
Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019

2015

Organizational Factors that influence the Retention of Special Education Teachers in Osceola County

Carla Keenum
University of Central Florida



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Doctoral Dissertation (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

STARS Citation

Keenum, Carla, "Organizational Factors that influence the Retention of Special Education Teachers in Osceola County" (2015). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 2004-2019*. 684.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/684>

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE RETENTION OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN OSCEOLA COUNTY

by

CARLA JOANNA KEENUM
B.A. University of Central Florida, 1986
M.A. University of North Alabama, 1999

A dissertation in practice submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
in the College of Education and Human Performance
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term

2015

Major Professor: David Boote

© 2015 Carla Keenum

ABSTRACT

The loss of special education teachers is a problem for all school districts. The effects of special education teacher attrition are felt in the classrooms and by all school district personnel. The impact on student achievement can be profound, especially if the teacher leaves in the middle of a school year. This study examines the organizational factors that influenced the attrition of special education teachers in one Central Florida school district.

Participation in the anonymous survey was voluntary. Invitations to participate were sent directly to 385 special education instructional personnel and distributed to all district personnel using an e-mail forum. After removing participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria, 250 completed surveys were included in the analysis. In addition to quantitative items, the survey also included open-ended items at the end of the survey. While special education instructional personnel were the focus of the study, data from general education instructional personnel were also collected for comparison.

The findings indicated that the major organizational causes of attrition among exceptional education teachers were in the areas of the human resources, political and structural frames. Human resource factors included the emotional, physical, and mental toll of daily classroom responsibilities and the perceived lack of district administration support. The main structural frame factor was the lack of compensation for the extra duties that special education teachers must perform. The main political factor was the lack of time needed by the special education staff to complete assigned duties during an average school day. In addition, the symbolic frame factors suggested a lack of perceived support from the general education staff; however,

respondents did not indicate that this was major factor affecting in the attrition of special education teachers in this district.

The school district has implemented strategies to support teachers to meet State certification requirements, Federal mandates of being highly qualified, and with monthly district level support visits. However, based on these data, the school district needs to recognize organizational factors affecting attrition. The district should pinpoint and alleviate the daily factors that cause undue stress on the special education staff. It should also reallocate resources and personnel to provide more frequent district and school level administrative support. Additional monetary or non-monetary compensation for the extra duties or reducing the workload on the special education teachers may also reduce attrition.

I wish to dedicate this to my family and friends who have put up with and supported me during the entire process.
Thank You.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my committee and the professors who gave their time and support to help make this a reality.

I also wish to acknowledge the support and assistance of my peers, colleagues, administrators, and supervisors of the School District.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
Introduction.....	1
Purpose.....	1
Location	3
Organization.....	3
Problem of Practice.....	3
Organizational Frames	7
Current Practices	9
CHAPTER TWO	12
Data Collection Methods	12
Survey Design.....	12
Survey questions in the organizational context	14
Survey Results	16
Qualitative Analysis.....	19
CHAPTER THREE	25
Research Questions Answered.....	25
Limitations	27

Discussion and Possible Solutions.....	27
The Human Resource Frame	29
The Political Frame.....	32
The Structural Frame	36
The Symbolic Frame.....	38
Summary.....	42
APPENDIX A: UCF IRB OUTCOME LETTER.....	44
APPENDIX B: SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTIFICATION LETTER.....	46
APPENDIX C: TEACHER ATTRITION SURVEY INSTRUMENT	48
APPENDIX D: ESE AND GE SURVEY RESPONSES	56
APPENDIX E: ESE SURVEY RESPONSE	58
APPENDIX F: TEXT RESPONSE ESE STAFF	60
APPENDIX G: GENERAL EDUCATION TEXT RESPONSE.....	71
APPENDIX H: CALCULATIONS FOR TABLE 1	79
APPENDIX I: ESE TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT	81
REFERENCES	82

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Number of teacher units, terminations, and ESE separations for the last three school years (Coordinator, private communication, December 16, 2014).	5
Table 2: Research questions by organizational frames.....	9
Table 3: What grade level are you currently teaching?	17
Table 4: What subject area(s) are you currently teaching?.....	17
Table 5: Organizational factors rated the most influential as a reason for leaving among general education and special education teachers.....	18
Table 6: Organizational factors rated the most influential as a reason for leaving among special education teachers.....	19
Table 7: Theme, Organizational Frame, Number, and Percentages of ESE Text Suggestions and Comments.	22
Table 8: Theme, Organizational Frame, Number, and Percentages of GE Text Suggestions and Comments.	23

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The inclusion of students with disabilities in the public school system became law with the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) in 1975. Some studies have shown that less than 10 years after PL 94-142 became law, there was a concern about the attrition rate of special education teachers (Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982; McKnab, 1983). The rate at which teachers are leaving the classroom is an ongoing problem, not just in the United States, but also for most developed and developing countries worldwide. Macdonald (1999) found that the yearly rate teachers left the classroom prematurely (prior to retirement age) in other countries was between five percent and 30% in 1999. The need for quality special education teachers is just as critical now as it was then (Billingsley, 1993). The overall question is why do special education teachers leave the special education classroom or the field of education altogether? While special education teacher attrition is a national concern, is there one answer that will work for all schools and school districts, or is this a question with no specific answer and requires each school district to look for its own answers?

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine potential organizational causes of a complex problem of practice within a public school district in Central, Florida. The school district is having difficulty keeping highly qualified special education teachers and personnel in all areas of special education due to attrition. This study used the organizational frames as outlined by L.G.

Bolman and T.E. Deal to identify structural, human resource, political, and symbolic causes of the attrition of special education personnel that were specific to this school district. Once attrition causes were identified, suggestions were provided so that the district administration could implement research-based practices to improve the retention of said personnel.

This study was limited to the attrition issues of special education instructional staff that includes teachers, compliance specialists, district-level program specialists, speech language pathologists/therapists, occupational and physical therapists. It included school psychologists and any others classified as instructional personnel. This study did not evaluate retention issues specific to general education teachers and personnel. This study did not evaluate the effectiveness of district personnel responsible for implementing the practices currently in place to help retain special education personnel.

The Exceptional Student Education (ESE) program is the title that the Florida Department of Education has used for special education programs since the early 1970's (Hist_letter.pdf.). The abbreviation 'ESE' designated the personnel and services used to provide an education to students with disabilities in most public school settings and, in the interest of brevity; this abbreviation was used to designate personnel or services used to educate students with disabilities in this work. 'ESE teacher' included any of the aforementioned special education instructional staff. The abbreviation GE was used to designate personnel designated as general education staff. The term 'district' was used to represent the school district in lieu of the name of the school district.

Location

The school district is located in an urban city in Central Florida. The county seat is located south of the main attraction areas of Florida, such as the Walt Disney World Complex, Universal Studios, and SeaWorld. Much of the southern and eastern portions of the county's 1,506 square miles are privately owned ranches, agricultural lands, public lands, and wildlife preserves. The urban areas include both incorporated cities and unincorporated towns. The US Census Bureau estimated population of the county to be nearly 300,000 people. (QuickFacts from the US census bureau.).

Organization

The district serves more than 58,113 students from all areas of the county. There are twenty-four elementary schools, eight middle schools, eight high schools; four schools that serve kindergarten to eighth grade or sixth through twelfth grade, ten alternative program sites, and thirteen charter schools governed, in part, by the district (ComputerEnrollment.xls-ComputerEnrollment.pdf, 2014). All district schools are capable of serving students with disabilities on their campuses and have special education personnel on the faculty.

Problem of Practice

The school district is experiencing difficulty retaining highly qualified ESE staff in all fields of special education services. According to the Director of Exceptional Student Education for the district, some classrooms have become 'revolving doors' as ESE teachers accept the position but leave shortly thereafter. In extreme cases, a class of students with disabilities may

have two or three ESE teachers in one year and the problem has become more apparent in the last 5 years (ESE Director, personal communication, November 2013). The situation is also equally acute for speech language, occupational, and physical therapists.

This ‘revolving door’ of teachers is detrimental to students and may affect achievement in several ways (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). Schools must often hire new or inexperienced teachers that are generally less effective than more experienced teachers (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008). The loss of experienced teachers makes consistent instruction from year to year difficult. In addition, schools that spend time and money training teachers on new instructional strategies must spend additional time and money training new incoming teachers to replace teachers who left (Boyd et al., 2008). In 2007, The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future issued a policy brief that showed the annual cost of teacher turnover in Miami, Florida was \$47,775,000 (Carroll, 2007).

ESE teacher attrition affects student morale. Ronfeldt et al (2013) found that when the morale of the students is adversely affected, it could have “a significant and negative impact” on academic achievement (p. 30). The detrimental effect of ESE teacher attrition is not limited to students in self-contained classrooms. Students and staff within the inclusive setting are also affected by ESE teacher attrition.

The school district’s Coordinator of Human Resource Staffing and Personnel Services Systems and Operations, provided statistics regarding the employment and attrition of instructional personnel for the past three consecutive school years. These statistics included the number of teachers employed, the number of resignations, retirements, and terminations among

the teacher population, and the number of ESE separations. The term ‘separation’ when used in this context means as any teacher who resigned, who retired, or was terminated during that school year (Coordinator HR, private communication, December 16, 2014).

The total number of employed teachers increased each school year from 2011 to 2014. The number of teachers separations increased from 2011-12 to 2012-13, then slightly decreased from 2012-13 to 2013-14. The number of ESE separations displayed the same pattern, however, if one looks at both types of separations statistically, from 2011-12 to 2012-13 the percentage of teacher separations increased by 21.5%. However, ESE separations increased by 53.8% during the same period. The percentage of ESE teachers who left was more than double that of non-ESE teachers. The number of GE teacher separations and ESE teacher separations were virtually the same from the 2012-13 to 2013-14 school years.

Table 1: Number of teacher units, terminations, and ESE separations for the last three school years (Coordinator, private communication, December 16, 2014).

School Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total number of teachers employed both general education and special education.	3,548	3,584	3,731
Total number of teacher separations not including ESE separations	307	373	370
Total number of ESE teacher separations	39	60	56
Percentage of ESE teacher attrition	12.7%	16%	15.1%

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), which is designed to “collect information that can provide a detailed picture of U.S. elementary and secondary schools and their staff”(Goldring & Taie, 2014). The SASS has

been conducted seven times since the 1987-1988 school year and the year after the SASS is completed, the NCES conducts the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS). The TFS is given to teachers who returned the previous year's SASS and includes both former and current teachers.

Approximately 4,400 current and former public school teachers completed the 2012-2013 TFS. The survey uses three terms to classify the movement of teachers. "Stayers" are teachers who were still teaching the same school for the 2011-2012 school year and the 2012- 2013 school year. "Movers" are teachers who were teaching in a different school in 2012-2013 then they had been in 2011-2012. "Leavers" are teachers who left the profession after the SASS survey in 2011-2012 (Goldring & Taie, 2014).

According to the TFS, in the 2012- 2013 school year, 10.5% of the special education respondents were labeled 'movers', and 6.6% were 'leavers'. Unfortunately, the data supplied by the school district does not differentiate between ESE teachers who moved to a different position within the district and those who left the district altogether either to a new school system or to a new career field.

When compared with the national average of movers and leavers (17.1%) on the TFS 2012-2013 survey, the percentage of ESE separations for the school district did not look overwhelming. However, when compared to the overall teacher separations in this school district the number of ESE separations was noteworthy. If the number of ESE separations were comparable to the national average was not the overriding issue. The issue was that the number of ESE separations was a concern for this organization.

Organizational Frames

The organizational frames are a method of looking at problems within an organization from various points of view. There are four specific points of view within the organizational frame concept, structural, human resource, political, and symbolic.

Problem-solvers within the organization who use the structural frame believe that organizations function more efficiently with clearly defined goals. Furthermore, all members within the organization know their roles and responsibilities, jobs are assigned based upon specific skills, and all within the organization are working towards the organization's goals and objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2011).

Public schools are educative organizations (Owens & Valesky, 1995). Schools are similar in structure to some business organizations, but there are differences due to the nature of the product being produced, the education of students. The school principal acts as the leader of the organization following the traditional organizational model. Teachers are the organizations different units and are grouped by either a common discipline (social studies, science) or grade level. All participants within the organization (school) are working toward the common goal of educating students. Problems occur when the members of the organization are not certain of their roles or the organization's goals.

Problem-solvers within the organization that use the human resources frame view the employee or worker as a vital resource. If the organization meets the needs of its employees, the employees will meet the needs of the organization. The abilities, skills, attitude, commitment, and effort of employees determine the success or failure of an organization. The organization is successful when all needs are met (Bolman & Deal, 2011). Organizations exist for a purpose,

but have no solid existence other than the humans who make up the organization (Owens & Valesky, 1995). Humans are an integral part of any organization.

Problem-solvers within the organization who use the political frame view the organization as a collection of individuals and/or groups that have their own ideas, beliefs, and needs. There are continual contests or conflicts between the various members or groups within the organization. The allocation of scarce resources is at the center of these conflicts. Groups compete for resources and the group with the most influence, or that meet specific criteria, receive the resources. The group that receives the most resources has the most power (Bolman & Deal, 2011).

Problem-solvers within the organization use the symbolic frame to look at the myths, culture, rituals, and symbols within an organization. This is how individuals find purpose, resolve dilemmas, and make sense of the rules within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2011). One aspect of the symbolic frame, the myth, is the story behind a situation, rule, or requirement. The myth can be true or false, but its power lies in what most of the individuals within the organization believe.

The organizational frames were used to examine the problem of practice for this school district. One research question per organizational frame was addressed in the research.

Table 2: Research questions by organizational frames

Frame	Research Questions
Structural	Was the lack of compensation (monetary or otherwise) for the extra work required of a special education teacher a motivating factor for the special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?
Human Resource	Was the lack of district/school based administrative support or direction a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?
Political	Is the uneven distribution of resource (material, time, personnel) a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?
Symbolic	Is the lack of understanding and support from general education peers and school-based staff a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?

Current Practices

The school district’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Teacher Recruitment and Retention Specialist, stated that the overall personnel retention efforts used by the district is mainly twofold. The first is providing assistance with certification and credentialing by offering study guides, professional development, and possible reimbursement for tests that are required for teachers to meet the federal requirement of highly qualified teachers. The second is by trying to maintain the sense of identity by providing personalized attention, and the human connection that had been present when the district was much smaller. The retention specialist also stated that this culture had been “branded as customer service” but he called it “being a part of the family” and an effort to “treat people as a name and not a number” (Recruitment Specialist, personal communication, September 17, 2014). Retention efforts aimed specifically at ESE consists of working with the Education Foundation and the University of Central Florida (UCF) to help defray the cost of certifications, endorsements, or more advanced degrees that are required by the

state to work with the more profound population of students with disabilities (ESE director, personal communication, May 12, 2015).

The ESE department has recently focused its retention efforts on the staff and personnel who work in the self-contained classrooms for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and with the speech language therapists. According to the ESE director, the department's efforts have included providing scholarships, backed by the district's Education Foundation, for ESE teachers to obtain their ASD endorsement with a two to three-year commitment to the district, or they must repay the funds (ESE Director, personal communication, May 12, 2015). As reported by the Recruitment Specialist, the ESE department hosts meetings so that interested ESE personnel can learn about scholarships available for obtaining a Master's degree that includes the ASD endorsement provided by the University of Central Florida (UCF). The ESE Director participates in the ASD Advisory Board Meeting held at UCF. The board looks for ways school can recruit and retain ESE teachers, specifically in the area of ASD. The department provides professional development to new ESE teachers. For teachers of students with ASD this professional development is often in conjunction with the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) at UCF (ESE Director, personal communication, May 12, 2015).

Retention efforts aimed specifically at speech language pathologists/therapists (SLP) include district attendance at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) national conferences to recruit new personnel, provide ongoing supports including professional development and mentoring. Other retention efforts for SLP's include additional steps to the salary schedule for those at a Master's level, and for SLP's who have their clinical competencies, district pay is at a specialist level.

One retention strategy directed at all ESE staff is monthly professional development that targets issues and topics of need in the ESE classroom environment. Program Specialists are ESE district instructional personnel who specialize in assisting ESE classroom teachers meet the educational needs of students with disabilities both in the self-contained and inclusive setting. Program specialists are required to visit all ESE classroom teachers at least once during every nine-week grading period. If an ESE teacher has need of more assistance, the program specialists are required to visit that teacher on a monthly or even weekly basis if necessary.

The global question in this problem of practice was are the current practices employed by the district to retain currently employed ESE personnel in all areas of special education proving to be effective in retaining said personnel?

CHAPTER TWO

Data Collection Methods

In order to determine the ESE teacher's perception of the causes of special education (ESE) teacher attrition, data was collected using an anonymous survey. Participants were recruited using an open invitation that contained an active link to the web-based survey software, Qualtrics. Consent information and the survey link were sent April 29, 2015, via the district-wide email system, First Class® E-mail. The open invitation was sent to the email forum 'Announcements' which is open to all district employed staff.

A list of ESE teachers and staff was obtained from the ESE Department and they were sent a targeted email to their school email via First Class®, which also contained the link and consent information. A reminder email was sent to Announcements and the ESE staff, May 11, 2015. One last email with a general thank you and statement of the survey closing date was sent May 15, 2015. The survey closed May 21, 2015.

Survey Design

The short, multi-branched anonymous quantitative survey was designed so that anyone who had access to the district email system could respond. Everyone who opened the survey answered the first question. Once the individual answered the question, they were directed to more questions or to a thank you screen.

The design of the survey was a collaborative effort with Dr. David Boote and Dr. Mary Little. Each is a recognized researcher in their respective fields and has a great deal of experience

designing survey questions. Questions were submitted, reviewed, discussed, and rewritten prior to the distribution of the final survey.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) 2012-2013 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) contained questions regarding why a teacher would make the decision to leave the classroom or education entirely. Approximately one-third of the study survey questions were based on the NCES Schools and Staffing Survey and the TFS. The question concerning the mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion of ESE teachers was based on and written like those in the national survey. Similar to the NCES survey, questions that directly related to the organizational frames used a Likert scale, but in this instance, it was a three-point Likert scale. Demographic questions used common answer choices or a text response and several open-ended text response questions were included to garner a qualitative response from participants.

The survey had three branches. The first question of the survey directed non-instructional personnel to the end of the survey with a thank you for their participation. Instructional personnel, which included deans, compliance specialist, librarians, academic/instructional coaches and any ESE instructional personnel, continued to more specific demographic questions. Demographic questions included a question regarding first professional teaching assignment, total number of years as a certified teacher, grade level currently teaching, and subject areas currently teaching.

If the respondent answered the subject area question with core academic areas, or elective areas they were directed to questions designed for the general education (GE) staff. ESE respondents answered questions designed for ESE staff. The survey instrument is found in Appendix C.

Survey questions in the organizational context

As stated earlier, this study looked at the organizational frames as outlined by Bolman and Deal (2011) to find causes and possible solutions for the attrition rate of ESE teachers in the district. Survey questions were designed based upon the research question as outlined in Table 2. Survey questions were categorized to examine which organizational cause or causes were of most concern. Questions marked with an ‘*’ are questions answered by ESE staff only.

Structural frame Research Question:

Was the lack of compensation (monetary or otherwise) for the extra work required of a special education teacher a motivating factor for the special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?

Structural frame survey questions:

- The training to support the diverse students within my classroom did not meet my needs or expectations.(e.g. special education, English Language Learners etc.)
- The opportunities for advancement were limited or unclear
- *The compensation for the extra work that was required of special education staff did not meet my expectations.

Human resources frame Research Question:

Was the lack of district/school based administrative support or direction a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?

Human resources frame survey questions:

- The support from school-based administration was not to my expectations (e.g. discipline, high maintenance students/parents, resources, etc.)

- The support from district administration was not to my expectations (e.g., curriculum support, resources, personnel, etc.)
- The pressure to improve test scores was unreasonable.
- *The school administrative support for special education programs did not meet my expectations.
- *The school administrative support with high maintenance students/parents did not meet my expectations.
- *I was often unsure of my duties and responsibilities.
- *My work environment left me physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted most days.
- *I often felt a lack of respect for my duties and responsibilities from the school based administration.(first pulled to cover class or testing when there was shortage of personnel)

Political frame Research Question:

Is the uneven distribution of resource (material, time, personnel) a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?

Political frame survey questions:

- I was not given the autonomy I needed in the classroom.
- Leadership roles on a school level for teachers were few.
- Teachers had little influence over school policies and practices.
- The classroom workload was unreasonable. (e.g. overwhelming number of diverse learners in a single class with little to no support)
- *The time I had to complete duties such as writing IEP's, attending meetings, completing progress monitoring documentation, lesson plans, etc., did not meet my needs or expectations.
- *The number and intensity of special needs students on my caseload was unmanageable.

- *The resources provided to the special education programs were unequal when compared to the general education setting.
- *I was often required to complete duties not related to special education or special education students.
- *I often had limited access to instructional resources that were provided to the general education teachers.(material, workshops, personnel).

Symbolic frame Research Question:

Is the lack of understanding and support from general education peers and school-based staff a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom?

Symbolic frame survey questions:

- The school climate did not meet my expectations.
- *I often felt ‘torn’ by the demands of the district special education staff versus my school administration.
- *I felt my input and suggestions were discounted and ignored by non-special education personnel.
- *My input into the daily aspects of the inclusive setting were ignored and discounted by my general education peers and administration.
- *The support and acceptance from the general education staff in the inclusive setting did not meet my needs or expectations.

Survey Results

The survey was open and available to all staff for 23 days and had a 92% completion rate. The first survey question revealed that 84% were of respondents were instructional staff and 18% were non-instructional. Instructional staff moved on to answer four demographic questions.

Twenty-four percent of respondents were in their first teaching assignment and 76% indicated they had more experience. The average number of years as a certified teacher was 15.04 years. The fewest number of years of experience was one and the greatest number was 50 years. The mode was 10 years and the median was 12.5 years.

Table 3: What grade level are you currently teaching?

Grade levels	Percentage of respondents
Primary (Pre-K- 2)	19%
Intermediate (3-5)	16%
Middle School (6-8)	20%
High School (9-12)	24%
Multiple grade levels such as K-8 or K-12 school.	11%
Other (District instructional staff that work in different school and grade levels)	11%

The survey had two major branches. Respondents teaching core academics or elective areas answered questions designed for GE staff. Those teaching ESE answered questions designed for ESE teachers.

Table 4: What subject area(s) are you currently teaching?

Subject Areas	Percentage of respondents
Core academic area (English/language arts, reading, science, math social studies)	41%
Elective areas (art, music, dance, Drivers Ed etc.)	7%
Special Education (any grade or position)	64%

The decision or desire to change teaching position affects both GE and ESE teachers. Sixty-eight percent of GE teachers indicated they had changed or considered changing positions, while 59% of the ESE teachers responded that they had changed or considered changing positions of the last three years.

Organizational factors that could motivate both GE and ESE teachers to leave were presented to each group. The respondents ranked the factors as a major consideration for leaving, a minor consideration for leaving, or not a consideration for leaving. Each group was presented these factors independent of the other so that a comparison could be made between the GE and ESE teachers. The full list of factors and the responses are listed together in Appendix D. Displayed here are those factors that rated the highest for both GE and ESE teachers.

Table 5 Organizational factors rated the most influential as a reason for leaving among general education and special education teachers

Organizational Factors	General Education Teachers	Special Education Teachers
The support from school-based administration was not to my expectations (e.g. discipline, high maintenance students/parents, resources, etc.)	60%	46%
The support from district administration was not to my expectations (e.g., curriculum support, resources, personnel, etc.)	53%	63%
The school climate did not meet my expectations.	52%	38%
The pressure to improve test scores was unreasonable.	49%	27%
The classroom workload was unreasonable. (e.g. overwhelming number of diverse learners in a single class with little to no support)	72%	62%

Special education respondents also rated factors that are generally found more in the realm of ESE than in general education. Displayed here are the six factors ESE respondents found the most influential when trying to make the decision to leave their teaching position. The list of factors and responses are found in Appendix E.

Table 6: Organizational factors rated the most influential as a reason for leaving among special education teachers

Organizational factors specific to ESE teachers	ESE Teachers
The school administrative support for special education programs did not meet my expectations.	49%
The time I had to complete duties such as writing IEP's, attending meetings, completing progress monitoring documentation, lesson plans, etc., did not meet my needs or expectations.	60%
The number and intensity of special needs students on my caseload was unmanageable.	46%
The compensation for the extra work that was required of special education staff did not meet my expectations.	63%
The resources provided to the special education programs were unequal when compared to the general education setting.	49%
My work environment left me physically, mentally and/or emotionally exhausted most days.	79%

Qualitative Analysis

The last question for respondents was a request for suggestions or comments regarding steps the district or the ESE Department could take to improve job satisfaction among GE and ESE teachers and staff. There were 80 text responses from ESE respondents and 52 from GE respondents; however, most text responses covered more than one theme.

Text responses generated by ESE and GE respondents were reviewed and the theme of each response was recorded using the themes.

The theme entitled “time” means that the respondent referred to not having enough time to complete their assigned duties. Some examples from the text responses are:

- “The new standards and new tests take more time than our small planning periods allow. So much more work needs to be done at home to prepare the students and administrations do not acknowledge or respect a teacher's time.”
- “I think Special Education Teachers could use a planning period and a period for office hours. Writing IEP's is time consuming. Administrators need to be aware of the amount of paperwork a Special Ed. Teacher has.”
- “Provide a set time each day where special education teachers could write IEP.”
- “Too many demands with too little time. The demands of the job keep my life out of balance.”
- “providing more planning time , common planning time and time to plan with our co-teacher”
- “As an ESE Teacher, it is unrealistic for us to "do it all". It is frustrating that not only are we required to teach, collect data, look at data and provide instruction based on this data but schedule and run all of our own meetings. Does the district want me to be an RCS or a teacher? I miss valuable teaching time performing two jobs. I love what I do, but I feel that a huge part is missing because of the amount of kids I have and how many meetings I plan and attend.”

The “professional development” theme indicates that the respondent referred to not having sufficient training or suggested training for other staff. Such as the following responses:

- “More diversity training and actually there is none”
- “It would be great to have more "Saturday" workshops available”.
- “...equal training with that of regular education peers in curriculum; additional professional development is needed to deal with specific problems that face ESE students and also training in what Marzano techniques can create the most academic growth for our ESE students.”
- “I believe we should do more training to help the reg. Ed teachers better understand the current statistics of ESE students, why the IEP is so important, and the large amount of stress and workload an ESE teacher has. I believe a lot of reg. Ed. teachers have no idea therefore devaluing the role of the ESE teacher and also resulting in a lack of IEPs not being upheld on a daily basis.”

The theme of “administration support” referred to feeling as though they were not supported by the school administration. Many times this theme overlapped with the theme of district support in which the respondent referred to feeling as though they were not supported by the district ESE administration. These two themes can be seen in the following responses;

- “They have forgotten or don't care about the teachers. It feels as if the administration does not care for the employees. This feeling equates to many ESE teachers treating this profession as a job, leaving with 2 weeks notice. When admin does not seem to care, why should teachers?”
- “Special Education teachers in my school are often left out and not considered when planning is done. We are teachers like every other teacher in the building and our students should matter like every other student. We just want to be included and thought of like everyone else.”
- “Protect us from verbal and physical abuse.”
- “I feel unappreciated and not supported from the District. They are unaware of how extreme the behavior is in the classroom setting and how parent support is not always there. The District expects us to do the impossible. Special Ed. teachers are being abused and beat up on a regular basis and the Districts attitude is that it is that it is OK. It is not OK. Then to add more of an insult, we don't even get a cost of living increase. This is a thankless job and we are suppose to be professionals! What a sad situation, and as I write these words I KNOW that no one cares.
- “...I would appreciate more district support during sensitive cases with very involved students...”.

Monetary expenditures are the basis of the “money” theme. This theme can be seen in the following responses:

- “We would love more supplies and items that the children need. A better playground facility to accommodate the special needs of our group. Perhaps an indoor play area that can be used all the time as we have elopers and this is a safety issue.”
- “The struggling learners need smaller class sizes.”
- “Raise salaries, stop hiring administration, stop promotion of friends”
- “Increase pay, work with the teachers to provide resources for those students who have special needs. The district needs to be more hands on versus hands off....”

The “personnel” theme is the suggestion referring to the hiring of or differentiated use of, school personnel. Examples can be seen in the following text responses:

- “Increase support staff such as para professionals in the class”
- “More supportive environment for first year teachers. Also behavior specialists at the high schools.”
- “...Add more support in classrooms.”
- “... We also would love to have an RCS FULL TIME at our location to relieve the burden of the classroom teachers acting as LEA and being removed from the instructional time of our students.”

Complete text responses from both ESE and GE teachers are listed in Appendix F and Appendix G, respectively. Table 7 contains the breakdown of the themes from the text responses and its corresponding organizational frame.

Table 7: Theme, Organizational Frame, Number, and Percentages of ESE Text Suggestions and Comments.

ESE Respondents			
Theme	Organizational Frame	Actual Number	Percentage
Time	Political	23	29%
Professional Development	Structural	9	11%
Administration Support	Structural, Human Resources, Symbolic	32	40%
District Support	Structural, Human Resources, Symbolic	46	57%
Monetary Expenditures	Political	21	26%
Personnel	Political	40	50%

Table 8: Theme, Organizational Frame, Number, and Percentages of GE Text Suggestions and Comments.

GE Respondents			
Theme	Organizational Frame	Actual Number	Percentage
Time	Political	11	21%
Professional Development	Structural	2	3%
Administration Support	Structural, Human Resources, Symbolic	24	47%
District Support	Structural, Human Resources, Symbolic	32	62%
Monetary Expenditures	Political	20	39%
Personnel	Political	7	13%

The qualitative responses of the ESE respondents closely match some of the ESE quantitative results. For example, the quantitative question regarding compensation for ESE teachers resulted in 63% stating that they did not feel their compensation was adequate yet in the qualitative responses, only 26% provided suggestions requiring monetary expenditures. Also in the quantitative theme of time, only 29% of ESE respondents provided suggestions indicating they needed more time while in the quantitative responses 60% indicated they did not have enough time to complete their expected duties. However, 50% of the ESE qualitative responses indicated a need for additional personnel that could be counted under the category of time; additional personnel would allow teachers more time to complete their duties.

The purpose of this survey was to ask the ESE teachers to rate the factors they considered the most important when they thought to leave, or chose to leave, their instructional position.

Their responses indicate there are several organizational factors within this district that need to be addressed before the problem of ESE teacher attrition can be resolved. The district must consider implementing various proven strategies, policies, or procedures to help stem the rate of ESE teacher attrition.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Questions Answered

The purpose of this study was to determine potential organizational causes to a complex problem of practice within a Central Florida School district. The school district has difficulty keeping special education personnel in the classroom or in the district. In order to stop the attrition of special education teachers, the district needs to find the actual causes of attrition and then implement research-based policies and procedures to remedy the situation. The quantitative and qualitative survey questions were used to determine which organizational factors, structural, human resources, political or symbolic, were the most influential when Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers decide to leave to an instructional position within the district or the field of education altogether.

The research data support the supposition that the causes of attrition in this school district are found, in part, in the organizational frames. Three organizational frames – the structural, political, and human resources – were most influential.

The most influential factors were the human resources frame. The research question was, is the lack of district/school based administrative support or direction a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom? A majority of ESE respondents (63%) indicated that the lack of district support was a major influence in the decision to leave the classroom. Another 46% felt that the lack of school-based administrative support was a major factor in the decision to leave. Similar results were seen in the qualitative

data with 57% of the respondents providing suggestions to increase district level support and 40% requesting school-based administrative support.

The structural frame question queried the lack of compensation for the extra work required of a special education teacher. A majority, 63%, of ESE teachers participating in the survey indicated that the lack of compensation, monetary or otherwise, was a major motivating factor in the decision to leave. The quantitative response indicated that the issues within structural frame were only slightly less influential than the issues of the human resource frame. While the qualitative responses did not indicate that compensation was the quantitative with only 26% of the ESE responses suggesting more compensation, 50% indicated did stress a need for additional personnel. Providing these additional personnel would involve an increase in monetary expenditures.

In the political frame, time is considered a resource. The research question for the political frame asked if the uneven distribution of resource (material, time, personnel) a motivating factor in the decision to leave. The majority, 62%, of ESE respondents they felt that their caseload was unreasonable and 60% felt the time they had to complete assigned duties was insufficient. These two factors, caseload and adequate time, were a major consideration in a teacher's decision to leave the ESE classroom. When looking at the qualitative responses only 29% of ESE respondents stated that, they did not have enough time to do their jobs effectively.

The research question for the symbolic frames asks if the lack of understanding and support from general education peers and school-based staff is a motivating factor for a special education teacher to leave the special education classroom. These data do not suggest that participants did not feel supported or understood by their peers, with only 15% of ESE

respondents indicated that it was a major contributing factor in their decision to leave the classroom. The qualitative responses did not have any suggestions about no support from the general education staff, all the responses about lack of support were directed at the district and school based administration. The symbolic frame is most often associated with how members of the organization interact with and support each other based on the culture of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2011). In educationally based research, this is most often called school climate.

Limitations

The intent of this study was to look at the problems of special education teacher retention at one school district within the state of Florida. This study has several limitations. The respondents of the survey were from one school district in one state. The participation in the survey was voluntary and may not be a fully representative sample of all the ESE teachers and instructional staff in the district. This survey was only presented to instructional staff who had access to the public school district's internal email system, which also included the local charter schools but not private schools. The survey questions were designed for this specific district. As a result of these limitation, the results of this study may not be generalizable to other districts within the state or to other school districts in other states.

Discussion and Possible Solutions

The school district has experienced a high turnover of instructional staff in all areas of special education. Informal conversation with the district's Exceptional Student Education (ESE) director revealed that the ESE office has no formal plan or procedure for determining the

cause of ESE staff attrition or for providing specific interventions to prevent attrition with the exception of the interventions outlined earlier in Chapter One (ESE Director, personal communication, November 2013). What does the ESE department believe are the causes of the ESE teacher attrition rates? According to the ESE Director, the attrition rate may be attributable to,

- ESE staff not meeting the requirements set forth by the State of Florida for certification required to teach students with disabilities;
- ESE staff being “out of field” and not following through on the certification requirements and;
- a lack of proper training in college and university training programs, especially a lack of training programs for students with severe disabilities as the focus appears to be for students with mild disabilities and in the inclusive setting.

The reasons for attrition as stated by the ESE Director may be a part of the attrition issue for some teachers. There is evidence in the literature that links certification issues, un-certified teachers in special education classrooms or those on emergency certificates and inadequate preparatory programs with higher attrition rates (Billingsley, 1993; Billingsley, 2004; Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Lawrenson & McKinnon, 1982). However, the supposition behind this study was to look at possible factors that are directly linked and mostly controlled by, the organization and not just the individual teachers. The respondents who participated in the survey provided other possible reasons for the attrition.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) from 2011-2012 found that 59% of public school teachers changed from one school to another within the same district and 38% changed school districts altogether (Goldring & Taie, 2014). The overall NCES findings do not differentiate between general education and special education

staff; however, it is interesting to note that between 59% (ESE) and 68% (GE) of the district survey respondents changed or considered changing positions within the last three years. The cost of teacher attrition is felt in areas other than student achievement and student-teacher morale (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has a web site with a teacher cost calculator that will compute the estimated cost of a teacher leaving a school district. Teacher attrition can cost a school district thousands of dollars a year per teacher (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007).

This study had four major research questions to try to determine the causes of ESE teacher attrition in this Central Florida public school district. These questions were aligned to the organizational frames as outlined by Bolman and Deal. However, in many cases, the answer to a problem that falls into the realm of one frame may find a solution in the characteristics of another frame.

The Human Resource Frame

The human resource frame views the worker as a vital organizational resource. If the needs of the worker are not met, the needs of the organization are not met. The question based on the human resource frame asked if a lack of district/school based administrative support was motivating factor for an ESE teacher to leave the classroom. The NCES teacher follow-up survey of 2012-2013 showed that 44.9% of public school teachers who left the classroom felt that the support and recognition from their administration was better outside of the classroom (Goldring & Taie, 2014). School level administration that provides support and effective leadership can have a major impact and influence over a teacher's decision to leave the

classroom or teaching (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Harrington, 2014; Kraft & Papay, 2014). School-based administrative support or the perceived lack thereof, is a major concern for 60% of general education teachers who responded to the district survey.

School-based administrative support was important to ESE teachers as well with 46% agreeing with their GE peers and 37% stating that they did not receive enough support when dealing with high maintenance students and/or parents. However, 63% of ESE respondents consider the support of the district administration, or perceived lack thereof, of greater concern and therefore a major consideration for leaving. Special education teachers are 29.7% likely to cite lack of (central office) district level support as a reason for leaving (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Billingsley, 1993(Certo & Fox, 2002). The finding that district office support is more critical to ESE teachers is not surprising. The district ESE administration, rather than the school-based administration, establishes local ESE policies and procedure, sets the number of special units within each school, allocates the number of ESE teacher units per school, and determines how ESE services are provided within the district (Billingsley, 2004b).

Certo and Fox (2002) had teachers list characteristics of an unsupportive district level administration.

- All school-based decisions are administrative with little to no teacher input.
- District staff is not visible in classrooms and is generally unaware of the daily running of the classroom.
- A teacher's time seems to be valueless and can be usurped at a moment's notice.
- Paperwork and minutiae are of paramount importance.
- Parent demands are granted despite teacher professional opinion and student actual needs.
- Reluctance to provide teachers and classrooms with needed materials, supplies, or additional personnel.

An unsupportive school level administration had similar characteristics and included a seeming disinterest in the needs of students with disabilities, unwillingness to listen to teacher needs or professional judgments and not listening to teacher concerns about the teaching assignment (Certo & Fox, 2002).

Supportive administrations, district level or school-based, share the following characteristics;

- administrators who showed an understanding and interest in students with disabilities;
- administrators who are aware of the legal requirements regarding students with disabilities
- administrators who maintained ongoing communication with ESE teachers;
- administrators who listen to and responded to needs regarding teaching materials and resources;
- administrators who willingly listens to and values teacher input;
- administrators who are frequently active in the classrooms;
- administrators who ensure teachers have adequate time to complete all assigned duties and requisite paperwork;
- administrators who are willing to provide support personnel as needed;
- administrators who listen to teachers and parents before making decisions;
- and administrators who allowed ESE teachers to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities (Billingsley, Crockett, & Kamman, 2014).

The issue of school and district administrative support can be addressed if school and district leaders focus on the main objective of the ESE teacher, helping students with disabilities meet their achievement goals (Billingsley, 2005). This can be done by ensuring that district administration, school administration, and the ESE teacher are fully aware of and understand the ESE teacher's job description.

The current job description for an ESE teacher in the district, written in 1996-97, is found in Appendix I. The district ESE administration can rewrite the ESE teacher's job description to

define and explain the roles and major responsibilities of an ESE teacher. This description should include a definition and explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the various types of support given by ESE teachers in the district. The roles and responsibilities of the support facilitator, the co-teacher, and the teacher of self-contained students in elementary, middle, and high school need to be specified and explained so that there is no ambiguity regarding the duties of the ESE teacher. This description should be periodically readdressed as the role and responsibility of the ESE teacher changes (Billingsley, 2005; Billingsley, 2004b). Once the role of the ESE teacher is established, district and school administration need to ensure support is given when and where needed so that ESE teachers and the students they serve meet their potential.

The Political Frame

The data based on the political frame suggested that the uneven distribution of resources (material, time, personnel) was a motivating factor for an ESE teacher to leave the classroom.

Time is one of the biggest and most important resource for an ESE teacher. How many times have teachers, both ESE and GE, said, “There’s not enough hours in the day”.

Unreasonable or excessive teacher workload and the time to deal with that workload has long been a major factor in the teacher attrition issue (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley, 2004b; Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014). However, what constitutes a reasonable workload varies greatly from teacher to teacher and administrator to administrator.

There is no definitive definition of workload, but for many GE teachers it includes;

- planning, writing and submitting lesson plans;
- teaching the lesson;
- grading papers;

- documenting individual student progress;
- making parent contacts;
- attending required meetings;
- documenting student behaviors;
- documenting required interventions for particular students (English language learners and/or students with disabilities);
- clerical classroom duties (attendance, writing behavioral referrals, etc.);
- non-teaching duties such as bus duty or hall duty;
- administering state and local assessments;
- other duties that change based on the subject and grade level taught;
- and any other duties as assigned by the administration.

Both the 2008-2009 and 2012-2013 NCES Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) asked respondents about the manageability of their workload. The percentage of respondents who indicated that the school workload was unmanageable rose from 45.2% in 2008-2009 to 51.2% in the 2012-2013 survey (Goldring, R., Taie, S., and Riddles, M., 2014; Keigher, 2010). This seems to indicate that teachers' workloads are only increasing which in turn continues to contribute to the problem of teacher attrition. A majority of the general education respondents (72%) who participated in the district survey identified "an unreasonable workload" as the number one factor influencing them to leave the classroom and/or teaching.

While 62% of ESE respondents agreed with their GE peer that the workload was unreasonable, for many ESE teachers their workload includes all of the GE teacher requirements and may also include;

- daily communication to parents;
- the maintenance of documentation of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives;
- the writing of the IEP;
- attendance at IEP meetings;
- collaboration with different GE teachers on a weekly basis;
- the maintenance and documentation of behavioral goals;

- weekly consultations with students, GE teachers, or other ESE personnel;
- the creation or adaptation of curriculum;
- the documentation of educational goals;
- the documentation of independent living goals;
- routine medical procedures such as tube feeding and catheterization of students with profound physical or mental disabilities;
- routine care of bodily functions for students with profound physical or mental disabilities;
- the training and supervision of classroom or instructional paraprofessionals;
- any duties, routines or procedures based on the needs of their students;
- and any other duties as assigned by the district ESE administration.

An unreasonable workload is one of the major catalysts for ESE teachers transferring to the general education setting. It is also the reason many ESE teachers who do transfer to general education never return to the ESE classroom (Billingsley & Cross, 1991; Billingsley, 2007).

Along with an unreasonable workload, 60% of ESE respondents stated they felt they did not have the time to complete their assigned duties. District and school-based administration needs to be aware that the non-instructional duties required of the ESE teacher on a daily basis detracts from teacher time spent with students. Especially time consuming are the requirements for documenting individual student progress on district assessments, classroom academics, and progress on IEP, behavioral, or functional goals. Numerous studies have shown that ESE teachers who feel they do not have adequate time to complete their assigned duties experience much greater levels of stress. The greater the stress level, the more likely a teacher is to leave the classroom and/or teaching (Billingsley, 1993). The ability of teachers to have sufficient time to provide services for their students, especially those in the inclusive settings, not only improves the overall job satisfaction and outcome of the teacher it can also improve the achievement level of students (Keefe & Moore, 2004).

Among the duties of an ESE teacher, writing the IEP itself can be very time-consuming depending upon the needs of the student. However, writing the IEP is the last part of the process that occurs just prior to the IEP meeting. Four to 6 weeks prior to an IEP meeting all school professionals involved in the student education must be notified of the potential IEP meeting to ensure coordination of schedules. This includes the GE teacher(s) and may include speech/language therapists, occupational, physical, or mobility therapists, school administrators, instructional coaches, or school psychologists. Once a date and time is set, written notice must be sent to the parent two to four weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. During this time, the ESE teacher must gather data regarding the student's progress on district assessments, IEP goals, and curriculum standards. Then the data must be put into a usable, understandable format for parents. District policy and federal law require that the ESE case manager, or the ESE teacher who knows the student best, must write the IEP. At this time, most ESE teachers are required to schedule and facilitate the annual IEP meetings of the students on their caseload. Some of these duties, coordinating schedules, sending out parent notices, collating data, and assisting with progress monitoring can be completed by trained clerical staff (Billingsley, 2004a; Billingsley, 2005). This leaves the ESE teacher more time for writing the IEP and working with the students themselves.

Whether a support facilitator, co-teacher, or teacher in a self-contained unit, the number and diversity of students on a teacher's caseload is another critical factor in the decision of ESE teachers to leave teaching. The more students the teacher has on their caseload, the less time they have to work with individual students, collaborate with general education teachers, write IEP's, and maintain documentation. At this time, Florida does not have a limit on the number of

students an ESE teacher is required to support. With the exception of students in the severe/profound population, the number of students an ESE teacher can be responsible for is unlimited. If reducing the number and diversity of students on an ESE teacher's caseload is not possible, the use of clerical assistance or scheduled time for paperwork only should be implemented (Billingsley, 2005). The more time teachers can spend doing what they became a teacher for, the more likely they are to remain a teacher.

The Structural Frame

The structural frame data suggested that the lack of compensation (monetary or otherwise) for the extra work required of an ESE teacher was a motivating factor leaving the classroom.

Providing adequate compensation for ESE teachers as a method to reduce attrition is well documented in the literature (Billingsley, 2002; Billingsley, 2007; Brownell, Hirsch, & Seo, 2004; Thornton, Peltier, & Medina, 2007). Sixty-three percent of the ESE respondents felt that they were not provided with adequate compensation for the extra duties they perform as special educators. Poor economic conditions, lower tax revenues, the push for school vouchers and the competition from private and charter schools make providing increased salaries difficult for many school districts. However, compensation does not always need to be monetary.

When a teacher accepts a teaching contract in most Florida public school districts, there is little to no negotiation on salary and benefits. In most Florida districts, salaries and benefits are determined by the local union and the district bargaining teams. However, the matter of compensation is a major factor in an ESE teacher's decision to stay in the classroom or leave. Allegretto, Corcoran and Mishel (2011) compared the weekly salary of public school teachers in

the United States to that of a comparably educated peer who was not a public school teacher. The researchers found that Florida public school teachers made between 18 and 20% less per week than a comparably educated nonteaching peer (Allegretto, Corcoran, Mishel, & Economic, 2011). Some states offer ESE teachers a differentiated salary for working in a high need area for students with severe or profound disabilities such as students with moderate to severe autism spectrum disorder; students with moderate to severe emotional/behavioral disabilities; or students with severe or profound cognitive disabilities.

When monetary compensation is not possible, other forms of compensation should be investigated. For example, the School District of Columbia County, Florida has the following compensation written into the teachers' contract. "Comp time will be earned when a teacher:...f. Is required to prepare and/or write an IEP (ESE teachers only) beyond the 7 ½-hour work day (CTAContract13-16.pdf)". The Columbia County contract requires teachers and administrators to agree on a system for measuring compensatory time. Compensation time is just one non-monetary compensations that might be employed for ESE teachers. Other nonmonetary compensations might include;

- more professional development opportunities,
- grants for teachers to cover professional development costs,
- ensuring teachers have a reasonable access to teaching materials,
- a strong mentoring program for both novice and veteran teachers,
- district recognition of ESE staff accomplishments and,
- providing opportunities for ESE staff to move into leadership positions (Billingsley, 2005).

The Symbolic Frame

The data for the symbolic frame suggested that the lack of understanding and support from general education peers was not a motivating factor for an ESE teacher to leave. This question was answered in three sections, each section asks about the ESE teacher's relationship with the general education staff. This relationship with others within the school setting is often called the school climate. School climate "is influenced by a range of variables, including the extent to which administrators and colleagues support one another in their teaching efforts" (Zabel & Zabel, 2002). Feeling that their general input was ignored and discounted accounted for 32% of ESE personnel while 24% felt their input into the inclusive setting was ignore and unwanted and 15% felt unaccepted in the inclusive setting by GE peers. The ESE survey respondents in this school district indicated that the support of the GE teacher, while important, was not a major motivating factor in their decisions to leave the classroom.

In the literature, the support of colleagues is generally tied to the climate of the school. In order to foster a supportive environment for all, the principal becomes the role model in the a positive school climate in which support is given and received among ESE and GE teachers as well as administrators, parents, paraprofessionals, and any others who work within the school environment (Billingsley, 2004). The ESE survey respondents in this school district indicated that the support of the GE teacher (often known as school climate), while somewhat important, was not a major motivating factor in their decisions to leave the classroom. This finding is different from most of the findings in the literature (Billingsley, 2004) and from the district's GE teachers, 52% of whom indicated that school climate was a major motivating factor in their decision to leave the classroom.

When students with disabilities are served in the inclusive setting, it is imperative that the ESE and GE teacher are united in their efforts to provide services for those students. Research has shown that if an inclusive pairing of GE and ESE teacher is forced, as often occurs in the middle and high school setting, the usual outcome is an unsuccessful partnership for both students and teachers (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). A forced pairing can lead to mistrust and hurt feeling due to frustration, miscommunication, and lack of guidance for the inclusive pair. School-based administration can help foster positive, inclusive classrooms by requesting volunteers rather than assigning inclusive classrooms. Administrators also need to foster and maintain open lines of communication between the inclusive teachers and the administration (Scruggs et al., 2007).

For ESE teachers in self-contained setting, the feeling of isolation can be overwhelming and become a major consideration for leaving teaching (Thompson & O'Brian, 2007). Principals need to make a concerted effort in insuring the inclusion of all ESE teachers into the everyday aspects of school life. When the principal acts as a role model, the inclusion of the ESE staff in all facets of school functions will become automatic for the GE staff (Scruggs et al., 2007) .

In some cases, support of GE teachers is often tainted by misconceptions regarding the ESE teacher's role and responsibilities. As a former teacher of students with emotional/behavioral disabilities in a self-contained setting, I have heard many GE teachers say, "It must be nice having only 10 kids and two aides" not realizing that my class has been just as challenging as her own class of 25 and no help. Furthermore, she usually did not realize that I had not had a lunch period and no planning time due to issues with students. A positive school climate and open dialogue between all staff can help alleviate some of the misconceptions.

Specific job descriptions for ESE teachers will also help. Once the role of the ESE teacher is determined, the district and school administration needs to work together to ensure that the general education staff is aware of the roles and responsibilities of the ESE teacher, especially those in the inclusive setting (Billingsley, 2004b; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002).

Another method of helping teachers feel supported by their general education peers is to provide a mentor, especially for first year ESE teachers. Research has shown that the first few years of the most critical for ESE teachers. Nearly half of ESE teachers will leave teaching within that time (Billingsley, 2002). Providing a mentor can cut the likelihood of a novice teacher leaving nearly in half (Ingersoll, 2003).

The mentoring program currently used by the district is voluntary on the part of the mentor and while there is monetary compensation for the mentor, there is additional paperwork as well. As a result, some new ESE teachers will have a GE mentor. This can also occur if there is a limited number of ESE staff on a particular campus. Some researchers show that this type of mentoring system can have a negligible effect on reducing teacher attrition, as it is not comprehensive enough to truly support the new teacher (Carroll, 2007).

The use of a comprehensive the teacher program can help alleviate some of the stress a new ESE or GE teacher faces and has shown to be cost-effective as it produces a more positive reduction in teacher attrition (Carroll, 2007). Four basic principles for a comprehensive new teacher (induction) program are;

- (1) building and deepening teacher knowledge; (2) integrating new practitioners into a teaching community and school culture that support the continuous professional growth of all teachers; (3) supporting the constant development of the teaching community in the school; and (4) encouraging a professional dialogue that articulates the goals, values, and best practices of a community (Carroll, 2007, p.7).

The induction program should include a mentor, positive, supportive communication with the administration, common planning time teachers in similar fields, reduced caseload or number of preps, the assistance of a paraprofessional when dealing with paperwork, and inclusion in an outside network of teachers (Carroll, 2007).

New GE teachers must become familiar with the school campus and routines, grade or subject curriculum, district policies, and non-instructional duties. New ESE teachers face all of these and additional responsibilities such as how to manage paperwork, adapt curriculum to individual student's needs, provide instructional accommodations, develop and write IEP's, and how to collaborate with other personnel involved with the education of students with disabilities (Billingsley, 2004). Having a mentor who understands the special responsibilities and duties ESE teachers face can be a positive deterrent to stress and attrition.

The mental, physical, and emotional toll the responsibilities an ESE teacher faces on a daily basis was the issue that prompted 79% of ESE respondents to leave or consider leaving their position. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines burnout as "exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration". The Mayo Clinic characterizes burnout as emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can cause doubts or negative attitudes and feeling regarding one's career or job and can even lead to physical manifestations such a chronic fatigue, substance abuse and physical and mental illness (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2015).

Burnout has been the subject of many studies on the attrition of special education teachers (Brunsting, Sreckovic, & Lane, 2014). Brunsting, Sreckovic and Lane (2014) conducted a synthesis of research on special education teacher burnout dating from 1979 to 2014

and found that burnout had an impact not only on teacher attrition but on teacher health and student achievement. Brunsting et al.(2014) also found that role ambiguity, role conflict and administrative support were central factors in the causes of ESE teacher burnout.

There is no one way to alleviate the burnout of ESE teachers as there is no one cause. Implementing strategies in the most common areas that contribute to teacher burnout, may alleviate the causes of burnout. The ESE teacher job description (role ambiguity), professional development to insure that all educational professionals within the school understand the role of the ESE teacher (role conflict), and additional, visible district and administrator support (administrative support) are the areas that should garner the most attention. Once the causes of burnout are addressed, the attrition of the ESE teacher may ease as well.

Summary

Richard Saul Wurman, co-founder of the TED Conference said, "In school, we're rewarded for having the answer, not for asking a good question". In order to find solutions to the problems within organizations, it is necessary to determine what the exact problem is, to ask the right questions. One question facing the school district is why are ESE teachers leaving? Unfortunately, there is no one right answer and each answer will vary from person to person. However, by asking questions of the people directly involved, it is possible to get an idea of how the district might be able to remedy the situation.

The school district may be able to stop the revolving door on their ESE classrooms by implementing policies and procedures that provide more direct district and school level administrative support, reduce caseloads, and provide a clearer definition of the ESE teacher's

roles and responsibilities. The district should also seek ways of providing more compensation for the extra duties required of ESE staff and implement a more comprehensive new teacher induction program.

APPENDIX A: UCF IRB OUTCOME LETTER



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Carla J. Keenum**

Date: **April 23, 2015**

Dear Researcher:

On 04/23/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination
Project Title: The Organizational Factors that Influence the Retention of
Special Education Teachers in Osceola County.
Investigator: Carla J. Keenum
IRB Number: SBE-15-11216
Funding Agency:
Grant Title:
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Dziegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Muratori".

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 04/23/2015 10:30:51 AM EDT

IRB manager

APPENDIX B: SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTIFICATION LETTER

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OSCEOLA COUNTY, FLORIDA

817 Bill Beck Boulevard • Kissimmee • Florida 34744-4492
Phone: 407-870-4600 • Fax: 407-870-4010 • www.osceola.k12.fl.us

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

District 1 – Jay Wheeler
407-973-4141
District 2 – Kelvin Soto – Vice Chair
407-361-2462
District 3 – Tim Weisheyer - Chair
407-361-0235
District 4 – Clarence Thacker
407-361-7906
District 5 – Ricky Booth
407-818-9464



Superintendent of Schools
Melba Luciano

April 27, 2015

Ms. Carla Keenum
701 Tennessee Avenue
St. Cloud, FL 34769

Dear Ms. Keenum:

This letter is to inform you that we have received your request to conduct research in our School District. Based on the description of the research you intend to conduct, I am pleased to inform you that you may proceed with your work as you have outlined.

I will remind you that all information obtained for the purpose of your research must be dealt with in the strictest of confidentiality. At no time is it acceptable to release any student or staff identifiable information.

I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. If I can be further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janine Jarvis".

Janine Jarvis, Director
Research, Evaluation & Accountability

APPENDIX C: TEACHER ATTRITION SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Q1 You are identified as instructional staff at any school or in the district office. (Including, deans, compliance specialist, librarians, academic/instructional coaches, Language /Occupational/ Physical Therapist etc.)

- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Q4. If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

*****GENERAL EDUCATION STAFF*****

Q3 Is this your first professional teaching assignment?

- Yes
- No

Q4 How many years have you been a certified teacher? (Please type the number of years in the box. If less than one year enter 1.)

Q5 What grade level are you currently teaching

- Primary (Pre-K- 2)
- Intermediate (3-5)
- Middle School (6-8)
- High School (9-12)
- Multiple grade levels such as K-8 or K-12 school.
- Other (District instructional staff that work in different school and grade levels)

Q6 What subject area(s) are you currently teaching?

- Core academic area (English/language arts, reading, science, math social studies)
- Elective areas (art, music, dance, Drivers Ed etc.)
- Special Education (any grade or position)

If Core academic area or Elective areas is Selected, Then Skip To Q7. If Special Education is Selected, Then Skip To Q12.

Q7 Are you certified by the State of Florida to teach students in the Exceptional Student Education Program (ESE)? (Not including Gifted students)

- Yes
- No

Q8 Have you changed, or considered changing, teaching positions within the last 3 years?
(within the district, from one school district/state to another district/state, or from a private/charter school)

- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Q9. If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Q11.

Q9 What was the primary reason for the change or possible change of position?

- Job related (dissatisfaction with job or working conditions)
- Personal (due to family issues, spouse relocation)
- Was offered another position/promoted

If Job related Then Skip to Q10. If Personal or Was offered another position is Selected, Then Skip To Q11.

Q10 Please indicate the level of importance each of the following played in your decision to leave, or possibly leave, your previous (current) teaching position.

	A major consideration for leaving	A minor consideration for leaving	Not a consideration for leaving
I needed a job closer to home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support from school-based administration was not to my expectations (e.g. discipline, high maintenance students/parents, resources, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support from district administration was not to my expectations (e.g., curriculum support, resources, personnel, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The training to support the diverse students within my classroom did not meet my needs or expectations.(e.g. special education, English Language Learners etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunities for advancement were limited or unclear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not given the autonomy I needed in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership roles on a school level for teachers were few.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school climate did not meet my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers had little influence over school policies and practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pressure to improve test scores was unreasonable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The classroom workload was unreasonable. (e.g. overwhelming number of diverse learners in a single class with little to no support)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 Do you have any comments or suggestions on how the district administration could improve the job satisfaction of instructional personnel?

End of Survey

*****SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF*****

Q12 Special Education is your primary certification. (the certification you received first)

- Yes
- No

Q13 Which type of special education setting is your current teaching position?

- Self-contained
- Resource room
- Co-teach in a general education class
- Support Facilitation in a general education class
- Consultation
- A combination of special education settings.
- Other (school or district level ESE staff, RCS, SLP, OT, PT etc.)

Q14 Have you changed, or considered changing, teaching positions within the last 3 years? (within the district, from one school district/state to another district/state, or from a private/charter school

- Yes
- No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To Q15. If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Q 19

Q15 What type of special education position or setting did you leave?

- Self-Contained
- Resource Room
- Co-teach in a general education classroom
- Support Facilitation in a general education classroom
- Consultation
- A combination of special education settings
- Other (school or district level ESE staff, RCS, SLP, OT, PT etc.)
- The position I left was not a special education position.

Q16 What was the primary the reason for the change or possible change of teaching position?

- Job related (dissatisfaction with job or working conditions)
- Personal (due to family issues, spouse relocation)
- Was offered another position/promoted

If Job related is Selected, Then Skip To Q17.If Personal or Was offered another position is Selected, Then Skip To Q19..

Q17 Please indicate the level of importance each of the following played in your decision to leave, or possibly leave, your previous (current) teaching position.

	A major consideration for leaving	A minor consideration for leaving	Not a consideration for leaving
I needed a job closer to home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support from school-based administration was not to my expectations (e.g. discipline, high maintenance students/parents, resources, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support from district administration was not to my expectations (e.g., curriculum support, resources, personnel, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The training to support the diverse students within my classroom did not meet my needs or expectations.(e.g. special education, English Language Learners etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunities for advancement were limited or unclear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not given the autonomy I needed in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership roles on a school level for teachers were few.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school climate did not meet my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers had little influence over school policies and practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pressure to improve test scores was unreasonable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The classroom workload was unreasonable. (e.g. overwhelming number of diverse learners in a single class with little to no support)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q18 Please indicate the level of importance each of the following played in your decision to leave, or possibly leave, your previous (current) teaching position.

	A major consideration for leaving	A minor consideration for leaving	Not a consideration for leaving
The school administrative support for special education programs did not meet my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school administrative support with high maintenance students/parents did not meet my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The time I had to complete duties such as writing IEP's, attending meetings, completing progress monitoring documentation, lesson plans, etc., did not meet my needs or expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number and intensity of special needs students on my caseload was unmanageable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The compensation for the extra work that was required of special education staff did not meet my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The resources provided to the special education programs were unequal when compared to the general education setting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was often unsure of my duties and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was often required to complete duties not related to special education or special education students that interfered with my responsibilities to the special education students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often had limited access to instructional resources that were provided to the general education teachers.(material, workshops, personnel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often felt a lack of respect for my duties and responsibilities from the school based administration.(first pulled to cover class or testing when there was shortage of personnel)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often felt 'torn' by the demands of the district special education staff versus my school administration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt my input and suggestions were discounted and ignored by non-special education personnel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My input into the daily aspects of the inclusive setting were ignored and discounted by my general education peers and administration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The support and acceptance from the general education staff in the inclusive setting did not meet my needs or expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My work environment left me physically, mentally and/or emotionally exhausted most days.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q19 Do you have any comments or suggestions on how district administration of the Special Education Department and/or the School District could improve the job satisfaction of special education instructional personnel.

End of Survey

APPENDIX D: ESE AND GE SURVEY RESPONSES

Questions answered by both general education teacher and Special Education teachers	Percent of teachers who marked the question mark as a major consideration for leaving		Organizational Frames
	General Education Teachers	Special Education Teachers	Which Frame
1. I needed a job closer to home	28%	20%	Human Resource
2. The support from school-based administration was not to my expectations (e.g. discipline, high maintenance students/parents, resources, etc.)	60%	46%	Human Resource
3. The support from district administration was not to my expectations (e.g., curriculum support, resources, personnel, etc.)	53%	63%	Human Resource
4. The training to support the diverse students within my classroom did not meet my needs or expectations.(e.g. special education, English Language Learners etc.)	21%	18%	Structural
5. The opportunities for advancement were limited or unclear	30%	18%	Structural
6. I was not given the autonomy I needed in the classroom.	32%	12%	Political
7. Leadership roles on a school level for teachers were few.	24%	12%	Political
8. The school climate did not meet my expectations.	52%	38%	Symbolic
9. Teachers had little influence over school policies and practices.	49%	35%	Political
10. The pressure to improve test scores was unreasonable.	49%	27%	Human Resource
11. The classroom workload was unreasonable. (e.g. overwhelming number of diverse learners in a single class with little to no support)	72%	62%	Political

APPENDIX E: ESE SURVEY RESPONSE

Questions answered by special education teachers	Percent of teachers who marked the question mark as a major consideration for leaving	Organizational Frames
1. The school administrative support for special education programs did not meet my expectations.	49%	Human Resource
2. The school administrative support with high maintenance students/parents did not meet my expectations.	37%	Human Resource
3. The time I had to complete duties such as writing IEP's, attending meetings, completing progress monitoring documentation, lesson plans, etc., did not meet my needs or expectations.	60%	Political
4. The number and intensity of special needs students on my caseload was unmanageable.	46%	Political
5. The compensation for the extra work that was required of special education staff did not meet my expectations.	63%	Structural
6. The resources provided to the special education programs were unequal when compared to the general education setting.	49%	Political
7. I was often unsure of my duties and responsibilities	12%	Human Resource
8. I was often required to complete duties not related to special education or special education students that interfered with my responsibilities to the special education students	6%	Political
9. I often had limited access to instructional resources that were provided to the general education teachers.(material, workshops, personnel)	24%	Political
10. I often felt a lack of respect for my duties and responsibilities from the school based administration.(first pulled to cover class or testing when there was shortage of personnel)	29%	Human Resources
11. I often felt 'torn' by the demands of the district special education staff versus my school administration.	38%	Symbolic
12. I felt my input and suggestions were discounted and ignored by non-special education personnel.	32%	Symbolic
13. My input into the daily aspects of the inclusive setting were ignored and discounted by my general education peers and administration.	24%	Symbolic
14. The support and acceptance from the general education staff in the inclusive setting did not meet my needs or expectations.	15%	Symbolic
15. My work environment left me physically, mentally and/or emotionally exhausted most days.	79%	Human Resource

APPENDIX F: TEXT RESPONSE ESE STAFF

Do you have any comments or suggestions on how district administration of the Special Education Department and/or the School District could improve the job satisfaction of special education instructional personnel?

1. More time to collaborate with classroom teachers is needed; equal training with that of regular education peers in curriculum; additional professional development is needed to deal with specific problems that face ESE students and also training in what Marzano techniques can create the most academic growth for our ESE students. I also think a realization that ESE students are not going to make the same rate of growth as their same age peers and that this should be taken in consideration when evaluating their instructors for VAM scores, etc.
2. I think Special Education Teachers could use a planning period and a period for office hours. Writing IEP's is time consuming. Administrators need to be aware of the amount of paperwork a Special Ed. Teacher has.
3. My recommendation would be to close the gap between interpretation and expectation.
4. Thank you for inviting me to be part of your survey. Have a nice day.
5. I believe the tone from District ESE directors needs to become one of collaboration, taking proactive measures to meet the needs of students rather than a tone of blame and finger pointing. It has been my experience that rather than take proactive measures, district is often scrambling to take temporary measures to address parent concerns.
6. There is a lack of respect from district ESE administration for the knowledge and experience that district resources, therapist, and psychologist possess to make decisions for students using professional judgment. It is unfortunate that a respectful, positive collaboration model is lacking with professionals that possess years of experience and knowledge causing a great exodus from ESE and ushering in new ESE staff that are provided with very little training and support!
7. Caseloads are overwhelming when considering the number of locations that an RCS has to cover, the number of students for whom we are responsible, the number of meetings that must be done, the additional tasks assigned by county office (allocations twice a year, FTE pre-verification and actual FTE verification which makes four times a year we must prepare, transportation verification, etc.), as well as trainings to attend and give our teachers, paperwork preparation, MTSS Tier 3 meetings, ESE team meetings, returning emails and phone calls. There is simply not enough time in one day to complete these tasks. Particularity if you are only at that school one day a week. I am currently working 12-14 hour days 5 days a week and taking work home for the weekends just to keep up. This is uncompensated work. Caseloads

must be lowered. County must realistically look at what we are truly doing in our day and amend our work and caseload to a more manageable level.

8. They have forgotten or don't care about the teachers. It feels as if the administration does not care for the employees. This feeling equates to many ESE teachers treating this profession as a job, leaving with 2 weeks notice. When admin does not seem to care, why should teachers?

9. I teach kids with ASD. After getting my Master of arts degree in Education I moved to Florida to begin teaching. In order to teach kids with Autism here, the certification progress is very strenuous and expensive. It's no wonder so many ASD teachers leave after the first year. The courses were good, but the timeline in which we were expected to finish is unreasonable. I was expected to begin taking 2 classes towards my ASD endorsement within the first year. I had planned on taking them both in the Spring but when I went to register, one of the classes I needed was not available at UCF. After a lot of stress and anxiety, both Osceola and my school made accommodations in order for me to continue teaching. I took 2 classes over the summer to finish. The courses (in total) were over \$3400.00, out of pocket. Not something many first year teachers have including myself. We had to take out a loan to pay the expenses. I love what I do, but it's no wonder we can't keep good teachers in the field.

10. Special education teachers who work with non-verbal students who have limited fine motor skills have considerable more planning to do to make lessons to meet the needs of the student

11. providing more planning time , common planning time and time to plan with our co-teacher

12. I believe we should do more training to help the reg. Ed teachers better understand the current statistics of ESE students, why the IEP is so important, and the large amount of stress and workload an ESE teacher has. I believe alot of reg. Ed. teachers have no idea therefore devaluing the role of the ESE teacher and also resulting in a lack of IEPs not being upheld on a daily basis.

13. provide more support to classroom teachers by coming into classrooms more often and offering feedback.

14. We really need to look at the disservice we are doing our students. Support Facilitation is not for everyone. We really need to look at the needs of the students and not make it one size fits all!

15. The teacher should be allowed to choose the paraprofessional that they work with in the self-contained units. The curriculum needs to be provided and not "made" daily by teachers. In a self-contained unit there are too many IEP's and too many different levels for the teacher to make curriculum.

- 16.** More training and mentorships for new EBD/ESE teachers.
- 17.** As an SLP, I believe a caseload of 85 is far too much. Although, it may seem like it's only 85 students, the workload is so much more. We are holding meetings constantly, writing IEPs, and testing student who are already on caseload, not to mention students who are being evaluated through MTSS. My job leaves me exhausted. I don't feel like I have the time to adequately plan and implement interventions the way I was trained to do. Something has to change, if not I fear that high quality therapist will continue to leave the county for other employment.
- 18.** By increasing funding and increasing the number of staff members (to include RCS's).
- 19.** I feel unappreciated and not supported from the District. They are unaware of how extreme the behavior is in the classroom setting and how parent support is not always there. The District expects us to do the impossible. Special ed teachers are being abused and beat up on a regular basis and the Districts attitude is that it is OK. It is not OK. Then to add more of an insult, we don't even get a cost of living increase. This is a thankless job and we are suppose to be professionals! What a sad situation, and as I write these words I KNOW that no one cares.
- 20.** I believe funding needs to increase for the support of general education. The Florida Alternative Assessment Checklist is not used in the manner it should be used. In addition, the students with ASD and overall special needs has increased substantially in the district and there is less support in the classes. We are still allowing services only in Math and Reading/LA. We have so many end of course of exams that students must pass to be successful. The requirements for making a life decision as to the type of diploma entering the high school is something that needs to be looked at on a case by case basis. Support increase for students in inclusion classrooms. More support equals success academically as well as emotionally!
- 21.** I'm really not sure of what could be done. I do feel that people at the district level/program specialists sometimes have unrealistic expectations, however, at the same time, I know that there are rules, laws and requirments in place that they must adhere to, which is the reason for them requiring certain things from us. (ex: having specific data sheets for us to keep now (vs. just using whatever works for us.))
- 22.** Special Education teachers in my school are often left out and not considered when planning is done. We are teachers like every other teacher in the building and our students should matter like every other student. We just want to be included and thought of like everyone else.
- 23.** I love being a teacher and serving the Special Education population. I understand that money and resources are somewhat limited for the district, but licensed teachers are being used as substitute teachers and pulled out of the classroom to teach when substitutes do not show up for assignments. Secondly, I truly believe that we are doing a disservice to our Special

Education population by not offering more service settings, (ex: self-contained, resource, EBD, pull-out, consultation and gen. ed). Third, not enough ESE teachers to staff caseloads, requiring teachers to write IEP's during times they should be in the classroom. If we are legally bound by having to write IEP's we MUST be given the time to implement. Additionally, some students should not be in the gen. ed population due to ability. Inclusion is important but only when ability is present. Finally, pay. We need a raise!!

24. Provide additional personnel at the district level to provide the supports that teachers need in the classrooms for their students.

25. Every body working with children must to have a deep knowledge about Special Education Laws and regulations.

26. Several areas are in need of improvement. First, the amount of paperwork (time) necessary for IEP's takes far too much away from our students learning time. I currently have 40 students assigned to my caseload. At a minimum, I spend one hour preparing paperwork and 1 hour at each meeting. When I only complete the minimum 1 meeting per year, I am spending 2 weeks of work hours (80 hours). I normally spend more than one hour working on paperwork. Much of this time is after school hours (on my own personal time). Time spent proctoring tests is another major issue we deal with. During the last 9 weeks of school, I will miss at least 2 days a week of student contact (in a learning environment) to proctoring of statewide testing requirements. So far, I have lost 12 days of student time due to testing. I am planning to loose at least another 6 to 8 days this school year for statewide testing and another 6 days proctoring County mandated End of Year exams (EOY).

27. Bring back resource rooms in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies.

28. Let us make the decisions about the level of support our students need.

29. Protect us from verbal and physical abuse.

30. Pay us for our worth.

31. I love my job--however, I am often not able to do my job. Many times those in charge of scheduling, or placement of students, think that a student is "serviced" if they are provided a thin slice of 15 minutes of my time in a day. They don't consider that while they might be meeting the letter of the law, they are forsaking the spirit of it. For the amount of \$\$ that each ESE child on support facilitation brings to a school, it is hard to understand why the position of support facilitator is often understaffed. I spend so little time with the kids, either due to a horrible schedule, or being pulled for meetings or testing, that the kids suffer. The whole reason my job exist is because the kids need more than a few minutes, no matter how quality (intensive or targeted). They need quantity time also. While each school is different, often I find that I am not seen as a teacher who needs to spend "real" time with students, receive curriculum-based professional development, or time to plan.

- 32.** Offering more electives that my students could attend.
- 33.** Provide support and materials to classroom teachers. I have not see my district administration much this year and have receive little support from them. Being new to the district, I expected support and have not received any. I have only one curriculum guide even though I teach 6 different courses. This has been a very difficult year, and I hope that next year will be easier. I really love working with my students, but having few/outdated materials has made this a very stressful year.
- 34.** When support is requested from the district, it should be address in a timely and orderly fashion. Currently it is difficult to contact district personnel by phone, and some issues are too sensitive or detailed to be put in an email. Also, their input/help is can't be depended upon because they are being pulled in so many different directions. Therefore they can't be counted on for assistance or support. This is not only frustrating for the school based instructional and administrative staff, it creates a feeling of isolation and apprehension.
- 35.** This first year has been crazy with paperwork. The courses on quality IEP and Matrix were informative, but given before I had access to the IEP system, so it was confusing. There have been several courses that contain differentiation ideas which are helpful. I would like more time with one teacher or grade level. It would be much easier to collaborate efforts and lesson planning with ESE students in mind. The curriculum map does not take into consideration student interests or the need to spend more time on skills that are not yet mastered.
- 36.** Please note that my previous experience reflected upon was in Orange County.
- 37.** Let teachers clearly know before the start of school year (prior to summer starting if possible), if the make-up (type of kids) or climate of the class will be changed...so that the teacher has an opportunity to find a different position and not be stuck with a position the teacher does not feel comfortable with, or is unable to physically handle, or can be physically harmed at. Especially, if is it a senior teacher that should be given the respect of seniority. If the teacher has repeatedly asked the administration for a change because of the metal and physical harm a position is doing, and they are qualified for something else; for the love of God, give them the other position. Do not continue to abuse that teacher. That is how you lose good, experienced people. If admin at the school will not do something, the rules SHOULD be changed so that district, or Union can assist the teacher to get another job at another school in the district. Many suffer physical/mental abuse for years.
- 38.** give special education teachers the same respect and support as gen ed teachers. Feel like other teachers looked down on spec ed teachers, we are the ":red headed stepchild" so to speak Frustration is easy in spec ed,, a change to gen ed for a couple of years then back to spec ed would have been nice. Instead, once you get in it , it is almost impossible to get out

39. Job satisfaction-that is the problem-teachers are looked as having a job not a career or being a professional. The School Board we all know does not care about teachers & students as been witnessed in the past. I expect nothing from them. The members are oblivious to the needs & requests of teachers & don't have empathy. Suggestions for their improvement is to resign or quit taking a beginning teacher salary for a part time job. At the least give an across the board raise to every person working under them. The District Administration really doesn't affect or effect my job on a daily basis. Most of the ESE Administration are unknown & unseen by me. I feel my abilities and knowledge is because of the co-partner who I work with and the years of my learning in the classroom. The Special Education Dept. has occasional trainings which give understanding of new requirements. For job satisfaction, mainly I need more time to write IEPs. My administrators keep the overall morale up.

40. Reduce the number of students on each teacher's caseload and ensure that they have administration/translators/correct personnel at IEP meetings.

41. Not at the moment

42. Provide the monies needed to increase ESE staff enough to fully cover the needs of the students. I have seen IEPs reflect what the school can do, rather than what the students need to be successful. It is a balancing act that errs on the side of what the school has money for.

43. I feel that they should treat ESE students and ESE teachers as a priority. A lot of the times, these kids get put on the back burner because administration is so preoccupied with testing of gen ed etc. We hardly ever get support for field trips or events for the students. Also, a lot of the time administration is completely "out of the loop" when it comes to ESE. I feel that they are sometimes uncomfortable in a self contained classroom because they have not had the exposure, experience, or training on how to deal with ESE kids. Also, they are less likely to support the ESE teachers because we are a whole different "animal" that comes with different testing, paper work, etc. I feel like me and my students are in our own world instead of feeling a part of the school. I love my job and working with my students, I just feel that my students deserve more, deserve better, and deserve to be treated just as fairly as the gen ed students.

44. I believe that we need more flexible settings for ESE in the schools. While Support Facilitation is the least restrictive for many students, we still have that few who need more in depth time in a small group or one-on-one. Resource Room would be very beneficial for those few students who are not able to keep up with the standards and rigor of the regular ed. room.

45. At our school, the support facilitators are pulled for testing at least twice a week. For the most part, this entails 3 times a week. This means that the students are not receiving the support facilitation they are entitled to. I'm surprised we have not had any due process cases as a result of being pulled from class on a regular basis. Furthermore, I spend my lunch, planning period (when I get one) and after school tutoring students.

- 46.** A greater show of appreciation for the challenging situations we face on a daily basis
- 47.** I feel that the problem today is the safety factor for students and teachers. It feels as if there are more violent students that are placed in our crowded classrooms and no outlet to protect ourselves. The current restraint techniques are not appropriate which leaves our bodies to protect the other students and ourselves. I love my job and would not work any other job but on many occasions I have felt that getting beat up is an acceptable option for the teacher.
- 48.** Schedule the ESE students first to ensure they are getting the services their IEP's require. Listen to the ESE teachers when we make recommendations as to which reg. ed. teachers will be the best fit for our students needs. These are common sense measures that can minimize the schedule changes that can be difficult for our students to adjust to. Stop using us ESE teachers as substitutes and test administrators and proctors for FSA and EOC denying our students of their needed academic support for many weeks. If I were a parent of an ESE student I would sue over this lack of compliance to the IEP and win!
- 49.** District administration is does not take into account what goes on at the school/classroom level when making decisions that adversely affect students.
- 50.** I have much to say but don't know where to start. I have been in this county for many years and the demands from the county special education department just keeps increasing. Our caseloads are unmanageable and the amount of paperwork just keeps going up. Unless I stay late and come in early, I can't get my work done.
- 51.** More district oversight at schools so problems/issues do not become so great as to discourage Gen Ed teachers and ESE teachers.
- 52.** Better Curriculum
- 53.** The district could set realistic expectations for the number of students to ESE teacher ratio. Overloading teachers prevents true support from taking place. I feel like a glorified para most days as I run from classroom to classroom.
- 54.** Having mentors that make sure you as a teacher get all the required workshops/trainings before or within the first year.
- 55.** Please take seriously low student teacher ratio!
- 56.** -provide more support in the classrooms through a broader continuum of services and for discipline problems -put a team of therapists in place that does testing only so that school based therapists do not have to do testing -revise the system of placement of Support /Facilitation students so that the VE teachers do not end up compromising quality of services because they have to visit too many rooms -streamline the testing and placement process - provide services according to what the child needs and not based on what the County offers -

hire more VE teachers, students probably get more support from MTSS Tier 3 than from Support Facilitation -hire OT assistants work under the supervision of licensed OT - review the system of how LEAs are appointed in the schools

57. I feel that providing the teachers more of a voice and creating a true team would benefit the students and the district. Communication both ways would provide more satisfaction for teachers and provide the district ideas to improve the system.

58. The scheduling of IEP meetings is unrealistic when a school only has one Program Compliance Specialist once a week. It is hard to include therapists, general edu teachers and ESE teachers at a convenient time. The specialist have such a large case load that they do not have time to get to know the families and provide better "customer service" to meet the needs of the students, families and staff. Other staff members who are considered the LEA to sign on the IEP are hard to come by and difficult to arrange a time to meet as well.

59. More assistance needs to be given when a class has a child with physical aggression towards others. It should not be okay for a student with any or no disabilities to hit another student or teacher. The reason "it is a manifestation of their disability" is going to really hurt a teacher or staff member, maybe even another student.

60. We need access to the IEP system from home. Having to come to the work site on our own time to complete IEP's is ridiculous. We need REAL PLANNING time, not just make it happen on paper. Administrators need to do our schedules, do what they ask us to do , and then see if it can really be implemented. Special class students should be instructed by a teacher during our planning, not taught by paras and supervised by the teacher on planning in the classroom. We should not be responsible for the copying, dissemination and filing of the IEP's unless additional office time is scheduled into our contract. My full time teaching position is also my part-time job without the pay. The full continuum of special education services needs to be offered so that more students are in the mainstream as much as possible. Give me the lesson plan and allow me time to develop all the special accommodations and teach the lesson, not write pretty lesson plans. Cut out the redundancy and repetition.

61. Bring back a full time RCS (by school) To help teachers with the ESE meetings, taking note, send invitation, etc. That way we have more time to teach. Update equipment is good too. Some ESE classroom the chairs, therapy bed, swings, etc., are so old that need to be replace.

62. Include more community based instruction.

63. I think district administration could be more open to our needs such as testing materials for nontraditional students and more training for special educators. I would appreciate more district support during sensitive cases with very involved students. I would like there to more resources available to the schools and home setting for very involved and needy ESE students. I think our ESE classroom models are not providing the level of support needed for some

students. One size does not fit all and many students are falling through the cracks, based upon results from psychoeducational tests. It is very frustrating to see students struggling tremendously in class and the IEP team feels as if the student was not placed correctly. There should be some type of safety net for these students that need more support than their psychoeducational testing indicates.

64. Increase support staff such as para professionals in the class, reduce unnecessary paperwork, have a curriculum to support teaching access points. Increase opportunities for students in self contained classes. Job training opportunities in schools, especially transition programs.

65. More support. Listen when people actually complain!!!

66. I took a considerable cut in pay to move to Florida. I adore this administration. I feel valued, I will go above and beyond to support the initiatives when I feel I make a difference. I really feel the ACCESS curriculum for moderate to severe disabled students need revamping. Having students that cannot read or write their own name, I cannot fathom why they need to understand the content pythagorean theorem, exponents and ratios when they don't even know one to one correspondence. In World History, its mostly Geography and language arts, my students did not know letter sounds and matching upper case with lower case letters or what a vowel is. How am I suppose to talk about presentation of reports, doing research, citing websites and analyzing the author's point of view?

67. Paying and allowing to attend different workshops and/or conventions.

68. We are in need of less testing and more time with the students. We also would love to have an RCS FULL TIME at our location to relieve the burden of the classroom teachers acting as LEA and being removed from the instructional time of our students.

69. We would love more supplies and items that the children need. A better playground facility to accommodate the special needs of our group. Perhaps an indoor play area that can be used all the time as we have elopers and this is a safety issue. We know these children generate a lot of money for the district and we wish it was used in better ways to allow teachers to fully support the needs of the kids. We needs more therapists to also service our children so they can get the full time that their IEP states. We are an ESE PreK facility with VE children as well as children on the spectrum.

70. I think that less paperwork would be excellent!

71. More supportive environment for first year teachers. Also behavior specialists at the high schools.

72. The school could do better by having fewer students wit disabilities in the general classrooms and needs to assign special ed students to genral ed. teachers who understand or are willing to be educated on special ed. students.

73. They need to realize that we are teachers too. Often ASD teachers are left out of meetings, events and supplies given out. We are the "red headed step child" in the building.

74. We need more training on curriculum or exposure as to what is working with other kids elsewhere to improve our scores and reduce testing.

75. There needs to be more time for paperwork, more time to attend IEP meetings and staffings. I know of others states that hold their meetings after school, but the staff involved are paid an hour for each meeting at their hourly rate. This makes it fair for all involved and no one misses classes, needs coverage etc... They also need lower caseloads for all, if we are to make the gains necessary for our students to be successful.

76. Provide a set time each day where special education teachers could write IEP.

77. Providing time for regular ed/special ed to plan together would be very helpful. Often times subs are paid for by district so regular ed can be trained, but not for ESE. We should be treated the same as regular ed as far as training opportunities.

78. As an ESE Teacher, it is unrealistic for us to "do it all". It is frustrating that not only are we required to teach, collect data, look at data and provide instruction based on this data but schedule and run all of our own meetings. Does the district want me to be an RCS or a teacher? I miss valuable teaching time performing two jobs. I love what I do, but I feel that a huge part is missing because of the amount of kids I have and how many meetings I plan and attend. The answer is not "give the kids less services" like I have been told many times. I carefully look at the continuum and give what the kids needs but because of all the other "requirements" I have to give them less time. It is not right. I understand budget cuts but taking away the full time RCS/assistant at the elementary level was a huge mistake for the teachers and students.

79. Many administrators really don't understand ESE, ESE students unique needs, allow us to be the experts, will take parents over teachers (even if the parents are wrong).

80. For SLPs, the caseload should have a cap in order to ensure the ethical services of the students. I am bound by the ethics of my governing board, the American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) not by the FL DOE. Additionally, my license is with the FL Department of Health so there is often conflict between what I know is right professionally and what I am required to perform under the DOE guidelines within the school setting. For therapists, the rules should be different than teachers.

APPENDIX G: GENERAL EDUCATION TEXT RESPONSE

Do you have any comments or suggestions on how district administration of the School District could improve the job satisfaction of instructional personnel.

1. Let teacher teach, let students learn. Students are not standardized human beings they have different abilities and one test cannot measure them all. These tests said my own son was a failure, nowadays he is studying law.
2. More diversity training and actually there is none.
3. Give teachers their yearly step increase and the raise they so completely deserve.
4. The county needs to support and respect their teachers. The new standards and new tests take more time than our small planning periods allow. So much more work needs to be done at home to prepare the students and administrations do not acknowledge or respect a teacher's time. We were not given our step per our contract let alone given a raise and the demands are not met with support but a more "get it done or get out" mentality. Teachers are overwhelmed and unappreciated here but their administrator, the county and parents. To improve this, more respect to a teacher's time needs to be given. If teachers must write new assessments, they need to provide time during the day with coverage for the teacher's class. We need to be given our step every year and not left frozen for years on end. We need to time to roll out new changes and not have everything dumped on us at once.
5. To improve the job satisfaction of instructional personnel wouldn't be an easy job. There are many things that instructional staff must do everyday in their line of work. I believe with recognition is gives a drive to want to do better and more. It's the same thing with children; they love recognition and we do too-even if we are adults. I believe having a lot of pre-planning during the summer would eliminate a lot of stress during the school year. Also, implementing team planning days would be helpful because that is the ideal way to teach-collaboration. When we all work together there is a higher rate of success!
6. Professional Development & Departmental training with team member.
7. The expectations for the studetns, and therefore, teachers are unreasonable in the sense that students are expected to learn a variety of unnecessary skills/concepts all the while the basics are neglected. The result is that the students know next to nothing. Their counterparts from other countries (specifically, European and Middle Eastern countires) are much better equipped educationally - I am only saying this to point out that our curricular waste the children's brain power. Our children deserve better carricular. Unfortunately, I do not have any suggestions other than a fundamental educational reform.
8. Osceola should be more discerning in the hiring of teachers. Many teachers come with no internship experience and degrees in other fields with alternate certification. They get

into a classroom and have no management skills. Once they are hired, they never leave and the quality of education our students receive suffers for it. We should be less focused on (preparing for) standardized testing and more focused on student learning.

9. The struggling learners need smaller class sizes.
10. A show of appreciation, recognition for hard work.
11. STOP changing every thing every year. be more organized .
12. Administration needs to recognize the hard work that the teachers do, and give them positive feedback to let them know they are appreciated and doing a great job. Administration needs to have an open line of communication, we should never have to guess about what is going on. We look to administration to lead us and help us do our jobs, that includes keeping us accountable and assisting us with discipline.
13. Raise salaries, stop hiring administration, stop promotion of friends
14. Less monetary resources should be spent on non-instructional teachers (i.e. Reading Coaches, Compliance Specialists (ESOL & ELL), Science Coaches, Math Coaches, Social Studies Coaches). These are all responsibilities that could be carried out by teachers or administration saving the county money. Additionally, less should be spend on district personal. While teachers are busy working many district employees have "cake" jobs and the top end of the district staff play politics instead of working for the schools and teachers and have turned into high paying but menial responsibility bureaucratic jobs.
15. Teachers need to be given opportunities for advancement. It seems that positions that open up throughout the county have already been filled before they are even posted. People are hired based on who they know and not in the amount of experience and degrees one possesses. I feel trapped in the county. Furthermore, I worry that I will never be more than the same classroom teacher I was 18 years ago.
16. STOP expecting BRAND NEW teachers to take all of these additional courses in their first year of teaching!! There is a list of requirements that are expected to be done by a first year teacher. We already have a steep learning curve in the classroom and then additional workshops are piled on top of that - spread it out! Make the requirement to have these courses completed in 2 years - but not the first year! It is too much! Last - two words - PAY RAISE! Seriously - we don't have the funds? It is sad to see our counterparts statewide receiving pay raises and we get nothing! Not cool Osceola County, not cool.
17. When a teacher voices they are unhappy teaching a class, give them a break. Keeping them teaching the class because they are over certified is unfair.

- 18.** Treat teachers as they deserve, with respect and value. Put an evaluation system of school site administrators into affect so that they are evaluated on the same level as teachers. Remember we are not robots and we also have families who we enjoy spending time with.
- 19.** I need a career that is family friendly and teaching is no long that type of job. If you want ot be just barely satisfactory then you must work 20 hour days between home and work. If you want outstanding mos to those days are school only. My family sits bored at school events that have no meaning to them except a roof over their heads. We use food pantries for food now and no long get to go on even a weekend getaway. let a lone a trip to visit and stay with family up north. This career is killing my health through over expensive health care that impeads my going to the doctor and my chronic illness daught had to be on medicaid due our health care being way to expensive to afford her meds and doctor visits. I am near the top of the pay scale image how the new ones feel when they are just 6 years in and have married had teh marriage fail and are now trying to raise their children. They leave quick and without job security why wouldn't they.
- 20.** Our principal does an excellent job recognizing teachers for their for service. The Osceola County School Board does an extremely poor job recognizing teachers for their above and beyond service monetarily. We continue to make less and less money (Net Pay) each year and pay more into benefits.
- 21.** Testing needs to be cut way down. We are not teaching the students, we are feeding them information to pass a test. The demands on counselors to get students to graduate on time when the students don't care is very difficult. Counselors are pulled to test 4 out of 5 days every week and still get our job done. I cannot be an effective counselor being pulled this much, and get students graduated, help students in crisis, register new students, etc. The work load is to a crisis state for counselors and our county office continues to add new programs that we have to implement. I am looking at going to another county that may value their counselors more. My administration is awesome and supportive, but it does not work if county administration is not supportive.
- 22.** District Administration needs to recognize that some teachers have made the choice to remain in the classroom and make teaching students their career. It is very tiring to be treated with such low regard by our administration. Interventions should be targeted towards situations that require it, while support should be provided in areas that are making a positive impact on student achievement. While district administration has revamped the entire curriculum pacing guide, I have not seen a single benefit, only a mind-numbing amount of extra work.
- 23.** Devise a fair and equitable teacher evaluation system that is completely understood by the District and its employees before implementing it, reduce the amount of standardized assessments (STAR reading/math, Science formatives), manage the budget in a way that allows for teachers to be paid bonuses they were promised based on the evaluation

system (regardless of how flawed it is) and for raises that at least match cost of living increases

- 24.** Increase pay, work with the teachers to provide resources for those students who have special needs. The district needs to be more hands on versus hands off. Special Education students should have their accommodations, but should not be treated any differently we are not preparing them for the future.
- 25.** Giving teachers more voice in how things are run, in all areas, not just academic. We know the students. Let us do our job. Weed out the bad teachers, let us have more time to be creative and not just using the book & tests. Use a better evaluation system. Admin. should be able to walk in any class and tell if that teacher is doing a good job, not just some prearranged snap shot. Teachers need to be paid more. Many good teachers coming from different states do not go into teaching here, the salary is too low. I can make more money at many other jobs in Orlando, but love the kids, so that keeps me here.
- 26.** Better wages
- 27.** Provide ELL support in ALL core classes as needed; not just ELA, Math and Science. More community involvement activities or fairs would benefit schools outside the downtown Kissimmee area of Osceola County.
- 28.** My personal experience involved a disciplinary action against a student who had threatened my life and he was afforded preferential treatment when the issue was handled. Neither the school based administration nor the district office would consider my concerns. For this reason, I sought to find a teaching position elsewhere, I could no longer work for a principal who had so little regard for the code of conduct.
- 29.** Besides pay us? You'd have a lot less attrition if they paid us what we are worth. Just because teachers have ALWAYS been treated as 2nd class professionals doesn't mean we have to continue thinking that way. The time is NOW to pay us what other professionals receive for such an important responsibility. We are no longer just teachers, but parent, doctors, social workers (another profession seriously under paid), and door mats. Stop the legacy! Also, cameras in the classroom would be most helpful for teachers to show proof of how students behave in class.
- 30.** Too many demands with too little time. The demands of the job keep my life out of balance. The proper balance is God first, family, then job. I have only worked at one school in my career. I have not considered moving to another school or district. I have considered leaving the profession.
- 31.** With more personnel and better salary.

- 32.** The School District of Osceola County needs to raise the wages of instructional personnel which has not been done in more than four years.
- 33.** I would like more resources available for ESE teachers. Specially for first year teachers.
- 34.** The district should give teachers the raises they deserve. They should also have discounted child care for their employees. It is very sad that I am responsible for the education and safety of 18 students everyday, but it costs half my salary for someone to make sure my one child is taken care of while I'm at work. I can't afford to have a second child until my first one enters kindergarten. This makes me want to quit!
- 35.** Better service model for ESE and ESOL students - the one size fits all model of support facilitation is not appropriate for all students more coaches does not equal better teaching treat teachers as professionals RESECT! follow through with discipline issues
- 36.** Allow teachers to teach. Stop mass punishment. Do not force unproven methods on teachers who have demonstrated consistent learning gains. Only force ineffective teachers to use district mandated instructional strategies. Education is not a business, so the business model is not appropriate, nor is it effective. Do you pay police officers less money and punish them because they work in a high crime area? Do firefighters get paid less money for working in an area with a high number of fires? It does not make sense. But, they are doing it to teachers.
- 37.** They could start by treating their staff with respect.
- 38.** Serious attention and thanks to people who are doing a good job. This does not have to be monetary. It could be a note in the mailbox, a handshake, a personal email from a supervisor, etc.
- 39.** Follow through with rewards/raises for teacher who "meet expectations". Increase general sense of care or consideration.
- 40.** Open communication; respect for expertise
- 41.** Provide experience credit for time served in military. Increase pay. Pay for college courses.
- 42.** Reward teachers who stay in the district year after year. Don't entice new hires with a decent wage and then fail to give those who stay year in and year out, no financial increase Common core tests that come from the district office should be edited before sent to the teacher. The scoring should also be edited. I have seen many misspellings over the course of this school year and many times when the grading scale does not match the amount of questions given. Administrative walk-throughs are needed but should not be used as a way to micro-manage. Have an open forum/question answer session for teachers/parents regionally at least once during the school year. Require board members

to spend a certain number of days in the classroom at each level of education: elementary, middle, and high school.

- 43.** Increase teacher salaries. Provide better health insurance benefits.
- 44.** Limit testing
- 45.** Osceola County is a fairly good county to work for. I have no major complaints at the moment. I love my career in the teaching field. I have about three years before I retire or just leave the field for something else. I do feel very sorry for young people who are entering the field at this time. The climate of the schools (most schools) seems to be that of maids cleaning hotel rooms and are being constantly rated and judged on well they scrub the tubs and make the beds. There is nothing wrong with accountability! However, when everyone is judged as having nothing to offer on their own merits of passion and creativity it takes the winds from your sails. I feel most teachers are driven by passion and compassion - and not stepping to the beat of whatever "best practice" is being "sold us" for the current school year. We can test the students, test the teachers, tests the principals - test all the future teachers - but test for what? We CAN NOT get that wrong! Thanks!
- 46.** Communication Better introduction to the District and how things work.
- 47.** Advocate for students and teachers by reining in the out of control testing. Add more support in classrooms.
- 48.** At this point I think the school board is out of touch. They also work part-time and make almost as much money as a beginning teacher. i don't think any of the school board members have ever actually taught but they make decisions as if they have. They are, as a whole, insulting to teachers.
- 49.** Give us the raises that we expect and also allow us to teach instead of always surprising us with new rules every week. I think it would be great if there was more administrative oversight instead of allowing the principals to RUN the school. Our school needs firmer discipline and to be less responsive to student complaints (since most of them are trumped up)
- 50.** It would be great to have more "Saturday" workshops available.
- 51.** Allow them to teach their students. We cannot be expected to teach WAY below grade level students on grade level without any remediation. We are also not paid for all of the extra work, testing, and grading that has been thrown on us.
- 52.** Less toxic testing for students. More support in areas, such as Attendance - currently no policy in place for elementary level (unlike Middle & High levels that can go after

parents & licenses) and to bring back truancy officers. This needed in order to hold parents liable for children not attending school and teachers expected to "catch up" students who are habitually absent. Follow through on discipline - administrators so worried about high numbers of referrals as for it looks bad on the school and telling the teachers being told to go above and beyond to keep and manage unruly students in the classroom. Not a teacher's job to teach full behaviors - especially during lunch periods. Yet teachers are having to discipline students when they are acting incorrectly at lunch? Giving a pay raise to show support and understanding of so many changes that have had to be dealt with this year.

APPENDIX H: CALCULATIONS FOR TABLE 1

School Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Total number of teachers employed both general education and special education.	3,548	3,584	3,731
Total number of teacher separations not including ESE separations	307	373	370
Total number of ESE teacher separations	39	60	56
Percentage of ESE teacher attrition	12.7%	16%	15.1%

Number increase of non-ESE teacher separations 2011-2012 to 2012-2013= 66

Percentage of increase in non-ESE teacher separations

$$373-307= 66$$

$$66/307= .215*100 = 21.5\% \text{ increase in non-ESE teacher separations}$$

Number increase of ESE teacher separations 2011-2012 to 2012-2013= 21

Percentage of increase in ESE teacher separations

$$60-39= 21$$

$$21/39= .538*100 = 53.8\% \text{ increase in ESE teacher separations}$$

**APPENDIX I: ESE TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION FOR SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

POSITION DESCRIPTION

- TITLE:** Exceptional Student Education Teacher
- QUALIFICATIONS:** 1. Bachelor's Degree and certification in exceptional student education
- REPORTS TO:** Principal
- POSITION GOAL:** To teach exceptional students according to individual education plans following adopted curriculum, instructional methods, monitoring systems
- PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**
1. To provide appropriate instruction to all eligible exceptional students assigned
 2. To write, review, update, and amend each assigned student's individual education plan, according to Florida State Board Rules and district procedures, and to certify mastery or continuation of goals and objectives at the end of each grading period and at year-end IEP reviews
 3. To provide mainstreaming opportunities for assigned exceptional students to the greatest possible degree and to provide consultative assistance to regular teachers to ensure success of mainstreamed exceptional students
 4. To provide direction, supervision, and limited training to any assigned classroom aide
 5. To maintain a working knowledge of current laws, regulations, trends, policies, and procedures by attending the appropriate program meetings throughout the school year
 6. To attend inservice opportunities developed to provide training in district adopted curriculum, instructional methods, monitoring systems, and other initiatives
 7. To maintain appropriate parent contacts as required by individual education plans
 8. To document student progress as required by individual plans and to assist in the re-evaluation process required by Florida State Board Rules
 9. To prepare individual education plans for students scheduled for staffing and to attend those staffings to complete the plan
 10. To perform other duties as assigned by the principal or Director of Exceptional Student Education
- TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:** Ten (10) Months - Teacher Salary Schedule
- EVALUATION:** Performance in this position will be evaluation by the Principal
- JOB CODE:**
- LINE #:**

REFERENCES

- Allegretto, S. A., Corcoran, S. P., Mishel, L., & Economic, P. I. (2011). *The teaching penalty: An update through 2010. EPI issue brief #298.* ().Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED537328&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study. *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future*, Retrieved from <http://nctaf.org/teacher-turnover-cost-calculator>
- Billingsley, B. S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition-in special and general education A critical review of the literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 27(2), 137-174.
- Billingsley, B. S. (2002). Improving special education teacher retention: Implications from a decade of research. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 15(2), 60-66.
- Billingsley, B. S. (2004). Special education teacher retention and attrition a critical analysis of the research literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 38(1), 39-55.
- Billingsley, B. S. (2005). *Cultivating and keeping committed special education teachers: What principals and district leaders can do* Corwin Press.
- Billingsley, B. S. (2007). A case study of special education teacher attrition in an urban district. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 20(1), 11-20.

Billingsley, B. S., Crockett, J., & Kamman, M. L. (2014). Recruiting and retaining teachers and administrators in special education. *Handbook of Research on Special Education Teacher Preparation*, 94.

Billingsley, B. S., & Cross, L. H. (1991). Teachers' decisions to transfer from special to general education. *The Journal of Special Education*, 24(4), 496-511.

Billingsley, B. S. (2004). Promoting teacher quality and retention in special education. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 37(5), 370-376. doi:10.1177/00222194040370050101

Boe, E. E., Bobbitt, S. A., & Cook, L. H. (1997). Whither didst thou go? retention, reassignment, migration, and attrition of special and general education teachers from a national perspective. *The Journal of Special Education*, 30(4), 371-389.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2011). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership*. Jossey-Bass.

Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2008). Who leaves? teacher attrition and student achievement.

Brownell, M. T., Hirsch, E., & Seo, S. (2004). Meeting the demand for highly qualified special education teachers during severe shortages what should policymakers consider? *The Journal of Special Education*, 38(1), 56-61.

Brunsting, N. C., Sreckovic, M. A., & Lane, K. L. (2014). Special education teacher burnout: A synthesis of research from 1979 to 2013. *Education and Treatment of Children, 37*(4), 681-711.

burnout. 2015. In Merriam-Webster.com. Retrieved June 30, 2015, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burnout>

Carroll, T. (2007). Policy brief: The high cost of teacher turnover. *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future*.

Certo, J. L., & Fox, J. E. (2002). Retaining quality teachers. *High School Journal, 86*(1), 57.

Retrieved from

<https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?auth=shibb&url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7587372&site=ehost-live>

Cities & geography Retrieved from <http://www.osceola.org/about-osceola-county/general-information/cities-geography.stml>

CTAContract13-16.pdf Retrieved from <http://columbia.k12.fl.us/CTAContract13-16.pdf>

Goldring, R., Taie, S., and Riddles, M. (2014).

Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012–13 teacher follow-up survey. (No. NCES 2014-077). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics.

Grissom, J. A., Nicholson-Crotty, S., & Harrington, J. R. (2014). Estimating the effects of no child left behind on teachers' work environments and job attitudes. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 417-436.

hist_letter.pdf Retrieved from http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/3/urlt/hist_letter.pdf

Ingersoll, R. (2003). Is there really a teacher shortage? GSE Publications, , 133.

Keefe, E. B., & Moore, V. (2004). The challenge of co-teaching in inclusive classrooms at the high school level: What the teachers told us. *American Secondary Education*, 32(3), 77-88.

Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41064524>

Keigher, A. (2010). Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2008-09 teacher follow-up survey. first look. NCES 2010-353. *National Center for Education Statistics*,

Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2014). Can professional environments in schools promote teacher development? explaining heterogeneity in returns to teaching experience. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 36(4), 476-500.

Lawrenson, G. M., & McKinnon, A. J. (1982). A survey of classroom teachers of the emotionally disturbed: Attrition and burnout factors. *Behavioral Disorders*, , 41-49.

Macdonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(8), 835-848.

Mayo Clinic Staff. (2015). **Job burnout: How to spot it and take action.** . Retrieved from

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642>

McKnab, P. (1983). Special education personnel attrition in Kansas, 1976 to 1982: A summary of attrition rates and an analysis of reasons for quitting.

Osceola county QuickFacts from the US census bureau Retrieved from

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/12097.html>

Owens, Robert G. and Valesky, Thomas C. (2011). *Organizational behavior in education: Leadership and school reform*. Upper Saddle River; New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36.

Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & McDuffie, K. A. (2007). Co-teaching in inclusive classrooms: A metasynthesis of qualitative research. *Exceptional Children*, 73(4), 392-416.

Thompson, J. R., & O'Brian, M. (2007). Many hats and a delicate balance: The lives and times of today's special education directors. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 20(1), 33-43.

Thornton, B., Peltier, G., & Medina, R. (2007). Reducing the special education teacher shortage. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 80(5), 233-238.

Watlington, E., Shockley, R., Guglielmino, P., & Felsher, R. (2010). The high cost of leaving: An analysis of the cost of teacher turnover. *Journal of Education Finance*, 36(1), 22-37.

Weiss, M. P., & Lloyd, J. W. (2002). Congruence between roles and actions of secondary special educators in co-taught and special education settings. *The Journal of Special Education*, 36(2), 58-68.

Zabel, R. H., & Zabel, M. K. (2002). Burnout among special education teachers and perceptions of support. *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 15(2), 67-73.