage (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Rather, this type of analysis enables a researcher to immerse themselves in the data by moving back and forth between the stages as needed (Saldana, 2012).

### **Interview Analysis**

The interview process began after participants reviewed and signed the informed consent form, and each participant was interviewed individually. Five participants did not wish to be audio recorded. Data from these participants were handwritten, capturing as much data as possible without the benefit of recording. Typed notes were reviewed with each participant later to assure completeness and accuracy. There was no correction made by these participants. In these cases, I used field notes exclusively to provide data for analysis.

The other four participants did consent to recording. The four audio-recorded interviews were transcribed with the help of Dragon Naturally Speaking speech-to-text software, which was selected for its efficiency and cost-effective transcription. I reviewed the typed transcripts later with the participants once transcription was completed to assure completeness and accuracy as I did with the participants who did not consent to the recording. Out of the four audio-recorded participants, corrections were made by two who deleted words they felt were inappropriate and incorrect in their response to the role of administrative support on teacher retention. I also used field notes to supplement the transcripts of these interviews.

The interviews provided the bulk of the data for analysis, but additional insights did stem from the single classroom observation that one participant consented to. Because of school policy, documents relevant to this research were not available as an addi-

tional data point per the original study design. Thus, interview data and the associated field notes were the primary sources of data, supplemented with the data gathered from the classroom observation.

### **Classroom Observation Analysis**

As a nonparticipant observer, I observed the classroom for a period of 50 minutes. I documented the teacher's interaction with students, her classroom management, classroom condition, and teaching comfort. I later compared these observations to the participant's statements from the interview regarding demonstrated teaching ability, classroom conditions, and working condition. Data from the classroom observation were collected following the observation guideline (see Appendix C).

The teacher observed was Participant 9, a fifth year teacher. The participant demonstrated good rapport with her students. She never had to raise her voice inappropriately; she showed respect for her students and vice versa. The participant's classroom managements skills allowed her to keep students focused and on task. She walked around the classroom and gently touched and redirected students to the lesson. She also asked questions about the last paragraph that was read in the classroom and reminded students that they would lose points for poor classroom participation. This participant was well prepared to teach her class. Lesson was introduced as well as the lesson's objectives and goals. Two students were assigned to distribute and collect all materials. All classroom expectations were reviewed with students at the beginning of the lesson. The classroom was spacious and conducive for teaching and learning. There were artifacts that reflected the social study class she was teaching strategically placed on the walls around the room. There were 22 students in the class. There were two reading areas where students could

quietly read. There was no disturbing outside noise level that interfered with the class.

The class was also located near the school library.

### **Coding and Extraction of Themes**

To begin the analysis process, I read and reread the interview transcripts and notes from the classroom observation. I highlighted repeated words and concepts with different colors to note similarities and frequency. I wrote observation about patterns, phrases, and meanings on the transcripts. Once familiar with the transcripts, I began the coding process. During this stage, I highlighted units of raw data and assigned a code like teacher preparation, administrative support, school environment, working conditions, and students characteristics. A code is a phrase used to describe a unit of data (Tracy, 2013). According to Lodico et al. (2010), coding is the process of identifying different portions of the data that explain connected occurrences and labeling these parts using comprehensive category names. An example of codes with associated raw data is reported in Table 2.

Table 2

*Examples of Codes and Associated Raw Data*

Codes	Raw data
Teacher preparation	<p>Without teacher preparation I would not be able to complete my first year as a teacher.</p> <p>The teacher preparation allowed me to be exposed to the reality of teaching.</p>
Administrative support	<p>Good administrative support is important for me to continue to teach at the school.</p> <p>Administrative support is the key to teaching longevity.</p>
School environment and working conditions	<p>It makes it easier to teach in a positive working environment.</p> <p>The working conditions here are favorable to teacher retention.</p> <p>Poor working conditions make it hard for effective teaching.</p> <p>Who wants to teach in a crazy working environment?</p>
Student characteristics	<p>Student's behavior and attitude toward learning is important to continue to teach at this school.</p> <p>We do not have a student discipline here at the school.</p>

Once I coded all transcripts, I began the axial coding process. I identified relationships among the initial codes by analyzing and color-coding the answers. Parts of the individual interview related to the factors of teacher attrition /retention were labeled in the margins. I highlighted phrases that I examined the codes for similarities and grouped them together in like categories. I also reviewed all interview answers individually, and then compared them for similarities. I counted and separated the number of category headings generated from the data. The observation data was minimal because I only conducted one classroom observation. Classroom environment and students characteristics were significant, however, and although the data gathered from this single observation is inherently limited, the data did contribute insights that aligned with those revealed through the transcripts.

The categories that I created were then explored to find links between categories. Links could consist of relationships, commonalities, or processes (Saldana, 2012). I joined categories that had a connection. This process continued until no further reduction was possible. I carefully looked at the frequency list and all of the coding to identify themes. I aligned themes from this analysis with the research questions, as well as the literature review for this study. I marked the major themes on a separate paper. I read the transcripts many times to make sure that coding for themes were accurate.

These final groupings became the themes and associated subthemes that comprised the results of the study. These themes were teacher preparation, student characteristics, school environmental working conditions, and administrative support. These themes provided insight into the motivating factors for continuing to teach after the first five years in the educational field, appearing in a variety of answers that emphasized the



importance of good teacher preservice programs, survival, and safety in classroom and school environment, corroboration and respect among staff and students, and being supported.

**Theme 1: Teacher preparation.** There was a strong indication that without a very good program that allowed student teachers to work fulltime in the classroom to prepare them, they would feel lost. The decision to even look for a teaching position after the internship was based on the training they received. Participant 4 said that without the teacher preparation program, she would not have been able to complete her first year as a teacher. Participant 4 also explained,

The teacher preparation allowed me to be exposed to the reality of teaching. I was able to practice what I have learned during my internship at a school similar to this one in demographics. I know things can get better with more experience. This is the end of the school year, and it was a very challenging first year for me as a new teacher at this school. I could not be here without a good teacher preparation program!

Participant 5 explained that teacher preparation was huge for starting her off on the right foot with teaching. Most importantly, her program taught her to think and read critically about teaching, and she also had a student teaching experience with an excellent teacher. Participant 5 stated, “Seeing all that goes in to a well-run and functional classroom gave me so much information before I started teaching.” The subthemes that were identified for teacher preparation were survival, experience and determination.

**Survival.** Participants indicated that preparation in an environment close or similar to the one they were hired to teach was extremely important to the survival of a novice

teacher. Participant 7 stated that teacher preparation helped her adjust to the school environment. She was hired this year after she completed her internship as a student teacher at the school. When asked to explain further, Participant 7 elaborated,

Student preparation program really helped me understand this crazy environment. It can get very confusing here at times. You do not have the help you need sometimes; you are practically on your own as a new teacher. I was here last year. It helped. Yes, the teacher preparation has a lot to do with me coming back here next year!

Participants also indicated that teachers had more strength to face some of the challenges that presented to them in their initial years of teaching, because of their teacher preparation program training at school with similar environment as the one they teaching in. Participant 8 explained how teacher preparation helped her start on the right foot with teaching. She, too, elaborated on how the program taught her to think critically, which is important to her competency in the classroom as a teacher. The role of teacher preparation as a retention factor in this study seemed to be of most importance to participants because it reduces trial and errors for new teachers.

***Experience.*** Participants indicated that teachers' experience plays an important role in the longevity of their career. Participants explained that experience provides the maturity and the security that teachers need to become highly effective. It takes more than six years to fully understand what is really going on in the school system, Participant 1, the second year teacher explained. He also indicated that experience is very important to become fully effective as a teacher. "Experience only comes with time spent in the field," he said. Participant 2, a fourth year teacher, explained that veteran teachers ap-

proach teaching with more maturity and confidence, that they had time to learn and perfection their teaching skills.

According to Barnwell (2015), it takes many educators a decade or even longer to become truly effective in their craft. Participant responses to teacher experience seemed to also indicate that respect in the field is gradually buildup with time. “There is more security and less discomfort in the classroom because of greater knowledge and better teaching skills. Excellent classroom managements skills can only be acquired with time,” Participant 9, a fifth grade teacher said.

***Determination.*** Teachers expressed a strong sense of commitment and purpose in their response to the question about value and attitude that contributed to their decision to remain in the field as teachers. Participant 6 said that his commitment to make things better at the school has motivated him when things seem difficult. The commitment to teach seemed to have a strong effect on how participants approach and cope with their daily tasks as teachers. “The values and attitudes that contributed to teachers’ decisions to continue to teach were a belief that all children can learn and deserve a good education,” said Participant 3. Participant 5 explained that her commitment to teaching as a career has helped her for the past three years during her difficult moments at the school. Participant 5 was asked to elaborate further on her answer and she said,

I am determined to complete this fourth year because of my commitment to teaching. I know that with more experience I will feel more secure. I need to be the best I can be. If you are not committed to teaching, things will get on your nerves, you will leave and do something else after the first year especially if there is little administrative support.

Participant 9 explained how her commitment to succeed as a teacher has allowed her to work harder and to look at herself first during time of hardship. Participant 9 noted, “I always have to remember why I am teaching. It is not an easy job. If you are not fully committed to teaching, this is not the career for you.”

**Theme 2: Administrative support.** One of the most important factors that surfaced as motivating factors for teacher retention were administration (being supportive, respectful, informed, or educated) and staff (supportive, friendly, and professional community.) Administrative support seemed on top of every participant’s list in this study as a reason to continue to teach. “Administrative support plays a huge role in her decision to continue to teach,” said Participant 7. However, micromanagement would be a strong attrition factor, she indicated. This sentiment was almost common among the participants in this study.

Participant 1 indicated that because of the support he received from the administrative staff, he is able to survive his 2nd year as a teacher. He felt encouraged to be the best he can be after a weak first year in the field. Administrative support is essential and it gives teachers autonomy and tools, said Participant 1. “Teachers usually stop teaching in first few years. If you make it past five years without administrative support it’s probably you have a life-long job!” said Participant 5. This participant also indicated that she transferred from another school because of poor administrative support. Her commitment to teaching did not allow her to quit like she contemplated so many times during her first year in the field, she said. This participant was a 4-year teacher when she was interviewed. Respect and autonomy were the subthemes that were identified for administrative support.

*Respect and autonomy.* Teacher autonomy and administrative support were also important reasons participants in this study gave for continuing to teach. Participants expressed a need to be guided and not be thrown at the mercy of trial and errors in a complex system as novice teachers. However, the negative effect of micromanagement was strongly emphasized on by participants. Participant 1 expressed this concern:

I do not want anyone from the administration or any staff member to breathe down my neck. I would feel very uncomfortable with this practice. Sometimes a front desk administrative assistant can make your life miserable by scrutinizing every move you make as a new teacher. I would leave teaching before I act stupid.

Participant 7 simply said,

That's what keeps me coming. Administrative support is the key to teaching longevity. I need to feel independent and not overwhelmed with directions. I need the support of the administration, but do not make me feel like I cannot think on my own.

**Theme 3: School environment and working conditions.** The current school environment seemed to be very appreciated by participants in this study, according to their response to the research question about school conditions and teacher retention. School environment included students; staff in general, classroom sizes, settings, as well as working conditions. There was a general sense of acceptance of the school's environment by participants in this study. However, there seemed to be a need to reduce stress caused by too many dumb mandates or discouraging issues that can affect teachers' ability to teach as expressed by Participant 9. "This can be a deterrent to teacher retention."

this participant said, “No matter what, if there is no encouragement and support from the administrative staff you are not comfortable teaching. The working conditions are very important for me to work effectively. I could not take micromanagement and overcrowded classroom.”

Participant 3 offered this explanation when asked to elaborate on his brief answer regarding the effect of school working conditions on teaching:

The working conditions here have improved for the last two years. It makes it easier to teach. My first year at the school was not comfortable at all. It took too long before materials were distributed to teach, and administrative support was very poor. These working conditions made it difficult to teach. You need to feel comfortable to teach effectively. Safety was identified as a subtheme for school environment and working conditions.

**Safety.** Participants expressed a need to feel safe as part of their working conditions. They want to feel safe with their colleagues and their administrators. Participant 4 said that she would feel uncomfortable working with people she does not trust, including the administrators. Participants also extended safety to the student population and the school environment. “We do not need to have overcrowded classrooms and cafeteria at the school either,” said Participant 2.

**Theme 4: Student characteristics.** Participants also indicated that students’ characteristics and attitude play a major role in their decision to continue to teach at their school. They expressed feelings of gratitude about the students’ general attitude toward learning. This is an encouraging factor of retention for participants “The families and students are focused, respectful, and dedicated. They (students) want to work and learn,”

said Participant 4. Participant 7 offered this explanation:

This is one element we do not have to worry much about here. I do not think that I would be able to deal with that on top of this. This is my first year teaching. There is so much to do. The students here are well behaved for the most part. It makes a big difference.

Participant 8, also a first year teacher, said that student characteristics and attitude are important for her survival at the school. She offered this explanation after she was asked to clarify her answer it is a positive contribution to her decision to continue to work at the school. She would leave for another school in the district, if she had to deal with very difficult students daily in her classroom. Participant 9 indicated that because of general student characteristics and attitude she worked harder to remain at the school for the past four year. She was completing her fifth year as a new teacher at that school in June 2015 when the interview was conducted.

Overall, participants made clear mention of administrative support and school environment/ conditions as the most important factors that have contributed to their decision to continue to teach at their school. Participants 1, 3, 5, and 7 simply said, administrative support and school conditions. Participant 2 said,

I would not work where there is no administrative support and where I worry about unnecessary distractions. I want to come to work every day here. You know? Administrative support and a trusting school environment are very important to me as a teacher.

Participant 9 expressed great satisfaction with the working conditions and her rapport with the administrative staff at the school. "I feel like I can express myself to my admin-

istrators, and this is a good teaching environment,” she said. “Who does not want to teach in an environment like this?”

### **Research Findings**

I reviewed 29 pages typed pages and 31 handwritten notes and compared them in the analysis. The findings from the data collected from the interviews were very similar to the findings from the literature review. Participants in this study placed great importance to administrative support, schools characteristics, teacher preparation, school environment, and working conditions as major contributing factors to teacher retention.

Students’ characteristics and attitudes were not elaborated upon as much as other dominants themes in the study. It should be noted that the school where the study was conducted did not have a noticeable discipline problem during the interview process time. Participants, nevertheless, saw students’ characteristics as an important factor in their desire to continue to teach at their school. The themes that derived from the classroom observation were students’ characteristics. The willingness to learn and the respect that the students displayed during the observation illustrated teacher’s responses regarding students’ characteristics role in teacher retention.

### **Trustworthiness of Data**

For this study, trustworthiness and credibility of the results were improved using the triangulation process. Creswell (2009) explained since data triangulation includes the utilization of a variety of sources of information so that the validity of a study may be greater, participants’ responses will be examined for areas of differences and areas of similarities. In this investigation, I examined all the data collected for this qualitative-method study’s interviews. Data from audio recorded and notes were compared. Member



checking was done by validating the interview data with the participants.

I applied the member checking method to make sure no misinterpretation occur of interviewees' statements. Creswell (2010) defined member checking as "a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account" (p. 259). Member checking was implemented by asking participants to review and comment on the draft from the interviews and the observation. The participants may be asked to make appropriate corrections, such as deleting their own words from the narratives if necessary, as well as elaborating and clarifying (Carlson, 2010).

The transcripts of the four participants who agreed to be recorded were reviewed with each participant for accuracy. In addition, audio-recorded interviews were reviewed along with handwritten notes and typed transcripts from the interviews with the participants who agreed to the audio recording. Out of the four audio-recorded participants, corrections were made by two who deleted words they felt were inappropriate and incorrect in their response to the role of administrative support on teacher retention. Participant 9 clarified one question and indicated how important administrative support was to her survival as a new teacher during her first year in the field. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed with Dragon Naturally Speaking speech-to-text software.

Field notes from the participants who did not want to be recorded were also provided to those participants for any additions, deletions, or corrections. No participant who chose not to be recorded indicated a need for corrections. Hand written and typed notes were also reviewed with the five participants who did not consent to be audio –recorded. There was no correction made by participants who agreed to the accuracy of the notes.

A case-study researcher must verify the results of the study immediately after all

data is collected, produced, and reported before distributing the last report (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). One of the strategies for confirming results was to demonstrate how multiple sources were used for information leading to the findings in the study. Merriam (2009) noted that “using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observation at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people” (p. 216). Section 2 presented a detailed understanding of the type of methodology that was appropriate for a case-study research design investigating teacher retention.

### **Discrepant Case**

In case of discrepancies in the patterns, follow-up interviews would have been conducted to confirm or correct information previously collected. According to Creswell (2009), discrepant cases can be dealt with by discussing evidence about the theme. The researcher can also present information that contradicts the general perspective of the theme (Creswell, 2009). Creswell also indicated, “By presenting this contradictory evidence, the account becomes more realistic and hence valid” (p. 192). In this case study, there was no follow-up interview conducted, as the data codes and themes were relatively consistent across the participants and no discrepant cases were identified.

### **Conclusion**

The methodology for this case-study research design had two levels of purposeful sampling (Merriam, 2009). The guiding question for this research was explored by first purposefully selecting the case according to pre-established criteria. The next level was an explanation of how the sample of people, the activities, or the documents were select-

ed. In Section 2, I provided a detailed plan about how participants were selected and how data were collected for this study followed by the data analysis and triangulation processes. Interviews, field notes, and observation were the main methods used to address the guiding question of this case-study research. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative data analysis must be performed together with data collection.

In Section 3, I introduce the project. This section will begin with the introduction of the project followed by subsections including description and goals, rationale, review of literature, implementation, potential barriers, proposal for implementation, and timetable. Other subsections will include project evaluation; implications including social change, local community, far reaching; and the conclusion.

## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

Based on the findings of this study, I created a professional development program for the school district under study. This section presents the features of the project, establishing the basis for the recommended professional development by using the findings of this study in relation to related literature. This section includes a full discussion of the resources necessary to implement the professional development program, as well as the necessary supports, responsibilities, timetable, and possible barriers to the professional development program. I conclude this section with the project evaluation and an examination of the implications for social change.

### **Description and Goals**

#### **Description of the Professional Development Program**

This professional development program (Appendix A) was created to provide new teachers in this Northeast Florida public school district with the necessary support to meet their needs and improve their job satisfaction, and in so doing hopefully enhance retention in the district. Section 2 explored reasons why teachers would continue to teach at a Northeast Florida public school district, and these reasons provided insights that formed the basis for this professional development program. The findings from this study provided the map to develop a list of recommendations aimed at reducing the attrition rates among new teachers at this Northeast Florida public school district.

#### **Goal of the Professional Development Program**

The goal of this professional development program is to engage school staff members in educational meetings to respond to the identified retention factors identified

by participants in the study in order to create and implement a list of suggested retention programs that school administrators may use to support teachers' concerns for attrition reduction. Data collected during the interviews indicated multiple factors that contributed to their decisions remain at the school under study. The main factors identified were teacher preparation, administrator support, school environment and working conditions, and students' characteristics. Therefore, school administrators will be provided with the following comprehensive proposal for a professional development program to educate administrative staff about the importance of their support to their teachers, especially their novice teachers. Administrators' roles in teacher retention should be prioritized. This proposal will also include the development of a mentoring program that educates and encourages veteran teachers to be supportive of new teachers at the school where the study was conducted. In addition, ways to improve and maintain positive school environment with all staff involvement will be explored. The last goal of this proposal is to improve communication between the school and the colleges/universities to better coordinate student teacher placement and preparation.

### **Rationale**

A professional development program that offers workshops grounded on the findings from the study interviews was chosen as the project format. As previously noted in the section 2, the findings from the data collected from the interviews were very similar to the findings from the literature review. Data collected during the interviews indicated many factors contribute to novice teachers' intentions to continue to teach at the school where the study was conducted. The main factors identified from those data were teacher preparation, administrative support, school environment and working conditions, and stu-

dent characteristics. These themes provide a basis for what was working in the district, and this provides an opportunity to enhance existing strengths.

Teachers, administrators, and other supporting staff members at the school would benefit from the professional development program's guidance to develop new skills and improve in areas important to the retention of new teachers at this Northeast Florida school district. All staff from the school would have a unique opportunity to share information and understand the importance of teacher retention and the strategies designed to enhance it. Gulamhussein (2013) indicated that new approaches developed by school districts have the ability to produce effective changes in teacher practice and increase student achievement. According to Bambrick-Santoyo (2013), a professional development program is a widely used system of facilitating teacher development.

Professional development programs can be used as a format to assist local schools in their efforts to improve the conditions of their school and increase teacher retention. Detailed documentation of novice teachers' points of view on the factors that may affect their decisions to stay in the teaching profession are important steps toward developing efficient retention programs.

Teacher preparation and administrative support, as well as a conducive school environment and working conditions for teaching and learning, were major factors for teacher retention that emerged from this study. The majority of the participants in this study indicated that the school's environmental conditions gave them no serious reason for contemplating leaving for another school or district. Vegas et al. (2012) explained that working conditions in schools would have to change if they are to keep the more academically skilled new teachers to improve the attrition problem.

Participants in this study provided significant information on the motivating factors behind their decision to continue to teach at their school that can be improved with professional development training. Administrators and teaching staff can group together to be informed about retention factors for their school and learn how to implement these factors. Thus, the need to implement retention measures that will benefit both teachers and students should be prioritized. A retention project based of the findings is an appropriate step that can be taken to improve job satisfaction for teaching and learning stability at this Northeast Florida public school district.

The purpose of this professional development program is to create opportunities for novice teachers to adapt and grow in the environment in which they teach. Students will ultimately benefit from the stabilization of teachers at their school. Therefore, the staff development program will focus on administrative support for veteran and novice teachers, the importance of a mentoring program, establishing a positive school environment, and better coordination of student teacher placement and preparation

### **Review of the Literature**

The following literature review was developed to link prior research with the results of the current study, specifically within the context of the major factors that contribute to novice teachers' decisions to continue to teach during their first five years in the field and the tenets of the proposed professional development program that serves as the deliverable for this study.

This literature review was based on the importance of the themes that were presented from the interview data, mainly teacher preparation, administrative support, school environment and working conditions, and student characteristics. The exploration of

these areas for this literature review provided a better understanding on how to effectively approach and develop the comprehensive professional development program that constituted the project.

### **Teacher Preparation**

The first theme to emerge from the current study was teacher preparation, wherein participants spoke at length about their feelings on the teaching internship, specifically how it was one of the driving factors in keeping them in their profession. In addition to the role the internship played in maintaining these individuals in their positions, participants also spoke in regard to survival as a novice teacher and how the facets of experience and determination helped in teacher preparation. In the reviewed literature, the concept of teacher preparation was a key finding in numerous past research studies. Ronfeldt, Schwartz, and Jacob (2014) found that teachers who completed more methods-related coursework and practice teaching felt better equipped and were most likely to remain in the field.

Shabbir et al (2016) stated that teacher training is a significant tool for quality management because it allows for staff development skills to be sharpened, which contributes towards a continuously upgraded system. Farrell (2016) investigated the effect of reflective practice in the field of education in teacher development programs, indicating that teachers who are encouraged to engage in reflective practice and development have the potential to gain new insight into their practice. Sydnor-Walton (2013) reported comprehensive preparation, classroom management, field experience, necessary skills, and multicultural preparation as significant training experiences in teacher preparation for increasing retention, which was consistent with the findings in this study. Ingersoll (2012)



identified a link between new teachers' involvement in teacher training programs and their retention. Teacher preparation was key because most out of field teachers who did not complete the traditional four-year preservice teacher training were more likely to depart from the teaching profession within three years compared to the considerably lower rates of teachers who had completed the four-year teacher training program (Linek et al., 2012).

To further this point, Thieman, Marx, and Kitchel (2012) found a direct correlation between a high level of resilience acquired during preservice preparation and leaving the profession of teaching. Because teacher preparation plays a major role in new teachers' decisions to leave the profession early, as suggested by Thieman et al (2012), application of a resilient framework can have a positive impact on numerous parts of the occupation from retention rates to standard of life. Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, and Burn (2012) indicated that as of the 2010-11 school year, 27 states mandated some type of teacher training program for novice teachers. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggested that providing high-quality support to novice teachers in their early years of teaching further develops the teaching skills they have acquired during their preservice preparation and helps to overcome weaknesses that might lead to them to abandoning the profession. It is a clear that teachers from across the country are in general agreement about which areas staff development programs should focus on to continue to encourage longevity in the field for new teachers. Providing high quality support for new teachers should begin during the teacher training years. Therefore the professional development program includes a segment that offers such support early to future teachers in order to strengthen their base for a potential longer career in the field.

## **Administrative Support**

The second theme revealed within the current study, *administrative support*, has been found to play a major role in teacher retention. Shen, Leslie, Spybrook, and Ma (2012) suggested that teacher job satisfaction is influenced by school-level factors, working conditions, and principal support. Study by Urick (2016) provided evidence how regardless of the principal type, teachers in schools with low principal-directed management were more prone to leave. Indicated that the lack of administrative support was a motivating factor for teacher attrition. The education of an administrative staff to better understand how to work with new teachers in the field can be addressed through professional development training. Besides the individual commitment by teachers to be successful as educators, researchers also indicated that school administrators have a significant part in retaining teachers at the school level (Prather-Jones, 2011). “It helped to be praised and have positive evaluations. I think that gave me the encouragement I needed to keep working hard. It sent the message that all work is worth it,” said first year teacher in response to administrative role in teacher retention.

Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, and Labat (2015) also found that poor encouragement from administrators, teacher assignments, and student discipline are main contributing factors to teachers’ decision to remain in the field. Cancion, Albrecht, and Johns (2014) looked into how administrators could improve retention of teachers of students with emotional/behavioral disorders (EBD) to understand the importance of training and mentoring programs, opportunities for professional development, and staff recognition. Cross (2011) examined the role of school principals in the retention of new teachers to find that school principals have the power to do a lot to make things happen to improve retention at their

school. Curtis, and Wise (2012) found that attrition among investigated new math teachers was caused by poor administrative support and low salary. Elliot, Isaacs, and Chugani (2010) also suggested in their study that as lead administrators, principals have an exceptional position to assist novice teachers in meeting their complex career needs. The administrative support of novice teachers was strongly mentioned by participants in this study. They have expressed a stronger will to succeed with the encouragement of their school principal.

The findings of this study align with prior studies, including Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2015), and Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015). Hughes, Matt, and O'Reilly (2015) found that individual development and the capability to obtain emotional, environmental and instructional support from administrators influenced teacher's choice to leave or to stay in a school. Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) reported that working situations that mostly count to teachers were the principal's ability to lead, collegiate associations, and the structural culture of the schools. The continuing education of school principals regarding the role they play in teacher retention at their school can be greatly improved through the implementation of appropriate and specific professional development training programs.

The proposed professional development program engages administrators by educating them about the importance of supporting their teaching staff, especially their new teachers, who need guidance and encouragement to strengthen their base as they begin their career.

### **School Environment and Working Conditions**

The third theme revealed in the current study, *school environment and working*

*conditions*, consisted of participants speaking about a general sense of acceptance of the school environment as well as a need to reduce stress caused by too many counterproductive mandates or discouraging issues that affected teachers' abilities to teach. According to Heitin (2012), to increase teacher retention and student performance, working conditions for teachers must be improved. Simon and Moore Johnson (2015) reported that data indicated that teachers in impoverished schools leave because of the poor working conditions.

More (2012) suggested that teacher satisfaction increases with encouraging surrounding and teacher empowerment. According to Minnicks (2013), teachers want schools and educational communities that will pay attention to them, and where their knowledge, expertise and experience are considered. Ronfeldt (2015) indicated that higher teacher retention is possible in schools with superior working conditions and teacher cooperation, with a record of solid students achievement. Bieler (2012) indicated that a strong faculty community and spending time with fellow teachers help retain teachers in certain schools. Bieler also found that exchanging instructional materials, resources, and ideas with new teachers help them focus more on their pedagogy and reflection and less on reinventing the wheel.

According to Galkhorst, Beishuizen, Zijstra, and Volman (2015), teachers strongly welcomed an environment that enhanced teachers' self-efficacy through professional development programs that provided opportunities to maintain relationships with other teachers to share experiences. The findings in this study provided newer details in understanding school environment as one of the diverse reasons why some teachers leave the profession of teaching early while some others stay longer in the field.

According to Darling-Hammond, Newton, and Wei (2013), beginning teachers can be positively impacted when new systems of evaluations are focused on the improvement of teacher practice. Berry, Smylie, and Fuller (2008) reported that teachers who plan to abandon their schools and teaching typically have serious concerns about absence of authority, weak school management, and the insignificant levels of confidence and respect within their buildings. Kraft and Marinell, and Yee (2016) found that improved school leadership, learning achievement, teacher associations, and school security are individually related to the consistent decrease in teacher turnover.

According to Pogodzinski, Young, and Frank (2013), intent to continue to teach in the field is more likely to be reported by new teachers who observe a greater interconnected environment evident by high level proficient and shared duty among coworkers. The relationship of school principals is regarded as important by some researches to the building of school climate (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013). Sedivy-Brenton and Boden-McGill (2012) reported teacher power on school, teacher understanding of control, and how teacher perceived support as contextual factors with significant part in teacher attrition and retention. Price (2012) indicated that principals and teachers' approaches produce conducive learning environment. Relationships among stakeholders in a school environment have often referred to as school climate. This finding was also reflected as an important factor of retention in this latest research on teacher retention. Thus, school environment and teachers' retention is an area to understand in this investigation of contributing factors to the retention of novice teachers early in their career.

Some researchers have extended their investigation into the testing area to find relation between mandated testing and teacher attrition (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez,

2012). In this investigation, participants explained how difficult things could become with different mandates that can be confusing and stressful to new teachers who have so much to learn in their first years in the field. These mandates can also become discouraging factors in the retention of new teachers reported participants in this study. It is also true that participants in this study found this Northeast Florida public school conducive to teaching and learning. The comfortable atmosphere of the school is encouraging, and teachers want to remain there. A third year teacher indicated that he would have to be kicked out of the school before he leaves. Most of the teachers who participated in this investigation felt they might be effective because of the positive atmosphere of the school.

The proposed professional development program will enhance the climate by providing a clearer understanding of the school environment and its impact on teachers daily functioning. It will allow better working conditions to be implemented for greater job satisfaction.

### **Students' Characteristics**

The fourth theme within the results of the current study, *student characteristics*, consisted of participants speaking of the roles their students played in their own personal retention, speaking back to the concepts of survival and determination. Allen, Burgess, and Mayo (2012) found that schools with mostly white and Asian students have higher rates of teacher retention. It was also found that new teacher turn over was higher in school serving higher low-income, low-achieving minority students. According to Goldstein, Eastwood and Behuniak (2014), their analysis of teacher opinions of students at the kindergarten level at the beginning of the school year explained that poor assessments of

students' abilities are prognostic of retention, especially for low- income male students.

Zurawieckie (2013) explored the impact of student threats and assaults on teacher attrition to find that negative experiences with student assaults and threats on teachers had a major influence on teacher to move to a different school. The possibility that teachers would leave the profession a year later did not increase because of these students' negative characteristics. Donaldson and Johnson (2011) investigated teacher's retention in hard-to-staff schools to suggest that if teachers stay in these schools it is because they are able to succeed, it will not be because the schools obtain a constant flow of highly-educated, dedicated new teachers. Dickson, Riddlebarger, Stringer, Tennant, and Kennetz (2014) found that novice teachers faced the challenges of managing student behavior during their first three years in the field.

The students' characteristics in this theme were a positive experience as reported by the data from the interviews. The professional development program will not include a workshop that focuses specifically on student's characteristics. Participants in the interviews expressed great satisfaction for not having to deal with negative elements of student's characteristics that can discourage teaching at this North East Florida county school district.

### **Implementation**

This professional development program should be presented to all administrators, the teaching staff and all supporting staff during staff development days. This process will begin after the professional development program proposal has been reviewed and approved by the district. The school principal will approve, coordinate, and announce the dates of the workshops. There will be a total of three workshops that include administra-

tive support, teacher preparation/mentoring, and school environment and working conditions.

Attention should be paid to continued improvement of teacher preparation programs that allow students-teachers to have better insight into the school environment, student characteristics and cultural backgrounds. In addition, workshops and trainings should be developed for administrators to better understand the influence of their support on teachers career. School environment and working conditions should be explored so improvement measures can be effectively implemented to benefit staff and students at this North East Florida public school district.

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

One of the main resources of that already exists is the Florida Department of Education. There are many programs like the Title II. Part A -Teacher and Principal Training Recruiting Fund. Principal Training and Recruiting Fund (Title II -A), which are intended to increase student Mentors not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers. The Clinical Educator Training (CTE) works with school district staffs and instructional personnel who oversee or manage teacher preparation students.

In addition, support will come from the teachers who volunteered their time to participate in the study, and veteran teachers who could utilize their leadership skills to mentor new teachers. Also, the school district administrators who granted permission for the study will have the major supportive role in the implementation of the workshops developed for the professional training series. They are in a position to work with the district to implement staff development training programs on the school level. Some teachers are already working collaboratively with their colleagues and the administrative staff.



This collaboration could be maintained and expanded as expressed by participants in the project study through professional development for administration and novice and veteran teachers.

### **Potential Barriers**

If the recommendations for the professional development program are approved, it is unlikely that the mentoring program will be mandatory. Not all veteran teachers may participate in the necessary leadership trainings. The administrators' commitments may not allow them to invest the time needed to gain the knowledge that only specific training could provide. Further, colleges and universities that partner with the local site may not have the flexibility needed to place students in specific grade level and subject for their preparation. Administrators and teachers need to agree on the implementation of the professional development training conditions in order for the program to maintain a positive outlook.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

This professional development program will be implemented in accordance with the district policy and school needs. Proposal for the professional development program (Appendix A) will be submitted to the school's principal in January 2017. The principal will review the recommendations with the school district for approval.

I have proposed a 3-day professional training workshop for the district to address teachers concerns that were presented.

**Workshop 1: The Role of Administrators in Teacher Retention.** *This is a workshop that will be exclusively for administrative staff.* The goal of this workshop is to educate administrators on how to best support their new teachers to improve retention at

their school according to the study results.

The professional development program recommendations will be introduced by the school principal in January 2017 during staff development meeting at the school where the study was conducted. Workshop for school administrators should begin after review and approval of program recommendations by the school district stakeholders in charge of school improvement. Training of school administrators should begin during the summer of 2017 before the beginning of a new school year 2017-2018.

**Workshop 2: Mentoring program for Novice Teachers: Exploration Session.**

*This workshop is to introduce the mentoring program to the school.* This workshop should be conducted before school opens in the fall. According to Wong (2004), the mentoring procedure can be set a planned support or support to a casual body system. It is intended to respond to a novice teacher's questions, offer emotional support, and improve deficient areas caused by university teacher training program. The principal of the school will be in charge of designing and managing the mentoring procedure.

Mentoring training should begin in May 2017 after the results and recommendations of the study are introduced to the teaching staff during teacher in-service day by the school principal in January 2017. Participation in the mentoring program is voluntary. However, it would be necessary to encourage veteran teachers to participate in such program as workshops are being developed between the months of January and April 2017.

**Workshop 3: Creating a Positive School Environment.** *This workshop is for all staff working at the school (administrators, teachers, all support staff including food services and all maintenance personnel).* This workshop is to review the importance of school environment factors that positively affected all staff in their daily function. Areas

for improvement will also be explored as well as methods of implementation of a positive school climate. The workshop should be conducted at the beginning of the school year during teacher in-service hours with all school personnel.

School administrators should develop a survey questionnaire about areas of the school environment that need improvement. The school principal would present such survey during school in-service day in January 2017. Results of the survey should be reviewed and shared with all staff in March 2017 during in-service meeting day. Improvement measures should be developed during the summer of 2017 and enforced during the school year 2017-2018.

The school principal should meet with the placement coordinator from the colleges/universities to discuss students-teachers training at the school in January 2017. Student preparation program strategies should be focused on how to better prepare new teachers to be successful in a variety of school environments, which include classroom, students, parents, and interpersonal relationship in a school setting.

### **Project Evaluation**

The professional development program will be monitored during the entire school year 2017-2018 using a formative assessment so areas in need of improvement can be gradually monitored and corrected by May 2018. An evaluation questionnaire should be developed by this researcher (Appendix E) guided by the people from curriculum services, the director of human services, the school principal, and teachers in charge of school improvement and completed by all staff members in February, March, and April 2018. In May 2018, a summative and final evaluation will be completed by all stakeholders and staff involved in the professional development program. The summative evalua-

tion will be used to assess which areas of the school retention program work or need overall improvement.

All assessments will include questions about administrative support, school environment, the mentoring program, and the teacher preparation program with improvement suggestions. Meetings will be scheduled with the participants and key stakeholders to review the project evaluation results. The key stakeholders and the participants can be instrumental in the future development of retention programs for this particular school district and other school district with similar characteristics.

### **Stakeholders**

The stakeholders in charge of overseeing the professional development program will be the group of people from curriculum services and the director of human resource in charge of school improvement programs. They will approve and oversee the school administrator workshops that focus on administrative support.

Other stakeholders will include the school principal and other administrative staff, the teachers who are directly involved in the implementation and evaluation of the programs, school placement coordinators from college/universities. The school principals and other administrative staff will have the greatest responsibility of assuring that these retention programs are fully reinforced and that they make their supportive contribution according to the programs' designs and expectations.

The goal of this professional development program is to establish better and continuous school environment to everyone who can benefit from long term stability of teaching and learning at the school level. This stabilization process needs a strong foundation that begins with teacher preparation programs that allow students-teachers to be

exposed to a variety of school environments and continuous training for school principals and other administrative staff that focus on factors affecting teacher retention specific to their school's characteristics.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others**

All parties involved in the implementation of the professional development program should play their roles. The school principal, the veteran teachers who volunteer to be mentors to new teachers. The administrators play a supportive role of overseeing all workshops. They also evaluate the programs. An assigned mentor program will train the mentors separately after the initial professional development at the school. They will participate in fully funded mentoring and coaching professional development, and professional development regarding improving pedagogy differentiation of instruction and evidence driven practice. The mentors are responsible for guiding their preservice/novice teachers during their first two years in the field. They will teach them how to acquire and improve their teaching and classroom management skills to get them ready for the daily challenges of teaching. Teachers will assess the programs that will be developed and implemented. School district stakeholders and the principal will review teachers' recommendations so appropriate adjustments or changes can be made to improve all retention programs resulted from this study.

### **Implications Including Social Change**

#### **Local Community**

Researchers have indicated that teacher attrition affects student performance and teachers' stability. Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff's (2011) study about turnover effect on students achievement found that higher turnover of teachers in grade levels has

a great impact on students who score lower in both English language arts and math, specially in school with majority underachieving and Black students. With the implementation of the professional development program, teachers will gain the necessary knowledge and skills to better understand and teach while increasing retention rates this North East Florida county school district. The students will benefit from the stability that improving returning rates of good novice teachers can bring to the school. Every one can benefit from the stability of teacher mobility at the school, students, parents and the local community.

Thus, teachers must be trained to acquire the necessary skills that will help them participate in the professional development program. This professional development program can help develop the retention skills that may encourage new teachers to be more committed to their primary goal of teaching. A stable teaching environment may also positively affect parents by increasing confidence in the school's ability to assist students in their academic development. Henkin and Holliman (2009) suggested that commitment and stability work hand in hand in student achievement.

### **Far-Reaching**

Schools of similar background and criteria can benefit from this project and the retention program that was developed. This study was conducted at rural low and mid income public school, with a predominantly White student body and faculty. A successful retention program for this particular school can be adjusted to school anywhere in the country that face similar problems with similar circumstances. Other schools can explore the internal factors that may cause newer teachers to continue their career beyond their fifth year of teaching. The professional development program that was developed can be

duplicated in other schools across the district. Part of the social change effect of this project is how it will affect the value of teacher retention in other rural public schools across the district.

Although the study was conducted at a specific local school, the results of such study could help school systems around the country identify internal factors that are contributors to novice teachers' attrition/retention at their local schools. Retention measures can be customized in accordance with the contributing retention factors recorded at their local school. Finally, this professional development training can be instrumental in assisting schools across the districts with similar backgrounds in their decisions to meet teachers' needs early in their career to reduce turnover and increase retention of potential great teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this professional development program will be to provide all teachers with the necessary tools to work better in their environment. Their new knowledge will help them to better understand the nature of their work and the responsibilities that come with their respective titles as educators at the school where the study was conducted. This section presented the goals and details of the professional development program and how it would affect the local community and its far-reaching potential. Social change that resulted from this professional education training was clearly identified as an improved balance in stability for teachers, students, parents and the local community. The external factors that contributed to teacher retention found in this study were teacher preparation, school administrators, school environment and teacher assignments were introduced in this section. The professional development program focused on im-

proving these areas after a literature review was conducted to bring clearer understanding on the subject.

These retention factors that this professional development program was based on may serve as a basis for future programs to improve retention rates among all teachers.

Section 3 provided the map and the blueprint of the study from the implementation to the implication of the study on a social level. Section 4 will include a reflection and conclusions of the study.



## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The goal of this qualitative study was to identify the contributing factors for retention among new teachers at a particular Northeast Florida public school district in order to better understand their job satisfaction and motivation for staying at their current schools. In this section, I present professional development program strengths and weaknesses. In addition, I complete a project development and evaluation. I also reflect on my learning as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.

### **Project Strengths**

A major strength of the professional development program is the opportunity to learn and understand the positive change that is generated from identifying teachers' concerns and their motivations for staying at the school. The professional development program motivates all stakeholders from the school district to the school level to develop better policies that could improve teacher retention and improve student academic achievement. The opportunity to respond to teachers concerns and factors affecting their retention were the foundation for the professional development program. The understanding of such factors was extended in this professional development program to pinpoint specific reasons why retention of new teachers at a particular Florida public school district may happen. This professional development program was an opportunity to respond to firsthand information regarding factors that may contribute to early departure of teachers from the field and presents an opportunity for all stakeholders to unite in their effort to improve retention and empower all staff as a learning community. Positive changes can only happen with continuing education, honest relationships, and communication

among teachers and school leaders in charge of school improvement.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

Due to staff turnover, interviewed participants may not be available for follow-up questioning if needed. This professional development program is only a foundation for future prevention and retention programs that educational stakeholders may implement to address the attrition problem at a particular school. The dominant factors that may contribute to early retention of new teachers in the field can be examined in order to improve or develop retention programs that include teacher training, teacher qualifications, school characteristics, contextual factors, or academic climate factors.

However, with the constant financial cuts that school systems receive on a yearly basis, funding for retention programs may not be readily available. To overcome this limitation, professional development programs can be initiated at the school levels by qualified staff to address concerns that may have surfaced in the study as teachers' retention factors. An appropriate mentoring program at the school level can be developed voluntarily by veteran teachers to assist novice teachers in their efforts to adjust to their new educational environment at no cost to the district.

A climate of encouragement can be created with the help of the administration staff as primary consultants to the new teachers to provide needed directions and confidence building. Internal surveys can be conducted to gain insight into the school climate characteristics that may need revision and improvement. Every staff member can benefit from workshops that focus on harmonious school climates. Another potential limitation to this program is the fact that teacher preparation programs may not have the flexibility required in their student teacher internship placement to rotate students from their as-

signed schools.

### **Scholarship**

The scholarship concept has been incorporated in my learning during my primary preparation for this study. As I reviewed the articles for this study, the importance of knowing and understanding what other researchers have found through rigorous enquiry became clearer. The scholarship of discovery is a review that creates the disciplinary and professional information at the center of educational searches (Boyer, 1990). The knowledge bases that are available at many university libraries, including Walden's, have been good sources that guided me through the study process. These resources provided me with valuable information for the development of the professional development program.

The professional development program is a major platform from which data revealed in the study could be addressed. The potential for improving all areas addressed in the professional development program is significant. With greater open communication among school officials and teachers there should be a more satisfactory school atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning that should positively affect teacher retention. I used the Walden Library for most of my literature search. I have accessed information about the subject of teacher attrition/retention that I did not know existed. I now understand the depth of the attrition problem among new teachers and what types of research have been conducted on the subject. There is a wealth of information about factors that contribute to teacher attrition/retention that I needed to critically explore for this program. I have also learned to narrow my search to focus on aspects of teacher retention that may help answer the guiding question of this study. I learned how overwhelming the rigorous

process of the literature review is. Therefore, I have acquired a better appreciation for the concept behind the systematic data collection for primary empirical research in the exploration of new ideas about teacher attrition and retention. This professional development program was a major step toward changes that will positively affect new teacher retention at the school where the program was implemented.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

When I started my study at Walden, I had no specific idea about what I wanted to do for my research. I knew that I had to do a project that would create social change. During my residency days, it became clear to me that I was concerned about the constant high rate of teacher turnover in the public schools in the city where I work. Teacher attrition was an unknown term to me until I presented my research plan to an advisor. However, teacher retention became very important to me in the course of my literature research reading. The project was developed using the same process to understand the effect of professional development training to implement change.

The understanding of the major factors that affect teacher retention gave me a new in-depth perception of how school leaders and new teachers needed to be trained for change to occur to increase new teacher retention rates.

I understand that the creation of a project is a long process that continues to evolve. There are many different aspects of the project that can surface that may need revision and adjustment. The literature search played a major role in guiding me through this project as well as the feedback that I received from my advisors. The professional development program was the best approach to address the retention factors that data from the study revealed. The professional development program allowed open communi-

cation, cooperation, and relation building between school officials, administrators, and teachers within the school for a unified teachers' retention movement at a particular Northeast Florida public school district. These would be the basic foundation for future retention programs to stabilize the school with staff longevity and student achievement.

### **Leadership and Change**

I understand that leadership demands a strong sense of security to develop and implement changes where it is necessary. I learned that the ability to initiate, guide, and implement school reforms involve a degree of commitment, risks, and responsibilities. Change is a process of structural regeneration that happens gradually (Birken, Lee, & Weiner, 2012). Tucker, Yeom, and Viki (2012) argued that a significant understanding of social accounts is required in order to guide and handle change positively. Machado (2012) indicated that an inclusive, collaborative, and collegiate atmosphere is beneficial to ensure progress in program development.

The study benefited from the collective efforts of all stakeholders who participated in the initial process that may help change retention strategies at the school. I also learned that leadership is a collective effort towards a common good. Mulford (2012) argued that to achieve the common good, democratic principles would incorporate appreciation for individuals and their philosophies; a dedication to review and analysis; a respect and appreciation for the interdependence required to attain the shared good; and the obligations of the person in working toward the common good.

Thus, I learned to take initiative that others would not take to motivate changes. I also understand that leaders are visionaries who need to grasp their limitations and their ability to help create changes unselfishly. The common good concept must be clear to a

leader to encourage others to participate in changes that can benefit them. Melville, Bartley, and Weinburgh (2012) suggested that a degree of dedication at the school level to the common good is the base to applying and maintaining change. I learned there is no change without leadership. I also learned that clear understanding between all parties involved in the progression of change is important for the process to work efficiently.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

I acquired new knowledge about resiliency and persistence as an adult learner. Despite many unforeseen life circumstances that have tried to derail me from my study, I have remained focused, inquisitive, and passionate about learning. My thirst for knowledge has increased, and I learned, as I developed my plan, that it is not about me. It is about those who will benefit from my newly acquired knowledge. I have become more eager to help, more eager to put my knowledge to a cause greater than me. The concept of social change strongly empowered me to complete this project, and my education. I understand how others can benefit from the awareness that I will bring in the near future. The more I understand my mission, the more motivated I become to absorb new knowledge and to share it with the world.

I understand the importance for an open mind in receiving feedbacks from instructors, advisors, and peers. This is part of learning that improves a scholar's knowledge acquisition. The ability to accept criticism and to learn from them is an important quality to possess in order to have a global understanding of the world's opinions and directions.

In addition, writing skills are important for a scholar to communicate. I learned how much work and efforts I had to make to communicate precisely and clearly to con-

vey my ideas in writing. I understand now that proficiency is not sometimes easy to achieve. I needed the guidance of my instructors and my advisors to improve my writing as a scholar. My willingness to continue to learn and to be guided has helped me improve some deficits in writing. I still need work in this area. However, I have better insight into the specific areas of my writing that need special attention.

Reading was never a passion of mine. I have developed a new appreciation for reading during the course of my study at Walden University. I started reading by obligation at the beginning of this educational journey. I continue to read because I understand its importance as a scholar in search of knowledge. Information for this study could only be found through reading. My research allowed me to understand where to focus my study. Reading provided me with information and direction on the types of study previously done on teacher attrition/retention. I have a better understanding of what the literature say about attrition among new teachers to develop my own approach on the subject.

Scholarship principles allowed me to explore my taught through the work of others in the literature search. I learned the importance of this extensive look into the work of others as a reference for understanding the complexity of teacher attrition as a phenomenon. The great number of researches that have been conducted on the subject of teacher turnover can only be understood through the rigor of scholarship principles.

Thus, I will utilize the discipline that I have acquired as a scholar to continue to grow in any future study, and as a lifelong learner. I learned the value of what others say, what others know and what others found to support my study. According to Hitt and Greer (2012), the scholarly research helps develop knowledge in fields such as strategic management, enhances the value of later applied research, and provides content for

courses. This project study has transformed my approach to learning forever. I am an independent learner and an improved critical thinker as a result of my work at Walden University.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

As a practitioner I learned that it is a very challenging task to motivate others to understand their role in their success. I learned that self-discipline plays a major contribution to positively guide others in self-assessment. I understand the importance of good interpersonal skills and respect for the learners' population as a leader. I learned that educators need a good understanding of the environment and the culture in which they teach. I have very strong interactions with teachers and students. I understand the effect of respect for the ones I teach and learn from.

This learning journey has not been easy at all for me. I had to surmount many difficult obstacles that made me reach very deep inside of me to renew my commitment to complete this project. I had to become almost selfish to stay focused and remain optimistic to stay on course. This doctoral process taught me how to read and write at a level that I never could without my enrollment at Walden University. I have developed patience as I earned to understand and conquered my own fear of failure during this course. My passion for learning has never faded, however. I have fallen behind schedule many times because of life's distractions that were impossible for me to control. The discipline that I established allowed me to rebound and continue to work to be where I am today with this project.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

The rationale for this project study was to investigate the factors that contributed



to teacher retention among new teachers at a particular Northeast Florida public school district. This project was developed out of concern for the effect of teacher turnover on school environmental and academic stabilities. This project was intimidating at first. But with the guidance of my advisors and the appropriate readings I gained more understanding about taking mini steps for completing my work.

I gradually understood the concept of one section at the time and the rigor of the scholarly literature review. I started this project as a quantitative survey. I later changed it to a qualitative case study. I learned that with the acquisition of new knowledge new and more appropriate approaches might be adopted in the process of completing a project. Wlodkowski (2008) indicated that the foremost challenges of education and training, at every level and every venue, are to create equitable and successful learning environments for every learner. This project study has been a great learning experience to me. I had the opportunities to understand my weaknesses and my strengths as an adult learner. This project is the foundation for future solutions to the teacher retention efforts in a particular school. A foundation that can be extended to other school settings similar to the one investigated.

In addition, I learned that my dedication to this project is driven by a strong desire to develop alternative approaches to teacher retention efforts in my community. I now value the time that I spent reading the scholarly work of others. I have a clearer understanding of my weaknesses as a student, a writer, and as an individual searching for answers and directions to develop this project. Most of all, I understand my self as a life-long adult learner and what motivates me to learn.

### **The Project's Potential Effect on Social Change**

This project has the potential to bring some additional important attention to the attrition subject among new teachers on a local level. This is another opportunity to analyze primary information provided by teachers who may be affected by some of the attrition factors stated in this study. This project is the foundation, the framework for future development of retention programs that would benefit both students and teachers in the community. Addressing the factors related to retention as discovered in this project, the attrition of new teachers should diminish. The plan is to develop future programs that encourage teachers to feel empowered to grow professionally at this particular school. These programs would be applicable in other schools with similar backgrounds as the one where the study was conducted.

In addition, this project should allow all stakeholders the unique opportunity to work jointly for a shared interest: the stabilization of the school. A stable school should ensure a positive effect on teaching and learning. I learned that there is a need for novice teachers to be trained and guided during their early years in the field. Workshops could be designed to offer the encouragement that novice teachers in the field may need to assist them with exploring their potential. Teachers would feel more secure about their job.

Students would also feel more productive as the effectiveness level of teachers increases. The academic benefit of competent teacher retention has also the potential to transform schools into vibrant productive learning communities. Parents may feel more connected with teachers whose faces look familiar because of reduction in teacher turnover.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The attrition/retention among new teachers has been investigated for many years. For many years researchers have explored the reasons why novice teachers abandon the education field early in their career. This project study took a specific look inside the dynamics of a specific Northeast Florida public school district to explore retention factors that may affect new teachers at that school. This study is the foundation for future work that should focus on developing teacher retention programs.

The results of this study should be used as a guide to appropriately respond to retention concerns on a school local level. Stakeholders and policymakers who are concerned about the yearly loss of novice teachers have a newer insight into specific retention factors to improve the conditions of their school. The concern has been acknowledged, and the reasons for the concern are now identified. Teachers will feel the positive effect of this project when professional programs are developed and implemented to address the issues identified in the study. Retention programs for any segment of an educational system can be successfully implemented with collaborative efforts between stakeholders and lawmakers.

Leana (2011) indicated that there is a correlation between the improvement of student's achievement scores and relationships founded on regular entrusting communication among teachers. This study should provoke meaningful discussion about the positive effect of teacher retention programs on teachers, students, and the educational community in general. Thus, new study may concentrate on exploring how widely spread the factors that influence the retention of teacher are in other schools with background similar or different to the school where this study was conducted. Retention programs that are devel-

oped to address the attrition problem in this particular school could be evaluated. New case study could focus on the effectiveness of the programs after their first year of implementation.

### **Conclusion**

The identification of causing influences to early departure of teachers in the field provides a foundation for future program development that focuses new teacher retention. The importance of the study and the conditions under which the study would be conducted were components of the rationale for the study. Lawmakers and educational stakeholders need to know what affect teacher retention to improve the retention rates in their schools. They need in-depth understanding of the phenomenon for appropriate intervention/ prevention programs that can create significant change in their districts' efforts to reduce turnover among new teachers.

In this section, I looked at the strengths and the limitations of the study. I made recommendations for future research. This section also included a self-analysis as a scholar and as a program developer. This reflection allowed me to understand and talk about the new knowledge I have acquired throughout the procedure of completing the study. It also included the implications, applications, and directions for future research.

The potential changes that can be generated from this project study will be a starting point for me. I will apply the knowledge and the skills acquired throughout this learning journey to work on future educational projects to continue my social change exploration and implementation.

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## Appendix A: The Project

### **Professional Development Program**

**Ernst Albert, Walden University**

Developed for building and district leadership for the development and implementation of retention training programs for elementary and high school Professional Learning communities.

### **Professional Development Program**

**Ernst Albert, Walden University**

Teacher retention is a problem nationwide in the USA growing number of teachers stop teaching every year for reasons that vary from individual to environmental factors. Researchers have explored the understanding of some of the factors that contribute to teacher turnover in the public schools (DeAngelis & Presley, 2007; Keigher, 2010; Schaefer, Long, & Clandinin, 2012). Retention measures can be developed and implemented in an effort to curtail the rates of teacher turnover. There is reason to believe that teacher retention programs can be successfully tailored when the factors for attrition and retention are identified.

In this study and teacher preparation, administrative support, school environment and working conditions, and student characteristics were identified as major factors important in the retention of teachers, especially new educators in the field.

**Administrative support, school environment and working conditions, student characteristics, and teacher preparation.**

**Teacher preparation.** Participants in this study reported that their internship prepared them for most of the situations they encountered as new teachers in the field.

Teacher preparation provided a good foundation to new teachers that allowed them to face the demands of teaching as a profession in certain school environment. Because of teacher preparation programs participants were able to continue to teach beyond their initial years in the field.

**Administrative support.** **Administrative support** was reported to play a major role in teacher retention. The encouragement that teachers receive from their principal can be emotional, academic and general guidance. A visible and accessible principal can uplift the quality of teachers' commitment to continue to teach. Administrative supports can make a difference in career longevity of new teachers, according to participants in this study.

**School environment and working conditions.** It was reported that harmonious and respectful school environment and working conditions were very conducive to teaching and learning. It included corroboration and easy communication among staff. A positive school environment is encouraging to novice teachers in their decisions to continue to teach at their school. It seemed like the safety feeling that is generated by a positive school environment and working conditions played a significant role in the retention of teachers, according to participants in this study.

**Student characteristics.** Students' motivation to learn was found to be a welcome incentive to participants in the study. It was reported that because of students' respect for learning and the school environment, it was easier for teachers to teach. According to participants in the study, a school that does not have major discipline problem is very attractive to teachers who want to remain in the field.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the following program is recommended to increase the retention rates at this Northeast Florida public school district

### **Program Description**

The program will address four areas of concern to:

1. Educate administrative staff about the importance of their support to their teachers, especially their novice teachers. Administrators' roles in teacher retention as well as expectations should be prioritized.
2. Develop a mentoring program that encourages veteran teachers to be supportive of new teachers at the school where the study was conducted. Teaching staff should be educated on how to mentor and collaborate with new teachers to support them during their initial years in the field.
3. Explore ways to improve and maintain positive school environment with all staff involvement.
4. Improve communication between the school and the colleges/universities to better coordinate students-teachers placement and preparation.

The first three of the above areas will be addressed in workshop format. The fourth area will be a formal meeting between the school principal and the teacher training program placement coordinator from the college/university to discuss how to best train student teachers to have a solid foundation and readiness for their future teaching career.

Discussion should include integration in school environment, training in appropriate grade and subject levels, and understanding of social-cultural background of the student population.



## **Proposed Workshop Objectives**

### **Workshop 1: Objectives**

1. Administrators will learn about the major factors that influence new teachers' retention at their school.
2. Administrators will discuss their supportive role in the retention of teachers at their school.
3. Administrators to develop plan to encourage and assist new teachers in their efforts to become successful educators at their school.

### **Workshop 2: Objectives**

1. Participants will review the importance of mentoring program for novice teachers.
2. Participants will learn about the requirements and the commitments to become mentors to their new peers.
3. Participants will gain basic understanding of their roles as mentors for new teachers at their school.

### **Workshop 3: Objectives**

1. Participants will learn about the impact of positive school climate on teacher retention at their school.
2. Participants will understand their role in their contribution to a positive school climate.
3. Participants will discuss their current school climate and their plan to improve the school environment.

**Workshop 1: The Role of Administrators in Teacher Retention.** *This is a workshop that will be exclusively for administrative staff.* The goal of this workshop is to educate

administrators on how to best support their new teachers to improve retention at their school according to the study results.

Date/Time 8.30 am-12 pm	Introduction 8.30-9.30 am: Meet and Greet; Participants complete the introduction activity. Review of retention factors from study results.	9.30-9.45: Break (refreshments)	9.45-10.45: Administrative roles in teacher retention.
	10.45-11.30: How to best support new teachers to be successful at your school. (Break out session- Participants work on objectives)	11.30- 11.45: Objectives sharing with all participants.	11.45-12: Round-up. Evaluation

### Workshop 1 Evaluation

Workshop name: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Please take a few minutes to complete this workshop evaluation.

1- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate the information you have learned about the major factors that influence teacher retention at your school?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

2- Please provide at least two factors that influence teacher retention at your school.

3- As a school administrator how do you see your role in the teacher retention at your school? Please provide a brief description of that role and how you can best support your new teaching staff to increase retention at your school.

4- Please briefly describe a retention plan that you have discussed with your colleagues in this workshop.

5- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your overall impression of this workshop.

1[] poor. 2[] average. 3[] good. 4very good. 5[] excellent

6- Why did you choose your rating?

7- Is there anything you would like to add to this workshop to improve it? Please provide your feedback in the space below.

Thank you for attending this workshop

**Workshop 2: Mentoring program for Novice Teachers: Exploration Session.** *This workshop is to introduce the mentoring program to the school.* This workshop should be conducted before school opened. According to Wong (2004), mentoring is a process that can range from a set of structured assistance and support to an informal body system. It is designed to answer a new teacher's questions, provide emotional support, and fill in the gaps left by university teacher training program. The principal of the school will be responsible for designing and administering the mentoring process.

<p>Date/Time 8.30 am-12 .15 pm</p>	<p>Introduc- tion 8.30-9:30: Meet and Greet; Participants complete introduction activity Review retention factors from study results Brain storming: What is mentoring? Why a mentoring program at the ---School? Who can become new teachers 'mentors? Who benefit from the mentoring process?</p>	<p>9.30-9.45: Break (Refreshments)</p>	<p>9. 45-10-45: How does the mentoring process benefit new teachers?</p>
<p>10.45-11.15: Type of training necessary for a mentoring program</p>	<p>11.15- 11.45: Goal setting in mentoring program/Break out session between new teachers and veteran teachers.</p>	<p>11.45: 12: Objective sharing with all participants</p>	<p>12-12.15 Round-up /Session review. Evaluation</p>

## Workshop 2 Evaluation

Workshop name: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS

Please take a few minutes to complete this workshop evaluation.

1-On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your understanding of the importance of a mentoring program for novice teachers at your school.

1[] poor. 2[] average. 3[] good. 4 [] very good. 5[] excellent

2- Please provide two examples of how new teachers can benefit from a mentoring program at your school.

3-On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your understanding of the requirements and commitment for becoming a mentor to new teachers at your school.

1- [] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5 [] excellent.

2- Please provide at least two requirements examples that may qualify you as a mentor for novice teachers at your school.

3- Please describe in a few words a commitment important to become a mentor for new teachers at your school.

4- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your understanding of your role as a mentor for new teachers at your school.

1[] poor. 2[] average. 3[] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

5- Describe the most important role you think you can play as a mentor for new teachers at your school.

6- How prepared are you to consider an enrollment in a teacher mentoring training program as a result of this workshop? Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

1[] poor. 2[] average. 3 [] good. 4 [] very good. 5 [] excellent.

7-Overall, please rate this workshop on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

8- Is there anything that you feel that could improve this workshop? Please add your comments below.

Thank you for attending this workshop.

**Workshop 3: Creating A Positive School Environment.** *This workshop is for every staff working at the school (administrators, teachers, all support staff including food services and all maintenance personnel)* This workshop is to review the importance of school environment factors that positively impact all staff in their daily function. Areas for improvement will also be explored as well as methods of implementation of a positive school climate. The workshop should be conducted at the beginning of the school year during teacher in-service hours with all school personnel.

<p>Date/Time 8.30 am-12.11.30am</p>	<p>Introduction 8.30-9:30: Meet and Greet; Participants complete introduction activity. Review retention factors from study results. What is a positive school climate? Why creating a school climate?</p>	<p>9.30-9.45: Break (refreshments)</p>	<p>9.45-10: Informal assessment of school environment.</p>
	<p>10-10.30: A look at a positive school environment.</p>	<p>10.30 -11: Goal setting for maintaining and improving positive school environment.</p>	<p>11-11. 30: Round-up and schedule follow-up workshop. Evaluation</p>

### Workshop 3 Evaluation

Workshop name: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS

Please take a few minutes to complete this workshop evaluation.

1-On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your understanding of the impact of positive school climate on new teacher retention at your school.

1[ ] poor. 2[ ] average. 3[ ] good. 4 [ ] very good. 5[ ] excellent.

2-Please name two positive school climate characteristics.

3- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate your understanding of your role in a positive school climate.

1[ ] poor. 2[ ] average. 3[ ] good. 4[ ] very good. 5[ ] excellent.

4- Please describe a major role that you can play in improving your school climate.

5- Please rate your understanding of your school climate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

1[ ] poor. 2[ ] average. 3[ ] good. 4[ ] very good. 5[ ] excellent.

6. Please briefly describe the plan you discussed with your colleagues to improve your school climate.

What is your overall rating of this workshop on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?



1[] poor. 2[] average 3[] good. 4 [] very good. 5[] excellent.

7- Is there anything that you feel could improve this workshop? Please use the space below for your suggestions.

Thank you for attending this workshop.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The development of a formal retention program as per the recommendations provided as a result of this research will be implemented in accordance with the school needs. The principal will review the executive summary with the school district for approval. The program recommendations will be introduced by the school principal in January 2018 during staff development meeting at the school where the study was conducted. Workshop for school administrators should begin after review and approval of program recommendations by the school district stakeholders in charge of school improvement. Training of school administrators should begin during the summer of 2018 before the beginning of a new school year 2018-2019.

Mentoring training should begin in January 2018 after the results and recommendations of the study are introduced to the teaching staff during teacher in-service day by the school principal in October 2017. Participation in the mentoring program is voluntarily. However, it would be necessary to encourage veteran teachers to participate in such program as workshops are being developed between the months of January and April 2018.

School administrators should develop a survey questionnaire about areas of the school environment that need improvement. The school principal would present such survey during school in-service day in January 2018. Results of the survey should be reviewed and shared with all staff in March 2018 during in-service meeting day. Improvement measures should be developed during the summer of 2018 and enforced during the school year 2018-2019.

The school principal should meet with the placement coordinator from the colleges/universities to discuss student- teachers training at the school in January 2018. Student preparation program strategies should be focused on how to better prepare new teachers to be successful in a variety of school environments, which include classroom, students, parents, and interpersonal relationship in a school setting.

### **Project Evaluation**

The retention program will be monitored during the entire school year 2018-2019 using a formative assessment so areas in need of improvement can be gradually monitored and corrected by May 2019. An evaluation questionnaire should be developed by the stakeholders (school administrative staff guided by school principal, and teachers in charge of school improvement) and completed by all staff members in February, March and April 2019.

In May 2019, a summative and final evaluation will be completed by all stakeholders and staff involved in the teacher retention program. The summative evaluation will be used to assess which areas of the school retention program work or need overall improvement. All assessments will include questions about administrative support, school environment, the mentoring program, and the teacher preparation program with improvement suggestions. Meetings will be scheduled with the participants and key stakeholders to review the project evaluation results. The key stakeholders and the participants can be instrumental in the future development of retention programs for this particular school district and other school district with similar characteristics.

**Project Evaluation questionnaire that can be customized by the school stakeholders based on their experiences with the training and their own priorities and preferences.**

Workshop name: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Instructions**

Please provide us your feedback on the progress of the school retention program by completing the following questions.

1-Please rate the interactions between administrator and teaching staff on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest?

1-  poor. 2  fair. 3  good. 4  very good. 5  excellent

2- How supportive has the administrative staff been to you so far this school year?

Not at all.  poor  average.  supportive.  very supportive

3- In a brief sentence please tell us how the administrative staff could continue to improve their support to you?

4- Please rate the current school climate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

1  poor. 2  average. 3  good.  4 very good. 5  excellent.

5-In a few words please explain your rating.

6 – Which areas in the school climate have you noticed satisfactory changes?

7- Please in a few words provide us with your feedback on the areas of the school climate that need improvement and why?

8- Please rate the mentoring program on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

1 [ ] poor. 2 [ ] average. 3 [ ] good. 4 [ ] very good. 5 [ ] excellent

8- Please explain your rating in a few words.

9- which areas of the mentoring program work and why?

10- Please give us your feedback on areas of the mentoring program that need improvement.

This section of the evaluation is only for student's teachers and their classroom teachers.

11- Please rate your teacher training experience at this school on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

1 [ ] poor. 2 [ ] average. 3 [ ] good. 4 [ ] very good. 5 [ ] excellent.

12- Which area of your teaching experience is satisfactory to you and why?

13- Which areas of your teaching experience need improvement to better prepare you for your future career as a teacher?

Thank you for participating in this Evaluation

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## Appendix B: Interview Guide

### Interview Guide

Date:

Time:

Grade level:

Thank you for participating in the interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore the factors that have contributed to your decision to continue to teach at --- School. This data will be used with other data for my study. Remember, your participation in this study is voluntary. You may stop at any time, if you feel stressed during the interview. There is no compensation for participating in this interview. Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your information for any purposes outside this project. In addition, I will not include your name or anything else that can identify you in my reports from the interview. I will be conducting the interview. The interview will involve a series of questions. The interview should last about 45 to 60 minutes and will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Do you have any question?

The following questions will guide the interviews to make sure that questions are centered on teacher characteristics and school characteristics.

How do the characteristics of the teachers who are currently teaching differ from those are not at the school?

What relationship does teaching experience have to teacher retention in your opinion?

How do you relate your teaching preparation to your decision to remain in the education feel?

What is the relationship between demonstrated teaching ability and your decision to

remain in the field after your initial years?

What type of value and attitude you think contribute to your decision to remain in the field as a teacher?

What are the two most important factors that you think have contributed to your decision to continue to teach at --- School?

What impact do the working conditions at your school have on your decision to continue to teach?

How important is administrative support in your decision to continue to teach at -- school?

What role does administrative support play on your decision to continue to teach at --- School?

What role does class size have on your decision to continue to teach at --- School?

What impact do student characteristics and attitude have on your decision to continue to teach at Jean School?

What are the two most important school characteristics that have contributed to your decision to continue to teach?

What impact do you think these characteristics have on your decision to continue to teach?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for participating in this interview. I will send you a transcribed copy of this interview for you to review once it is completed.



## Appendix C: Observation Checklist

**The Observation Checklist**

Goal of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation will be scheduled after the individual interview with participant

Location of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Role of observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Nonparticipant

Type of notes: Descriptive fieldnotes and reflective fieldnotes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Descriptive fieldnotes \_\_\_\_\_ Reflective fieldnotes \_\_\_\_\_

During the classroom observation the following data will be recorded

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ and grade of teaching: \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom conditions:

---

Interactions with students during lesson:

---

Classroom management:

---

General level of teaching comfort:

---

Participant's concern from interview:

---

Check for observers' bias:

---

Observation goal: \_\_\_\_\_ met, \_\_\_\_\_ not met

## Appendix D: Program Evaluation

### Program Evaluation

Please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation. It will allow us to monitor the progress of our professional development program at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest, please rate the administration support.

How was the school administration's support before the implementation of the professional development program?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

How is the school administration's support after the implementation of the professional development program?

1 [] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

2- In a few words please explain your answer.

3-What type of support would you like to receive from the administrative staff?

4-How was your comfort level as a teacher before the implementation of the mentoring program at\_\_\_\_\_ school?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3[] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent

5. How is your comfort level as a teacher after the implementation of the mentoring program at\_\_\_\_\_ school?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3[] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent

6-In a few words please explain your answer.

6- Please tell us how you would like to improve the mentoring program to benefit both mentors and mentees at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

7-How were the school environment and the working conditions at \_\_\_\_\_ school before the implementation of the professional development program?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

How are the school environment and the working conditions at \_\_\_\_\_ school after the implementation of the professional development program?

1[] poor. 2 [] average. 3 [] good. 4[] very good. 5[] excellent.

8-In a few words please explain your answer.

9-In a few words please tell us how you would like to improve the professional development program to better benefit school environment and the working conditions at \_\_\_\_\_ school.

Thank you for your feedback.