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The Retention of Teachers in the State of Georgia in the Absence of a State-Wide Retention Policy

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THE RETENTION OF TEACHERS IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA IN THE

ABSENCE OF A STATE-WIDE RETENTION POLICY

by

NATASHA GRIFFIN

(Under the Direction of Walter Polka)

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of personnel directors on strategies that are currently being used to retain teachers in the absence of a state-wide retention policy in the state of Georgia. Data collection methods were structured based on the review of literature. Components of the survey were sampled on six personnel directors in order to ensure that all areas of the topic were discussed. A survey was administered to personnel directors throughout the state of Georgia.

Education has a deep impact on society; therefore, it is the biggest investment of our future. Results indicated that teachers need to be provided sufficient training and mentoring support, so they can better educate students. Funds should be appropriately allocated to provide resources, salary increases, and continuous training to novice and veteran teachers. Positive and supportive environments will encourage teachers to remain in the field of education. Recommendations suggest that the use of more dialogue between school systems will illuminate ideas, so best practices of strategies to retain teachers can be shared and utilized for this very important and timely purpose.

INDEX WORDS: Teacher retention, Georgia, Personnel directors

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DEDICATION

First of all I would like to thank my heavenly father for leading me along the right paths daily in life and keeping my soul anchored. I want to thank my husband, Dexter, for allowing me to conquer this dream, supporting me every step of the way, and lifting me up when I was down. To my Kennedy, I thank you for being my inspiration. To my parents, Jesse & Gloria Peters, grandparents, Lois Whiters and Nicie Johnson, and my sisters, Maqueta Griswold and Josette Bynum, I thank you all for my foundation and will to strive for excellence. To the Williams family, I thank you for allowing me to go to class at peace knowing Kennedy was in good hands.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context of Study

If we are committed to making sure that no child is left behind, school districts across the country will need to develop successful strategies both to support new teachers and to keep veteran teachers in place.

(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2002, p. 2)

Teaching touches the lives of all children from a variety of backgrounds and ability levels. Although the profession of teaching is vital, the retention of public school teachers in America has been an issue of concern for many years (Henke, Chen, and Geis, 2000). Some teachers who leave the profession benefit themselves, their schools, and their students, but it is highly likely that committed and quality teachers are leaving as well (Shen, 2001). Ingersoll (2002) found that high rates of turnover have little to do with a graying workforce. He continues to express that as many as 33 percent of new hires leave teaching all together in their first 3 years, and 46 percent leave in their first five years for various reasons.

For the past 10 years, the number of teachers exiting the profession annually has surpassed the number of teachers entering the profession. Less than 20 percent of this attrition, the rate of teachers who choose to leave the field of education to pursue other careers and options, is due to retirement (Darling-Hammond, 2003a & Shen, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) found that while schools hired 232,000 teachers in 1999, for example, 287,000 teachers left the profession that year. Retirements make up a small part of this attrition. Only 14% of teachers who left in 1994-1995 listed retirement as their primary reason (Ingersoll, 2001). Widespread concerns have increased in the field of education because a decrease in teacher retention disrupts program continuity and hinders student

learning and achievement. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2003) has named teacher retention a "national crisis."

Teacher effectiveness increases with years of experience on the job, but when teachers leave before they acquire valuable experience, effective teaching skills may never be reached by these individuals. According to the NCTAF (2003), too many teachers are leaving before they become accomplished professionals. The person that may replace the exiting teacher will most likely be inexperienced and even lack the limited background experience the previous teacher could have possibly had; therefore, taking a step backwards towards the true goal of helping students. The NCTAF indicates that the "students pay the highest price of all: diminishing learning and dreams denied" (2003, p. 9).

The mandates of the "*No Child Left Behind Act*," stress the importance of teacher accountability, making it necessary for all schools to have a highly skilled and productive staff (Rose, 2003). According to the United States Department of Education, the solution that the "*No Child Left Behind Act*" offers is that every school must have well-prepared teachers in all classrooms by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. This will be achieved by school systems being mandated to hire and assign teachers in the areas of education in which they are certified to teach. NCTAF (2003) states, "a prepared teacher, also known as a qualified teacher, possesses several skills, including a deep understanding of the subject matter, a positive classroom environment, the ability to use a variety of assessment techniques, and the ability to instill a passion for learning into each student (p. 10)."

Another important factor of the "*No Child Left Behind Act"* is that it requires all students to be on grade level by 2014 (Mathis, 2003; No Child Left Behind, 2003). This strict mandate, which is set at the federal level, is causing stress and nervousness amongst both new and veteran teachers. Educational administrators are also feeling the pressure of the mandate, and are directing their attention to increasing test scores rather than inducting their new teachers and retaining current teachers (Hope, 1999). The absence of adequate induction into a school may discourage new teachers at this critical period of their career development. This type of work atmosphere is not conducive for welcoming new staff members or showing the positive side to the profession for novice and veteran teachers.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) shared an advertisement created by Darling-Hammond that depicted current conditions teachers were faced with on a daily basis in 1983:

Wanted, college-educated individuals who are willing to put in excessively long hours without commensurate compensation; who can work under adverse conditions, with unappreciative supervisors and even more unappreciative clients, many of whom prefer to be uninvolved, as well; who do not mind having inadequate resources and support services; who agree to assume unspecified responsibilities without prior notification; but who will be held accountable for the satisfaction and performance of the unappreciative and uninvolved clients. Candidates for the position also must be willing to receive inadequate wages and expect not to be able to double their income in constant dollars in a lifetime.

Applicants are encouraged to send resumes to the Teacher Employment

Office of the _____ School. (¶ 5)

This advertisement depicts the thoughts of many teachers today. Educational systems

have become less attractive because of the conditions teachers are faced with daily.

For many years, administrators have witnessed a growing teacher shortage across

all academic levels and in particular geographic areas. Administrators have observed low

teacher retention rates throughout school systems, especially in the areas of special

education, mathematics, and sciences (Ingersoll, 2001). The retention of teachers in

schools with large numbers of special education and bilingual students is extremely low

(Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). These teaching disciplines are especially difficult to staff in

urban and rural schools (American Association of Employment in Education, 2003).

These concerns are due to an increase in multicultural populations and the diverse needs

and attitudes of school systems.

The resilience of teachers and its effects on teacher retention and attrition is an

area of high concern by educational leaders and teachers. Bobek (2002) defines resiliency

as, "the capacity, after encountering hardship, adversity or reversals in life, to cope with

the feeling and retain emotional well being in both the short term and long term

(p. 202)." In the field of education, a certain level of tolerance is necessary for teachers

and administrators (Bobek, 2002). Other researchers have found that teachers who choose

to stay in the field are usually in a school or district that provides a supportive and

positive environment (Buckley, Schneidor, & Shang, 2004; Inman & Marlow, 2004).

Researchers also discovered that there is a need for school systems to incorporate

effective strategies that will encourage teacher retention (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Woods & Weasmer, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Teacher retention and attrition are complicated issues that involve many factors, such as organizational structure, work conditions, and salary concerns. There are continuous concerns that professionals are leaving the teaching field much earlier in their careers than are professionals in other fields, such as the medical and industrial professions (Ingersoll, 2001). The explanation for the difference in career longevity is the fact that the profession of teaching is not valued and respected to the extent of their actual contributions to society (Ingersoll, 2001). The challenge of staffing schools with qualified teachers becomes more acute when teachers leave in large numbers (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2001). Some individuals believe that the issues concerning the retention of teachers stem from unwelcoming work environments that lack essential professional support (Leob, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005).

Significance of the Study

High teacher turnover rates impose high costs on school districts (Leob et al., 2005). This cost drains the financial resources from areas where they are desperately needed throughout the school system. Determining the reasons teachers leave and developing measures to change this trend, are crucial to students, teachers, administrators, parents, and society. It is an inefficient use of state and local resources to lose two out of five (40%) novice teachers in the profession after only five years in the profession (Ingersoll, 2002).

In 1999, it was determined that two million teachers will be needed in the next ten years to fill current and newly created teaching positions in the United States

(Lucksinger, 2000). This information is alarming for not only the state of Georgia, but all states in the United States of America. The ability to retain teachers in Georgia, as well as in other states will have to be improved in order to see higher success rates in the areas of curriculum and student achievement because consistency is a key factor to improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999b).

Due to the recent focus in the United States' public education on accountability of schools, administrators need to have qualified and effective professionals teaching all students. The mandate of the "*No Child Left Behind Act*" requires that all students have well-qualified, credentialed teachers. Because of this mandate, the factors that are leading to success with teacher retention need to be identified for implementation by school districts and administrators. Recruiting teachers can be difficult for some school districts, but it can be cost ineffective if the teachers choose to leave the profession within three to five years.

Although many researchers show that there is a shortage in certain areas and states in the United States, there is little information that discusses the strategies that are being used by school districts in retaining teachers and the effectiveness of those strategies (Colgan, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 1999a; Fetler, 1997). Researchers have not thoroughly evaluated if or when school districts are collecting and discussing data in order to determine why teachers are choosing to stay or not stay at individual schools or in certain school districts. Due to the fact that Georgia does not have a retention policy, it was the pursuit of this study to collect information on what specific strategies, if any, are being implemented to retain teachers in Georgia.

As an Assistant Principal in Georgia, this researcher knows teacher retention will not only affect administrative decisions made by principals and other administrators, but also professional decisions made by teachers in their individual buildings. This research is an educational tool for these educators. In educating myself and other educators about why teachers choose to leave the field of education, I, being an administrator, will implement strategies to make my staff stronger and assist other administrators with the same concerns. Teacher turnover is a yearly occurrence that most school districts witness. Due to the effect it has on the researcher's personal dwelling of Henry County, it is her desire to prevent this crisis from occurring not just in her county, being one of the fastest growing counties in the United States of America, but in the state of Georgia as a whole.

The researcher is hopeful that the information from this study will assist all educational administrators in understanding the strategies needed to retain qualified teachers. Hopefully, a greater number of educational administrators will begin to view teacher retention as an important task, which will make the future of education more productive for all students. All members of a school district will benefit from reviewing strategies that may be successful in retaining teachers. By making this a priority, educational administrators will also find that an increase in teacher retention causes improvements throughout the structure of their school/county.

This study examined the roles principals and central office personnel play in retaining teachers in Georgia. It also examined attributes provided by various school districts in Georgia and their effectiveness in retaining teachers in the profession. Due to numerous findings by researchers, many concerns have appeared because of school systems' inability to retain teachers in individual counties and schools. The goal to staff

Georgia schools with highly qualified teachers becomes more acute when teachers leave the profession in large numbers. There appears to be a link between teacher retention and the strategies and programs that are implemented by school systems.

Research Questions

The overarching question was, "What strategies are currently being used in Georgia to retain teachers in the absence of a state-wide teacher retention policy?" This research question was answered through the following sub questions:

1. What are school districts doing to retain teachers?

2. How effective are these strategies as perceived by personnel directors in school districts?

3. What are specific challenges perceived by personnel directors in retaining teachers?

4. How do these strategies and challenges vary by school districts' individual characteristics?

Delimitations and Limitations

A limitation of this study was that the participants may not have answered the survey honestly. Since the researcher's survey questions were pertained to personal perceptions about each county in Georgia, personal biases may have interfered with the answers. Through my research that included states other than Georgia, I realized that my study being was delimited because it only involved personnel directors in Georgia which limited broader perspectives that could have benefited the topic.

Procedures

The researcher surveyed personnel directors to acquire information that promotes an increase in the retention of teachers in Georgia. Personnel directors were chosen for the survey due to their direct contact with individuals seeking educational positions, as well as individuals choosing to leave the profession. Due to the implementation of the "*No Child Left Behind Act*", society is witnessing a greater need for highly qualified teachers. Personnel directors will witness a larger shortage if teachers are not encouraged to remain in the profession and if the profession continues to appear less desirable to individuals. An extensive investigation of strategies that have been successful will benefit school systems in increasing their retention rate, especially in the hard-to-staff schools.

The method that was utilized is a descriptive, mixed method design that consisted of quantitative and qualitative research. The investigation into current and ideal programs characterized for teacher retention was conducted using data from one hundred and eighty personnel directors in Georgia. The purpose of the mixed study was to provide diverse perspectives on issues concerning the retention of teachers.

The researcher will conclude the data from the study in order to make recommendations for future studies. In Chapter 1 (Introduction), the readers were introduced to the context of the study, research purpose, research questions, limitations of the study, significance of the study, and a preview of the methodology. In Chapter 2 (Review of Literature), six bodies of literature related to the researcher's topic will be reviewed, which includes the (1) historical perspective, (2) reasons teachers stay in the profession, (3) reasons teachers leave the profession, (4) role of school districts, (5) role

of recruitment, and (6) role of professional development. Chapter 3 (Methodology)

explains qualitative and quantitative research designs and the purpose of their use for the

study. Chapter 4 (Data Presentation) includes the data collection from the results of the

survey and open-ended questions. In Chapter 5 (Summary, Findings, Concerns, and

Future Directions), the researcher will present the summary of the dissertation study that

included the components of findings, concerns, recommendations for future research, and

implications of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter two provides the review of literature. Various topics that effect teacher retention are shared through numerous researchers (Appendix A). The information discussed includes an introduction of the topic, the historical perspective, reasons teachers remain in and abandon the profession, and the roles of school districts, recruitment, and professional development.

There is currently a growing teacher shortage in many states (Exstrom, 2003; Moses, Brown, & Tackett, 1999). In just the past decade, nearly half of all states in the United States have mounted efforts to retain and boost the quantity of teachers in schools (Laurence, Hass, Burr, Fuller, Gardner, Hayward, & Kuboyama, 2002). Society has seen a drastic decrease in school systems' ability to maintain teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003). However, this shortage has caused school systems to experiment with different strategies that may be used to retain more teachers, particularly in critical subject areas and grade levels (Murphy & DeArmond, 2003). Severe and chronic teacher shortages exist in the fields of special education, bilingual education, mathematics, and physical science (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). There are also severe and chronic teacher shortages in communities where many poor children reside, according to Claycomb and Hawley (2000).

Although recruitment is one element to the reduction of the teacher shortage, the school system's ability to retain quality teachers is another important element (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003). Researchers have discovered that while as many as 30

percent of new teachers leave the profession within five years of entry (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001; Exstrom, 2003), only 11 percent of public school teachers report being satisfied with their jobs (NCES, 1999; Bobek, 2002). Accordingly, Toth, Stephens, Stewart, Mather, and Avera (2001) reported that there is a consistent imbalance between the number of persons entering and staying in the teaching profession. The researchers continued to discuss the fact that fewer teachers are entering the teaching profession than the number of teachers leaving the profession, which causes the imbalance.

<center>Historical Perspective</center>

The concerns of teacher retention arose in the 1980s when organizations and individuals became concerned about America's children receiving the best possible education (Toth et al, 2001). Teachers in the entering generation bring their own set of expectations and concerns to educate children (Johnson and Birkeland, 2004). However, their stories echo those of teachers in the past, meaning that the concerns that accompany novice teachers, also accompanied veteran teachers at their career entry level. Additionally, researchers also discussed how deciding to become a teacher today raises many of the same concerns that teachers have encountered in the United States public schools for more than a century—low pay and prestige, inadequate resources, the isolation of work, subordinate status, and limited career opportunities (Johnson and Birkeland, 2004).

Teacher turnover is considered to be the primary factor that contributes to teacher shortages. Ingersoll (2001) conducted a study that addressed a report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), which reported that on

average, schools are currently losing approximately the same number of teachers each year as the number of teachers they hire. Because of this concern, school systems are unable to keep up with the demand to hire enough qualified teachers to address students' needs. The commission also reported that the rate of turnover in high-poverty schools outpaces that of any other educational sector.

The field of teaching represents four percent of the entire civilian workforce (Ingersoll, 2003). Although teaching is a relatively large profession, it is often referred to as the "revolving door" occupation (Ingersoll, 2001). According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2002), there are twice as many K-12 teachers as registered nurses and five times as many teachers as either lawyers or professors. The United States Bureau of the Census also found that the sheer size of the teaching force combined with its relatively high annual turnover means that there are large flows in, through, and out of schools each year.

<center>School Reform Movements</center>

Since the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, teachers have gone through three school reforms prior to the *"No Child Left Behind Act"*. According to the commission, the reforms ranged from legislated standardization to accountability (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1993). Although the goals of these reforms were to increase the quality of education, each affected the educational system differently.

The first movement's, legislated standardization and competency testing, goal was to introduce uniformity and conformity through standardize curricula, rigorous requirements for student performance, promotion and graduation, and teacher evaluation.

Lawmakers wanted to guarantee that only competent teachers were in the classroom and that only educated students graduated from school. New teachers, teachers with five to fifteen years of experience, and minority teachers faced the greatest effects during this era. Soon after the first reform was implemented, failure made legislators realize that a change was needed in the educational system.

A second reform followed in the 1980s due to the fact that the centralized, legislated reform was unproductive. The second reform was decentralized, which involved localize or site-based decision making components. This movement focused on the localization of accountability. A Nation at Risk (NAR) was established in 1983 during President Ronald Reagan's administration, in which public schools were criticized for being mediocre (Cookson, 1995). Schools were no longer going to be measured by the amount of resources they had available. A national reform effort was called for to ensure that the United States of America could compete successfully in a global economy with emphasis on Science and Technology (Congressional Digest, 1994). Lawmakers felt that if teachers and principals were given autonomy from the central district, they should be held accountable for student learning outcomes. During this era, the principal, the teachers, the parents, and the local community stakeholders were competing for power. White teachers in minority schools displayed the highest level of burnout through this reform.

Due to the fact that this reform did not meet the expectations of the government, the public, and corporate America, by the early to mid-1990s a third reform was developed. This reform was referred to as "high-stakes testing". The "high-stakes testing" reform depended upon the use of state-mandated standardized achievement tests, school

and school districts' ratings, and holding students, teachers, and school administrators accountable for the results of those tests. Experienced, minority teachers had the most difficulties in this era because they were unable to raise test scores. Teachers with twenty to thirty years of experience were at risk.

The first reform saw teachers as the problem, but the second reform viewed teachers as the solution. Through the third reform, all participants in schooling were viewed as being problematic. Each of these changes caused an alteration in the morale of teachers. Demographics of the teachers changed throughout each reform. In 1986 and 1998, the highest burnout rate was experienced amongst minority teachers, but in 1991 and 1997 the burnout rate was highest amongst white novice teachers (Dworkin & Townsend, 1994; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Shen, 2001). We are now faced with the fact that the largest burnout rates are found amongst the most experienced white teachers (Holloway, 2003).

Reasons Teachers Stay in the Profession

The NCTAF (2003) has challenged the nation to improve teacher retention by 50% before 2006. This challenge is daunting, considering the greatest areas of retention include special education and the math and science disciplines. The challenge does inspire administrators to take advantage of the opportunity to focus on the development of their retention plan.

Black (2001) stated that teachers who are happy with their placement tend to report that their administrators value their input on issues related to the management of the facility. When teachers are allowed to be a part of the decision making process, they feel empowered and are more likely to accept the policies and rules that have been

decided upon (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Peske, 2001). Having a voice in such issues also leads to less conflict between staff and students, resulting in higher morale and less turnover (Ingersoll, 2002). In addition, Black found that teachers appreciate when their time is valued. Administrators who give appropriate workloads, especially to special educators, have teachers who do not feel overwhelmed (Stinebrickner, 2001). Teachers stated that time for collaboration with their colleagues lead to higher job satisfaction (Certo & Fox, 2002).

New teachers make their decisions to stay in teaching based on the level of support and acceptance they receive at the building level. Not only is it important to assist new teachers with the myriad of new work related responsibilities, but it is also essential to acknowledge personal needs of the new hires (Dyal & Sewell, 2002). This task may include helping the new teacher balance his/her professional and personal time. Many beginning teachers are initially filled with excitement and over-commit themselves, making it necessary for administrators to save the novice from their own enthusiasm (Stansbury, 2001). One strategy designed to assist new teachers includes giving them extra supplies, but any strategies that are designed to let teachers know they are supported by other individuals in their profession will help to guide a beginning teacher towards a permanent career in their classroom (Ingersoll, 2002b).

Veteran teachers seek stability in their schools. Teachers stay for some of the same reasons they enter the profession; because of trust, confidence, and faith in their students and in their subject matter; an enduring sense of hope and possibility; and the rewards of meaningful relationships and the knowledge that they are making a difference (Nieto, 2003; Williams, 2003). According to Darling-Hammond (2003), "good teachers

gravitate to schools where they know they will be appreciated and supported in their work." Veteran teachers want to learn and improve their skills while having their intellects challenged, so they will not become burned out (Bobek, 2002).

Teachers in high performing schools are more likely to stay at their site than those in the bottom quartile (Hanushek et al., 2001). One reason they remain in these schools is because it has been discovered that high performing schools usually have a well-coordinated school-community partnership (Collins, 1999). The researcher also stated, "a school-community partnership can help teachers overcome a feeling of isolation, acquire a sense of community security, and develop professional competence." Teachers in these settings feel appreciated by their administrators, colleagues, parents, and students (Exstrom, 2003). Resources are often plentiful and a building-level support system is evident in high performing schools.

The climate within a school and the work conditions act as either a supportive measure or a deterrent for teachers to remain in a particular school setting (Westat, 2002; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, et. al., 2001). Consequently if these two components are positive then teachers stay, but if they are both negative then teachers choose to leave. Specifically, work conditions that encourage the capabilities and emphasize the worth of individuals contribute to teacher retention. In addition, school climates and work conditions that enforce student discipline policies, strive to assign teachers based on their certification and background. These schools are also known to provide compensation for difficult and time-consuming duties that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills among all teachers, which encourages teachers to remain in the educational profession.

Reasons Teachers Leave the Profession

Ingersoll (2002b) cited that 50% of the teachers who leave the profession do so because of job dissatisfaction. He defined job dissatisfaction as low salaries, a lack of support from administration, poor student motivation, unpleasureable student discipline, and a lack of teacher influence over decisions made daily. Darling-Hammond (1999a) reiterated the research found by Ingersoll in finding that teachers choose to leave the education profession because of low pay and a lack of support, resources, collaboration, guidance, and respect from students and parents. Other factors that may encourage a teacher to leave the profession included age, academic abilities, and unreasonable expectations (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Factors that are not significantly related to teacher retention or attrition included gender, race/ethnicity, and level of highest degree earned. These factors are not significantly related because the issues that teachers face daily appear to be universal and, thus, unrelated to gender, race/ethnicity, and level of highest degree earned. However, she also found that the highest achieving teachers are least likely to stay in education because they recognize the presence of other career opportunities.

The researchers from a national study reveal that the United States of America's annual teacher turnover rate of 13% is slightly higher than other professions, and that 42% of the teachers who leave report job dissatisfaction, pursuit of a better job, or dissatisfaction of the support they received from administrators as reason (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001; Laurence et al, 2002). In addition, Johnson and Birkeland (2004) concluded that teachers are overwhelmed by feeling almost totally isolated from their colleagues, being provided inadequate curriculum materials, and

working in a school with few meaningful rules or norms for student behavior and achievement. According to Tabs (2004), other factors that contribute to districts' inability to retain high quality teachers are record-high student enrollment, state and local entry requirements, reduction of class sizes, greater demands on teachers, and the demand for talented people from private industries to teach certain fields.

Lucksinger (2000) believes the school environment is more crucial than salary. Using the business world as a guide, Larry Emend, senior vice-president of the Gallup Organization, found that 70% of employees leave their jobs because "they are unhappy with their immediate supervisor, not their benefit package"(p.12). Black (2001) stated that teachers "tend to be motivated more by intrinsic rewards such as self-respect, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment than by extrinsic rewards such as job security, salaries, and fringe benefits"(p.41). Morice and Murray (2003) countered the statement by acknowledging that teachers enter education for intrinsic fulfillment, but stated that this does not rule out the fact that they may also be motivated by extrinsic factors as well.

Teachers feel that often their administration ignores their needs and does not offer support (Dyal & Sewell, 2002). Administrators cannot allow their new teachers to face the sink or swim mentality that is often used in our schools (Hope, 1999; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001). "The lack of support and guidance is the reason why 16% of our nation's newest teachers abandon the profession. Nearly 20% of novice teachers in Texas left due to a lack of professional support. North Carolina teachers reported that 63% quit because of a lack of administrative support" (Bolich, 2001).

Teachers who feel they are not supported begin to "look back and ponder what happened to our passion and sense of mission to make schools a better place for teaching and learning" (Posden, 2002, p.8). Many young teachers enter feeling a calling to the profession and are full of hope and determination (Dyal & Sewell, 2002). Too often these feelings become that of disillusionment and an overwhelming doubt in their career choices, resulting in low morale. "Low teacher morale can lead to indifference towards others, cynical attitudes towards students, little initiative when it comes to teaching and participating in school activities, preoccupation with leaving teaching for a better job, increased sick leave, and episodes of depression" (Black, 2001, p. 40).

Student respect and classroom management affect teachers' morale and willingness to remain in the classroom as well. New teachers often get the most difficult groups of students (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Stansbury, 2001; Dyal & Sewll, 2002). Having these students, forces the new job to be even more difficult to understand, which leads to a teacher feeling incompetent. Lucksinger (2000) referred to the first year of teaching as "The Survival Stage" and recognized that novice teachers need time to develop and learn their skill. The researcher also discussed that because novice teachers are developing their skill, it is inappropriate for their classes to consist of the most challenging students.

Research suggested that those who did not undergo a teacher preparation program were more likely to leave the profession (Darling-Hammond. 2003). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000) found that after five years, 14% of certified teachers had left their jobs, whereas 49% of the teachers without certification were gone. The state of Tennessee conducted a study on teachers who left the profession with less

than 10 years of service, finding that those surveyed viewed their teacher preparation courses and student teaching as being "very effective" or "somewhat effective" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003). These finding corroborate the research of Darling-Hammond (2003, p.10) when she stated, "graduates of extended 5 year programs report higher levels of satisfaction with their preparation and receive higher ratings from principals and colleagues."

A number of studies have found that teachers systematically move from schools with low levels of achievement and high concentrations of poor children of diverse backgrounds (Carroll, Reichardt, Guarino, & Mejia, 2000; Hanushek et al., 2001; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). Another variable is the location of the school. The NCTAF (2003) stated, "wealthy school districts often have surpluses of teachers" (p.29). Other data suggested that community type, urban versus suburban, is not a factor that is related to teacher retention or attrition (Loeb, et al., 2005).

<div align="center">School Districts' Role in Teacher Retention</div>

School districts are placing their focus on retaining highly qualified teachers who are least likely to leave the profession after three to five years of teaching (Johnson and Birkeland, 2004). The creation of an environment that is fruitful to learning and teaching may entice new teachers and encourage veteran teachers to stay in the district (Allen, 1999). Effective teaching requires continuity among employees, which is difficult to attain when the key members constantly change (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003).

Studies showed that higher rates of teacher retention are found where there are higher salaries. The obverse also holds true, that lower rates of retention are prevalent when lower salaries are offered (Darling-Hammond, 2003). The researcher also

compared the field of education with other professions that require similar education and

training and found that teachers' salaries are approximately 20% below their

counterparts. Teachers want to be compensated and provided incentives for their work.

An option that some school districts could consider was offering incentives for teachers

who remain at the school over a certain period of time (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

Administrators are responsible for determining the climate and culture of a school

(Fredricks, 2001; Black, 2001). A principal has the power to create an ambience where

teachers feel supported and are more likely to stay. Certo and Fox (2002) found that

teachers not only feel a lack of support from school level administration, but are leaving

their jobs due to neglect from the district-level administrators as well. This may include a

lack of supplies, textbooks, staff development options, or not having a voice in district-

wide decision making opportunities.

The teaching environment is encouraged to be more attractive in order to retain

teachers (Buckley, 2004). Teachers want to be a part of a workforce that encourages

workers to help each other establish a collaborative environment that will be supportive

of veteran and new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1999a). Teachers are seeking

administrators that will support them when dealing with parents, students, and the

community (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004)). Future teachers may

remain in the educational field if they are better prepared for the demands of a classroom

(Darling-Hammond, 2003). Administrators are encouraged to assign new teachers to

fields that commensurate the skills they acquired during their preparation programs in

order to create a successful environment (Allen, 1999).

Districts are encouraged to reevaluate transfer policies. In many districts, veteran teachers are granted the opportunity to move into vacant positions first (Minarik et al, 2003). The authors also discussed how the results of this common practice conclude with more experienced teachers moving into less troubled schools and are of greater representation in these schools, as well. Novice teachers seldom have the opportunity to teach in a new facility. They are often placed in positions that are vacated by those veteran teachers who choose to transfer to a newer facility. Unfortunately these positions include discipline problems, large population of students with special needs, and very limited amounts of teacher resources. The conditions described cause new teachers to become frustrated, lose their sense of self-competence, and eventually quit (Allen, 1999). These conditions also have an impact on certified teachers being assigned to teach subjects that are out of their field (Ingersoll, 2001).

Teacher retention has become a critical issue with the current problem including attrition rates. School districts that provide mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, had lower rates of turnover among beginning teachers (Carroll et al., 2002). School districts that focused on increasing teaching expertise through expanded professional development for all teachers, supported the development of teacher leaders who could coach and mentor others (Laurence et al., 2002). Through the guidance, support and understanding of competent mentors, novice teachers experience professional growth, personal satisfaction, and organizational productivity (Darwin, 2000).

Across the country, school districts are working to reform staff development in education (NCTAF, 2000). However, continuing education must be an ongoing process,

with school districts making sustained efforts to provide accessible, high quality

programs that meet the needs of teachers (Laurence et al., 2002). Providing teachers the

opportunity and incentive to advance their own development, districts gain a powerful

recruiting and retention incentive toll that directly impacts student achievement. Making

sure that potential teachers are receiving the type of education that will prepare them to

teach our children is a step in the right direction. Teachers who are more thoroughly

prepared to meet the specific needs of schools may persist longer in their careers. If this

is true, higher retention rates of qualified teachers will result in the establishment of a

more stable, satisfying, and highly competent workforce, which will result in improved

student achievement.

<div align="center">Role of Recruitment in Teacher Retention</div>

Recruiters are discovering that most students make a career decision before

entering college. States and school districts are attempting to interest students into the

teaching profession before they reach college age (National Education Association on

Teacher Quality, 2003). Recent studies such as Laurence et al. (2002) encouraged school

districts to reduce the barriers to entering the profession by strengthening multiple

pathways into teaching and school leadership and offering incentives for individuals

interested in teaching at schools with large percentages of high-needs students.

Recruiting and retaining excellent teachers are daunting tasks for school

administrators. New policies, including teachers recruiting plans, "will not by themselves

solve the staffing problems plaguing schools" (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003, p.32).

According to the National Education Association on Teacher Quality (2003), recruitment

will be successful for school districts if comprehensive plans are established, which will

include strong marketing and outreach campaigning, an improved hiring process,

nontraditional routes into the profession, and financial incentives. Many states have

moved forward into this direction by establishing a retention policy along with other

policies (Appendix B). The NEA also stressed the importance of school districts

assessing needs, examining their existing culture, clarifying their mission, identifying

their target audience, involving the community, and collecting data in order to make sure

their strategies are working currently and that they are preparing to address future needs.

 As the population continues to grow, more students will enter schools. One of the

pivotal concerns was the staffing of schools (Ingersoll, 2001). The recruitment, screening,

and interview process of school districts must be aligned with the district's framework of

teaching and learning. This alignment will enable districts to hire teachers who have a

sincere desire, preferably a passion, for teaching and who are compatible with the

expectations of the district. If the school can develop a strong pool of candidates and

select individuals that match its definition of quality teachers, then the probability of

retention greatly increases (Minarik et al., 2003).

 Some school districts' hiring process needs to be reorganized (NEA, 2004). If the

process is long and cumbersome, applicants will become frustrated and choose to apply

in another district. NEA (2004) also explained that the hiring process should be

convenient and as swift as possible. Many states have moved into offering more

programs to attract and retain teachers (Appendix B). The hiring process can also be

improved by positions being listed online. In addition, school districts that are able to

facilitate a licensing reciprocity program where teachers will not have to go through

additional qualifications to acquire a job if they move to another state will benefit many

systems since they will be able to attract and retain more highly qualified teachers. It is important that districts seek within their buildings and target paraprofessionals and teachers that are looking to retire. Paraprofessionals can be offered the opportunity to become certified teachers and retired teachers can be offered the opportunity to return to systems to teach without losing their pension benefits because their earnings are above their prescribed salary caps (Darling-Hammond, 1999a).

Finances are always of the essence in the field of education. New hires are targeting districts that offer financial incentives. Some states offer signing bonuses, bonuses for teachers in critical fields and hard-to-staff schools, housing subsidies, tuition assistance, and tax credits. The use of financial incentives has been identified as one of the most widespread strategies for attracting and retaining teachers in the classroom in the United States of America (National Education Association on Teacher Quality, 2003).

Role of Professional Development in Teacher Retention

The transition from teacher preparation programs to an actual classroom can be very challenging for new teachers (Tabs, 2004). Novice teachers enter the field of education having to teach students, as well as learn how to teach a particular content area (Tabs, 2004). Beginning teachers are expected to work at full capacity, making the same types of decisions on curricular content, pedagogical theory, teaching methods, and child development as their more experienced colleagues, often under even more challenging circumstances (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). Novice teachers need support throughout their first few years of teaching (Johnson & Birkeland, 2004). Effective support includes initial placements in which new teachers can focus upon improving their skills as teachers, receive targeted professional development, and are provided the opportunity to

build a close relationship with a mentor that is a highly competent and experienced

colleague (Feiman-Nemser, 1999).

According to the National Education Association (2004), the profession of

teaching needs to be shaped-- its culture, its knowledge base, its standards for practice,

and even its future. The NEA discussed that the future of education can be best impacted

by nurturing new educators through intensive support, which will entice higher levels of

professional competence, greater success in working with children, and increased job

satisfaction. Researchers suggested that the creation of new teacher support systems that

welcome newcomers to the profession and help them to succeed will assist in the reversal

of teachers leaving the profession (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000).

Many states are beginning to use best research practice strategies that may

promote the greatest teaching effectiveness and the greatest rate for teacher retention.

Some of the main factors that are considered were the teacher preparation programs,

high-quality alternative programs, technology, and the implementation of beginning

teacher support programs (Allen, 1999). He also discusses the importance of teachers

possessing strong subject matter expertise and pedagogical skills, receiving appropriate

teaching assignments and resources, and continuing teacher learning.

Many districts are now expanding professional development programs to retrain

and retain their teachers. A study conducted by the Prairie Teachers Project found that

teachers who work in schools that are members of teacher centers, providing professional

leave, and/or reimbursed travel to professional meetings are slightly more likely to

remain in their first positions (Harris, 2001, ¶7). A survey conducted by the Fast

Response Survey System of the National Center for Educational Statistics on more than

5,000 teachers found a link between the amount of professional development in which teachers had participated and the teachers' feeling of competence (Holloway, 2003, ¶ 2).

It is important that school districts make a concerted effort to maintain a strong induction and mentoring program in the first years of teaching. "A number of studies have found that well-designed mentoring programs raise retention rates for new teachers by improving their attitudes, feelings of teaching efficacy, and instructional skills" (Darling Hammond, 2003). A well-designed and well-supported induction program can produce many positive benefits. Darling-Hammond (2003) stated, "Most effective programs are state induction programs that are tied to high-quality preparation." "According to the National Education Association, new teachers who participate in induction programs like mentoring are nearly twice as likely to stay in their profession" (Brown, 2003, ¶3). Strong support systems for novice teachers can mean the difference between staying and leaving (Recruiting New Teachers, 1999).

Induction programs can provide on-the-job training for new teachers. The programs are considered one of the most effective ways to retain teachers because the support they need to develop required knowledge and skills is provided within their county or school (National Education Association, 2003). In conducting programs on-site or within the county, novice teachers will be provided resources that will assist in continued learning (Blackburn, 2003). Novice teachers develop increasingly higher levels of professional practice through reflection and the continual study of teaching and learning (Claycomb & Hawley, 2000). Induction programs allow new teachers the chance to network with new and experienced teachers with whom concerns and issues can be addressed through group discussions (Darling-Hammond, 1999a). The researcher also

expressed that good induction programs increase the retention of novice teachers, which often helps to attract new teachers to a district, and can increase effectiveness across the board.

Teachers entering the field will benefit from effective and well-trained mentors. Mentors need to possess specific knowledge and skills to carry out their roles as reflective guide, supportive coach, and understanding caregiver to novice teachers (Kajs, 2002). According to NEA (2004), a mentor plays many roles in a novice teacher's professional experience. The impact they have on novice teachers can determine the resiliency that will develop over time in the profession of teaching. In conducting programs during the school day, novice teachers will be provided resources that will assist in continued learning (Blackburn, 2003).

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Teacher retention is an important issue in the 21st century in education due to the passing of NCLB. Many factors mingle together for a teacher to make the serious decision of whether to stay or to leave his/her classroom. "Researchers and policymakers have told us again and again that severe teacher shortages confront schools" (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). Keeping teachers—both novices and veterans—requires attention to the working conditions that matter to teachers. Darling-Hammond (2003) concluded that seeking out and hiring better-prepared teachers have many payoffs and savings in the long run in terms of both lower attrition and higher levels of competence.

It appears that administrators need to find ways to retain teachers that are currently in the school systems across Georgia. A source of information that could very well be related to addressing the retention concerns is allowing teachers to choose the

schools in which they prefer to work. It is possible that much can be learned from the

data collected and analyzed by this researcher related to the schools in which teachers

prefer to work. Research has shown that teachers look for schools where they can feel

like professionals, sharing ideas and resources. When teachers are empowered as agents

for change, they become active agents rather than passive workers (Woods and Weasmer,

2004). Whether school districts can begin to retain experienced teachers is yet to be seen.

The optimism and enthusiasm that compel people to go into educating the United States

of America's children should be conscientiously nurtured. Teachers are resources that the

world cannot function without in the educational system.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Throughout the United States teachers are leaving the teaching profession at alarming rates. "Today, there is an undercurrent of unease regarding the growing number of new teachers who are exiting the profession in the years immediately following their initial licensure" (Bowman, 2003, p. 52). As a result, teacher retention is one of the leading educational challenges of today.

The researcher set out to discover exactly what strategies were being used in Georgia to retain teachers. Her goal was to determine the effectiveness of the current strategies/programs being used, as well as the challenges that were faced in implementing these strategies/programs. As a researcher, her ultimate goal was to share the findings of this study in order to increase teacher retention in Georgia.

Chapter three provides the methodology of this study. The steps taken to conduct the research to show how counties in Georgia are addressing the retention concern were thoroughly explained throughout this chapter. The information discussed includes an introduction, research questions, research design, population and sample, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Questions

The overarching question was, "What strategies are currently being used in Georgia to retain teachers in the absence of a state-wide teacher retention policy?" This research question was answered through the following sub questions:

3. What are school districts doing to retain teachers?

4. How effective are these strategies as perceived by personnel directors in school districts?

3. What are specific challenges perceived by personnel directors in retaining teachers?

4. How do these strategies and challenges vary by school districts' individual characteristics?

Research Design

The researcher utilized a descriptive, mixed method qualitative, quantitative research design. The investigation into current and ideal programs and strategies characterized for teacher retention was conducted using data from the personnel directors in Georgia. The purpose of the mixed study was to provide diverse perspectives on issues concerning the retention of teachers while quantifying response frequencies. The concurrent procedure was used to converge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of teacher retention (Creswell, 2003; Leeny & Ormrod, 2005). The researcher collected both forms of data at different times during the study and then integrated the information into the interpretation of the overall results.

Quantitative research was used to answer questions about the relationships amongst measured variables, as well as to answer questions on programs and strategies that are currently being used in counties, in order to explain the phenomena. This technique used allowed the researcher to conduct a survey that was sent out to the 180 personnel directors of public schools in the state of Georgia. The survey gave the researcher information about the personnel directors and the effectiveness of current programs and strategies that are being utilized within the state from each of their school

districts. By asking questions and tabulating their answers, the researcher gained knowledge about their personal characteristics, opinions, and attitudes. By conducting a quantitative study, the researcher was also able to establish, confirm, or validate relationships between what entices teachers to remain in public education, or abandon the teaching profession. It also helped the researcher to develop generalizations that contributed to the findings.

Some components of the qualitative research method were used in order to seek a better understanding of the information gathered through the survey. This method, which included initial interviews with six personnel directors and short answer questions on the survey, was used to reveal the nature of certain settings, processes, relationships, and systems. The use of qualitative research allowed the researcher to view the questions from four different aspects: description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation. The questions were used to reveal present and past behaviors, standards for behavior, and conscious reasons for actions or feelings. The researcher scrutinized this information in order to seek patterns that may be reflective of the participants' perceptions.

The six personnel directors that were chosen for individual interviews were selected because of their county's demographic descriptions. The researcher selected personnel directors from two urban, rural, and poverty-stricken counties. The counties that represented urban life were located in and near the downtown Atlanta area. The rural counties were found in middle Georgia, and the poverty-stricken counties were found in north and south Georgia. The personnel directors represented a diverse group of participants that varied in levels of experience, race, and expertise.

Population and Sample

The participants who were solicited for the study were the 180 school personnel directors in Georgia, with six of the personnel directors participating in individual interviews. The population was diverse and informative. The size of the sample was critical because it allowed the researcher to attempt to collect information from every county in Georgia. The personnel directors were identified using data from the Georgia Department of Education (http://www.doe.k12.ga.us) and the Georgia Association of State Personnel Administrators (http://www.ciprg.com/ss/peodb_list.asp). Once each agency was contacted, the researcher obtained a list of the personnel directors. All personnel directors were employed in Georgia as of January 1, 2006. This group was chosen to obtain precise information about programs that are currently being utilized throughout the state, and the effectiveness of the programs in the retention of teachers. A target set of 60%, or 108, surveys to be returned in order to generalize results to the population.

Data Collection

The primary data collection method that was used was a survey created by this researcher (Appendix C), which consisted of short answer questions. The researcher designed and evaluated the survey for validity and reliability. The survey was used to acquire background information and give the researcher the opportunity for personnel directors to elaborate and discuss the areas they felt were important to retain teachers. It was crucial to acquire information from all perspectives in order to gain greater knowledge of what is being done to retain teachers in Georgia.

Prior to the surveys being mailed to the personnel directors, individual interviews took place with six personnel directors from various demographic areas. The researcher contacted each of the six personnel directors by phone to ask for their participation in an interview. Each personnel director agreed to participate in the interview. The interviews gave the researcher an opportunity to research findings of what was currently being done in certain school districts to retain teachers. These interviews were approximately 30 to 45 minutes in length and the questions were developed from the survey prior to it being sent out to all personnel directors in Georgia. An open-ended question format was used to draw out the most comprehensive answers possible. Transcriptions of the interviews were returned to participants for clarification and verification of information. Throughout the interview process questions were refined to improve the quality of the data gathered and to collect some successful and unsuccessful strategies for retaining teachers. The interviews were administered during the month of August.

The survey was administered between September 1, 2006 and September 30, 2006. The instrument was created using data from states that currently have a retention policy (Appendix B) and information gathered through the individual surveys (Appendix D), which were conducted during the month of August with six selected personnel directors. The instrument was created based on the work of Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond (1999a) and Dr. Richard Ingersoll (2001), who both continuously study teacher retention. Through their studies, the researcher was able to determine which attributes to focus on in creating the survey. Being that teacher retention is a very broad topic that can be expounded in many different ways, the researcher was able to decipher through the

findings of Ingersoll and Darling-Hammond in order to address issues that are pertinent

to educators in Georgia.

Before contacting the participants for interviews and administering the survey,

permission was requested from the Institutional Review Board Committee at Georgia

Southern University to conduct the study. A copy of the survey questions accompanied

the computerized IRB application (Appendix E). The application contained the

investigator's assurance statement regarding ethical practices in conducting the research.

In all cases, potential respondents were informed that they were not required to

participate in the study. The introduction to this dissertation, research questions, design of

the research, the survey instrument and interview questions, description of the proposed

population, other required information, and the acknowledgement of confidentiality were

all included on the application.

One hundred and eighty surveys were mailed to personnel directors throughout

Georgia. Each respondent received a self-addressed envelope with return postage.

Accompanying each survey was a letter describing the potential value of the study

(Appendix C). The letter emphasized the importance of the study to the addressee and it

included an invitation for the respondents to cooperate by answering the questions. The

letter included a statement that explained to the potential respondents that their reply was

voluntary. The selected respondents were informed that they were chosen as possible

participants because of their roles in retaining teachers throughout the state of Georgia.

The researcher offered to send the respondents a summary of the results if he or she

requested one, in return for the investment of their time, and their courtesy in answering

the survey.

In order to receive as many responses as possible, the researcher sent follow-up reminders to the 180 interviewees through the mail as well as electronically. Follow-up reminders were mailed two weeks after surveys were initially sent to the personnel directors. The respondents who had not replied within the four-week window, received electronic reminders that informed them that the window would be open an additional week and they were welcome to respond to the survey electronically. The additional attempts were made in order to better accommodate the personnel directors and provide an opportunity for more data collection.

<p style="text-align:center">Data Analysis</p>

Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data revealed in the surveys. Some questions from the survey were summarized with percentages and frequencies. This data collection method allowed the researcher to single out each known strategy that may assist in the retention of teachers. The researcher believes the survey answers are generalized to the state of Georgia and will assist in updating previous research.

Interviews were set up for approximately 30 to 45 minutes and each session was recorded. During these interviews, each personnel director was asked to share any success stories he or she had regarding experiences with teachers choosing to remain in school systems/schools. He or she was then asked to relate any unsuccessful experiences. The transcripts were returned to the interviewees for any clarifications of answers or additional information. Changes were made according to the interviewees' concerns. Patterns or similar experiences were analyzed and information that may be generalized to any educational setting was noted. A descriptive summary of the interviews was

composed and a collection of the shared experiences of the personnel directors was included in the results of the research.

A Likert scale of 1 to 3 was used in Section 1 for the study. The survey asked the personnel directors to identify how focused their county is on 17 strategies or programs that will factor in on encouraging a teacher to remain in the profession. The 17 strategies or programs listed were most frequently found in the professional literature. A response of 3 equaled a strong level of focus, a 2 equaled some focus, and a 1 equaled no focus on behalf of the county. The three points that were used on the survey enabled the personnel directors to use the responses of no focus, some focus, and primary focus. These data were analyzed by determining means and standard deviations. Responses were also compared by means of an analysis of variance with demographic categories to determine if there were any significant differences.

Section 2 consisted of five short answer questions. Of the 17 strategies or programs listed on the survey from the professional literature, participants were asked to choose the top five that encourages teachers to remain in their system/school. The responses were used to compute a weighted value and determine which of the characteristics were rated higher than others. The remainder of the four questions required direct answers.

The interview and short answer questions were scrutinized to determine certain patterns that were reflective of the participants' perceptions about teacher retention. The questions also gave the respondents a place to record additional information that did not appear on the survey that was beneficial to the study. The results of the questions were summarized in a descriptive manner.

Reporting of Data

Chapter 4 presents the data from this study. It includes an introduction and the findings from the research. The results are shared using various methods. The researcher utilizes text formats in order to explain charts and tables, as well as other important information. The qualitative responses are recorded according to the research question each answers.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify strategies currently being used in

Georgia to retain teachers in light of the fact that Georgia does not have a state-wide

retention policy. In order to obtain comprehensive information about the topic, both

quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry were employed by the researcher. Data

were collected using voluntary interviews and surveys that were created by the

researcher. The data were studied through the observation of frequencies to the responses,

as well as percentages. Quantitative (survey) data were gathered to address each research

question; whereas, qualitative (interview) data were collected to enhance the findings by

more comprehensively answering the overarching question and the sub-questions.

A listing of all personnel directors was obtained from the Georgia Department of

Education and the Association of State Personnel Administrators. A search of directors

revealed that there were 180 personnel directors in Georgia during the 2005-2006 school

year. Six personnel directors from various demographic areas were selected to participate

in a voluntary interview prior to all personnel directors being asked to participate in the

survey. The six personnel directors who were selected based on their location in Georgia

were the pilot group for this study.

Through the researcher's findings, it was discovered that personnel directors feel

school systems focus primarily on factors that involve teacher induction programs,

building level support, mentoring programs, collaborative planning, and availability of

professional development when they critique teacher retention in Georgia. However, it

was determined that teachers favor support from building level administrators, positive

school climates, competitive salaries/benefits, discipline of students, and the availability

of resources when they critique teacher retention in Georgia. The factors that were found

to be crucial, according to teachers, in determining whether to remain in a school system

represented lower percentages of concerns for school systems, which depicts a

discrepancy in the levels of concern about the factors that truly affect teacher retention.

<div align="center">Portraitures of Pilot Study School Systems</div>

Six personnel directors were individually interviewed prior to the surveys being

sent out to the 180 personnel directors in Georgia. The personnel directors represented

school systems that are considered urban, rural, and poverty-stricken areas. The

characteristics that were utilized in this study for the six school systems included their

student and teacher population, district size, Adequate Yearly Progress status, and

performance index, which were obtained from the Georgia Department of Education

(www.doe.k12.ga.us). The performance index included the percent of schools with the

greatest gains and the highest percentage of students meeting or exceeding academic

standards based on the comparisons of the 2005 and 2006 Criterion Reference

Competency Test (CRCT) and the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT). The

purpose of selecting these individuals was to ensure that the researcher was able to gather

information from various demographic areas. Asking the various personnel directors to

participate in the interviews assisted the researcher in ensuring that the survey instrument

addressed the necessary information for answering the research questions associated with

this study.

School District A is a representative of an urban school district. This school district, which is located a few miles south of Atlanta, is one of the top 150 largest school district in the United States and one of the top 10 largest school system in Georgia. School District A has over twenty-five elementary schools, ten middle schools, and five high schools with a total enrollment of over 50, 000 students. This system also has an alternative and evening education school. Certified personnel included over 350 with less than 1 year, 1, 500 with 1 to 10 years, 700 with 11 to 20 years, 400 with 21-30 years, and 100 with more than 30 years of teaching experience. The racial backgrounds of the teachers are: 57% African American, 41% White, 1% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian, Native American, and Multiracial. The average number of years for certified teaching personnel was 10 years and 19 years for administrative personnel.

School District A did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards. The criteria were met in 15 out of 21 areas, which placed them in the "Needs Improvement" status. Performance highlights were reflected in areas that had at least 80% of students meeting and exceeding standards. On the elementary level, the following grade levels were highlighted for academic success on the CRCT: 1st Grade-Mathematics, 2nd Grade-Reading, 3rd Grade- Mathematics and Social Studies, 4th Grade-Social Studies, and 5th Grade-Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The middle school level was recognized for academic success on the CRCT in the areas of 8th grade English Language Arts and Reading. The district was also highlighted for success on the Middle Grade Writing Assignment. On the high school level, the 11th grade students were commended for their performance on the Georgia High School Writing Test and the GHSGT in the areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

School District B represented poverty-stricken school districts. The school district has not grown much over the past twenty-five years. School District B has more than ten elementary schools with three of them being magnet schools, over five middle schools with one being a magnet school, and more than two high schools. The student enrollment was over 15,000, with over 1, 000 certified personnel. This school system, located in south Georgia near the Florida border, certified personnel included more than 30 with less than 1 year, 350 with 1 to 10 years, 300 with 11-20 years, 300 with 21-30 years, and less than 10 with more than 30 years of teaching experience. The racial background of the teachers was 58% African American, 42% White, and less than 1% Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Multiracial. The average number of years for certified personnel was 14 years and 18 years for administrative personnel.

School District B did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards. The criteria were met in 8 out of 13 areas, which placed them in the "Adequate Progress, but Did Not Meet" status. Honorable mentions were given to 1 elementary and 2 elementary magnet schools for having the highest percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards. One middle magnet school was honored for having the greatest gain of students meeting and exceeding standards. Performance highlights that were reflective in areas that had at least 80% of students meeting and exceeding standards was seen on various levels. Elementary students were highlighted for their achievement on the CRCT in the following areas: 1st Grade- Mathematics, Reading, and English Language Arts, 2nd Grade- Mathematics and English Language Arts, 3rd Grade- Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, 4th Grade- Social Studies and Science, and 5th Grade- Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Middle school students were recognized for

their success on the CRCT in the following areas: 6th Grade- Reading, 7th Grade- English Language Arts, and 8th Grade- Reading and English Language Arts. On the high school level, students were commended for their performance on the Georgia High School Writing Test and the 11th graders' performance on the GHSGT in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics.

School District C, which has a large portion of the district in Atlanta, was the second district to represent urban school districts. Founded in the 1870's, this school district's enrollment has grown nearly 27,000 students in the past ten years. School District C consisted of over fifty elementary schools, fifteen middle schools, ten high schools, one open campus high school, and three charter schools, whose enrollment was over 75,000 students. The school system had over 5, 000 certified teachers. Certified employees consisted of over 400 with less than 1 year, 3, 000 with 1 to 10 years, 1, 000 with 11 to 20 years, 800 with 21-30 years, and 100 with more than 30 years of experience. The teachers' racial makeup was 31%African American, 65% White, 2% Hispanic, 1% Asians, and less than 1% Native American and Multiracial. The average number of years for certified personnel was 10 years, with the administrative average being 14 years.

School District C did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards. The criteria were met in 15 out of 19 areas, which placed them in the "Adequate Progress, but Did Not Meet" status. Honorable mentions were given to 19 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 5 high schools, and 1 academy for the highest percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards. One elementary, academy, and high school were recognized for having the greatest gain of students meeting and

exceeding standards. The elementary students were recognized for their performance on the CRCT in the following grade levels: 1st Grade- Mathematics, Reading, and English Language Arts, 2nd Grade- Reading, Mathematics, and English Language Arts, 3rd Grade- Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Reading, and English Language Arts, 4th Grade- Social Studies, Science, Reading, English Language Arts, and Mathematics, and 5th Grade- Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and Reading. Middle schools were commended for their success on the Middle Grades Writing Assignment and the CRCT in the following areas: 6th Grade- Reading, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, 7th Grade- Social Studies, English Language Arts, Reading, and Mathematics, and 8th Grade- Reading, Social Studies, English Language Arts, and Mathematics. High schools were not only highlighted for their performance on the Georgia High School Writing Test and their graduation rate, but also their performance on the GHSGT in the areas of: 11th- English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

School District D was the second district to represent poverty-stricken districts. This school district served over 10, 000 students in over ten elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. School District D is located in middle Georgia outside of Atlanta. There were almost 750 certified teachers. The teachers' years of experience were represented as follows: almost 45 had less than 1 year, more than 300 had 1-10 years, almost 200 had 11-20 years, over 150 had 21-30 years, and less than 60 had more than 30 years. The racial makeup of the teachers was 23% African Americans, 77% Whites, and less than 1% Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and Multiracial. The

average number of years for certified teaching personnel was 13 years and 19 years for administrators.

School District D did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards. The criteria were met in 14 out of 17 areas, which placed them in the "Adequate Progress, but Did Not Meet" status. The elementary schools' performances were highlighted on the CRCT in the areas of: 1st Grade- Mathematics and Reading, 2nd Grade- Reading and Mathematics, 3rd Grade- Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Reading, 4th Grade- Science and Social Studies, and 5th Grade- Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and English Language Arts. The middle schools' performances were highlighted on the Middle Grades Writing Assignment and the CRCT in the areas of: 6th Grade- Reading, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, 7th Grade- Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Social Studies, and 8th Grade- Reading, English Language Arts, and Social Studies. The high schools' performances were highlighted on the Georgia High School Writing Test and the GHSGT in the area of 11th Grade- English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

School District E represented rural school districts. The school district is located in one of the fastest growing counties in the United States of America. There were over thirty existing schools, with five new schools scheduled to open in the 2006-2007 school year. The board projected that more than fifteen additional schools will need to be built by 2015. School District E is thirty minutes south of Atlanta. The school system's student enrollment was over 35, 000. There were over 2, 000 certified teachers, with more than 150 having less than 1 year of experience, 900 having 1-10 years of experience, 600 having 11-20 years of experience, 300 having 21-30 years of experience, and 50 having

more than 30 years of experience. The racial makeup of the teachers was 17% African

Americans, 81% Whites, 1% Hispanics, and less than 1% Asian, Native American, and

Multiracial. The average number of years for certified personnel was 12 years and

administrators averaged 20 years.

School District E did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state

standards. The criteria were met in 17 out of 20 areas, which placed them in the

"Adequate Progress, but Did Not Meet" status. Honorable mention was given to one

elementary school for having the highest percentage of students meeting and exceeding

standards on the CRCT. Performances on the elementary level for the CRCT were

highlighted in the areas of: 1st Grade- Mathematics, Reading, and English Language Arts,

2nd Grade- Reading, Mathematics, and English Language Arts, 3rd Grade- Mathematics,

Social Studies, Science, Reading, and English Language Arts, 4th Grade- Social Studies,

Science, Reading, and English Language Arts, and 5th Grade- Social Studies, Science,

Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Reading. The middle schools' performances

were highlighted on the Middle Grades Writing Assignment and the CRCT in the areas

of: 6th Grade- Reading, Social Studies, and English Language Arts, 7th Grade- Social

Studies, English Language Arts, Reading, and Mathematics, and 8th Grade- Reading,

Social Studies, English Language Arts, Science, and Mathematics. The high schools'

performances were highlighted on the Georgia High School Writing Test and the GHSGT

in the area of 11th Grade- English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies.

School District F was the second district to represent rural school districts. It is

recognized as one of the best school systems in the state of Georgia. School District F

served over 14,000 students. There were over ten elementary schools, two middle

schools, two high schools, and one evening, magnet, and alternative school. School

district F is located in northeast Georgia. There were over 900 certified teachers with 0

having less than 1 year of experience, almost 500 having 1-10 years of experience, more

than 200 having 11-20 years of experience, almost 200 having 21-30 years of experience,

and less than 75 having more than 30 years of experience. The racial makeup of the

teachers was 18% African American, 82% Whites, and less than 1% Hispanic, Asian,

Native American, and Multiracial. The average number of years for certified personnel

was 13 years and 21 years for administrators.

School District F met Adequate Yearly Progress according to the state standards.

The criteria were met in 19 out of 19 areas, which placed them in the "Needs

Improvement" status. Honorable mentions were given to two elementary schools and 1

high school for having the highest percentage of students meeting and exceeding

standards on the CRCT. Performances on the elementary level for the CRCT were

highlighted in the areas of: 1st Grade- Mathematics and Reading, 2nd Grade- Reading,

Mathematics, and English Language Arts, 3rd Grade- Mathematics, Social Studies,

Science, Reading, and English Language Arts, 4th Grade- Mathematics, Social Studies,

Science, Reading, and English Language Arts, and 5th Grade- Social Studies, Science,

Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Reading. The middle schools' performances

were highlighted on the Middle Grades Writing Assignment and the CRCT in the areas

of: 6th Grade- Reading, Social Studies, and English Language Arts, 7th Grade- Social

Studies, English Language Arts, Reading, and Mathematics, and 8th Grade- Reading,

Social Studies, and English Language Arts. The high schools' performances were

highlighted on their Graduation Rate, Georgia High School Writing Test, and the

GHSGT in the area of 11th Grade- English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and

Social Studies.

<p style="text-align:center">Findings</p>

Prior to sending the survey out to personnel directors, the researcher asked six of

the 180 personnel directors to participate in voluntary interviews. The purpose of these

interviews was to ensure all necessary information concerning teacher retention was

surveyed efficiently by the researcher. The interviews took place in the office of each

personnel director at the main administrative building. The six personnel directors were

asked seven short answer questions (Appendix D).

<p style="text-align:center">Interviewees</p>

There were two females and four males that agreed to participate in the

interviews. The racial makeup of the interviewees was as follows: 1 African American

and 5 Caucasians. Experience levels ranged from 12-29 years, with a female from an

urban school district having the most years. In researching the counties in Georgia, the

researcher's goal was to find 6 counties that closely resembled most urban, suburban, and

poverty-stricken areas. In reviewing the interviewees, it was surprising to see that the

demographics not only represented more males, but it lacked diversity. The

demographics of the interview participants are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information About Interview Participants

Sex	Race	Years of Administrative Experience	District Setting
Female	African American	29	Urban
Female	Caucasian	20	Poverty-Stricken
Male	Caucasian	16	Urban
Male	Caucasian	21	Poverty-Stricken
Male	Caucasian	17	Rural
Male	Caucasian	12	Rural

Summary of Interview Questions

The first question asked, "Do you feel your county has a hard time retaining teachers? If yes, why?" Two personnel directors stated, "yes" and 4 personnel directors stated, "no." The reasons shared for the retention issue were similar with the personnel directors that were in agreement that their county had retention concerns. The personnel directors stated a lack of competitive salaries, job placement dissatisfaction, and a lack of resources for their explanations.

Question two related to subquestion 1: *What are school districts doing to retain teachers?* It asked the personnel directors, "What are some things their county is doing to retain teachers?" Some strategies currently being used are competitive salaries, mentoring programs, signing bonuses, retention bonuses, and professional development opportunities. All of the personnel directors elaborated on the following two strategies that they felt were very important: competitive salaries and mentoring programs. They felt these strategies were important to retaining teachers because salaries assist with the cost of living and mentoring programs address professional needs and growth.

Question three related to subquestion 2: *How effective are these strategies as perceived by personnel directors in school districts?* This question asked the personnel directors how successful they felt the programs listed above were in retaining teachers. The four directors that stated that they did not have difficulties retaining teachers felt their county had successfully developed a very solid pool of applicants from which to choose from, while the other two counties started their school year without hundreds of teaching positions filled. They felt the strategies implemented by their school systems allowed them to begin the school year almost fully staffed. The question also related to subquestion 3: *What are specific challenges perceived by personnel directors in retaining teachers?* The personnel directors shared the fact that resources mean everything when attracting teachers to a county. They communicated about school districts' funding being a major factor in teacher recruitment and how a lack of funding impedes on their ability to promote certain ideas.

Question four related to subquestion 2 also, as well as subquestion 4: *How do these strategies and challenges vary by school districts' individual characteristics?* It

questioned the directors about what strategies they felt were less effective in retaining teachers. One of the strategies that was least effective was the strategy of providing teacher bonuses. The personnel directors discussed how signing and retention bonuses were being used less and less by school systems because they appear to be either ineffective or fiscally impossible.

Question five related to subquestion 3: *What are specific challenges perceived by personnel directors in retaining teachers?* It inquired about what possible strategies could be used if proper resources were provided by school systems. One strategy unanimously shared involved better hiring strategies that involve creating a better "fit" between teachers and schools. A better 'fit' to them comes through more efficient recruitment. They felt that expanding recruitment efforts to include higher learning institutions that are producing large numbers of quality education majors regardless of their location would only increase their efforts in retaining teachers. Another strategy they feel they have limited authority over is better performance management and increased/effective feedback regarding job performance. Although this strategy is essential, the personnel directors explained how some principals provide this feedback well, while others do not put forth the same effort.

Question six asked the personnel directors how the retention rate was evaluated in their counties. In asking this question, the researcher found that it appeared to be a very confusing question. Further explanation was given by the researcher to explain that the purpose of answer was for the personnel directors to tell me what is done by their school system to measure how well they are retaining teachers. All of the personnel directors stated that they collected data based on resignations submitted each year. They also

discussed that they have to provide a report to the superintendent at the end of each

academic year related to a review of teacher retention in the school district. One

personnel director stated that she has to present data to the board members as well. Their

dialogue mirrored one another in that they all explained how there is not a system put into

place to interview teachers choosing to leave their school system and how effective that

type of "exit interview" would be to the success of the school system in retaining

teachers.

The final question asked the personnel directors, "What resources do you feel will

aide in retaining teachers in your county?" The personnel directors referred back to

question five where their answers consisted of the ability to have better hiring and

recruitment strategies. They also want the ability to have authority over performance

management. All personnel directors felt limited when it comes to actually mandating

strategies to increase retention in their county.

In communicating with the personnel directors, it seemed that they share the same

concerns. Although they had creative ideas on how to improve retention in their county,

their authority is limited and so are their resources. Some of the creative ideas shared by

them were recruitment of teachers from out of the country such as foreign exchange

agreements, offering scholarships for college students that are willing to teach in the

county for a number of years, and scholarships for paraprofessionals. The personnel

directors elaborated on international research that addressed teacher retention. Valuable

research was shared by the personnel directors, but they all shared that funding restraints

limited their capabilities. However, prior to this funding restraint, it was hard for counties

to change their mindsets that more creativity was needed in order to attract more

individuals into the teaching profession.

Summary of Survey Questions

All personnel directors in the state of Georgia were given a survey to complete

(Appendix E). Eighty-four of the one hundred-eighty personnel directors responded to the

survey which led to a 46% rate of return for the originally sent surveys. According to

Newton and Rudestrom (1999), the typical response rate for a mail survey is between

25% and 40% , which validates this study. The survey was divided into two sections. The

first section was composed of seventeen characteristics that could be answered within

three columns to best identify the importance that each characteristic plays in teacher

retention from a choice of one (no focus) to a choice of three (primary focus). The

seventeen characteristics mainly fell within the "some focus" to "primary focus" range.

According to the personnel directors, districts in Georgia's primary focus (weighted

value) in retaining teachers was in the areas of collaborative planning (2.4286), mentor

programs for new teachers (2.3452), support from building level administrators (2.4762),

and teacher induction programs (2.5119). The factors that included somewhat of a

focus(weighted value) were availability of professional development (2.4167),

availability of resources (2.2857), collaborative planning (2.4286), competitive

salaries/benefits (2.2857), discipline of students (2.2143), low teacher to student

ratios(2.2143), motivation of students (2.1071), positive school climate (2.2976),

professional input on county initiatives (2.0833), recognition of outstanding job

performances (2.1190), sense of efficacy (2.0833), sufficient planning time (2.1071),

sufficient training of job responsibilities (2.1786), and support from central office

administrators (2.3095). The factor that was equally divided between primary focus and somewhat focus was collaborative planning. As viewed in Table 4, the top five factors that personnel directors felt were crucial to teacher retention in ranked order were: teacher induction program, support from building level administrators, mentor program for new teachers, collaborative planning, and availability of professional development. Table 2 shows the findings of the first section of the survey and Table 3 illustrates the weighted values of each factor.

Table 2

Personnel Directors' Perspectives of Georgia School Systems' Focus Levels on Factors that Affect Teacher Retention (n=84)

Factors	No Focus	Some Focus	Primary Focus
Availability of professional development	4	(41)	39
Availability of resources	7	(46)	31
Collaborative planning	4	(40)	(40)
Competitive salaries/benefits	7	(46)	31
Discipline of students	8	(50)	26
Low teacher to students ratios	10	(46)	28
Mentor program for new teachers	11	33	(40)
Motivation of students	10	(55)	19
Positive school climate	8	(43)	33
Professional input on county initiatives	17	(43)	24
Recognition of outstanding job performances	13	(48)	23
Sense of efficacy	11	(55)	18
Sufficient planning time	13	(49)	22
Sufficient training of job responsibilities	11	(47)	26
Support from building level administrators	3	38	(43)
Support from central office administrators	9	(40)	35
Teacher induction program	4	33	(47)

Table 3

Personnel Directors' Perspectives of Georgia School Systems' Focus Levels on Factors
that Affect Teacher Retention: Weighted Values as Ranked by 84 Survey Respondents

Factors	N	Range	Mean		Std. Deviation	Varia nce
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Stati stic
Availability of Professional Development	84	2.00	2.4167	.06384	.58512	.342
Availability of Resources	84	2.00	2.2857	.06683	.61255	.375
Collaborative Planning	84	2.00	2.4286	.06402	.58671	.344
Competitive Salaries/benefits	84	2.00	2.2857	.06683	.61255	.375
Discipline of Students	84	2.00	2.2143	.06575	.60263	.363
Low teacher to students ratios	84	2.00	2.2143	.06998	.64137	.411
Mentor program for new teachers	84	2.00	2.3452	.07667	.70273	.494
Motivation of students	84	2.00	2.1071	.06341	.58119	.338
Positive school climate	84	2.00	2.2976	.06938	.63587	.404
Professional input on county initiatives	84	2.00	2.0833	.07614	.69782	.487
Recognition of outstanding job performances	84	2.00	2.1190	.07066	.64760	.419
Sense of efficacy	84	2.00	2.0833	.06384	.58512	.342
Sufficient planning time	84	2.00	2.1071	.06987	.64037	.410
Sufficient training of job responsibilities	84	2.00	2.1786	.07016	.64305	.414
Support from building level administrators	84	2.00	2.4762	.06218	.56985	.325
Support from central office administrators	84	2.00	2.3095	.07181	.65815	.433
Teacher induction program	84	2.00	2.5119	.06448	.59098	.349

Table 4

Top Five Factors that School Systems Give Primary Focus to In Retaining Teachers
(n=84)

Factors	Number of Respondents
Teacher Induction Program	47
Support from Building Level Administrators	43
Mentor Program for New Teachers	40
Collaborative Planning	40
Availability of Professional Development	39

The next section of the survey was short answer questions. The short answer
section consisted of five questions. These five questions allowed the personnel directors
to go into greater depth in answering questions concerning teacher retention. Many
personnel directors shared information, but some strategies were more apparent than
others as seen in Table 5.

The first question asked was, "Do you feel your school district has a problem
retaining teachers? If yes, why?" Seventeen out of the sixty-nine personnel directors that
answered the survey stated, "Yes." The reasons for the retention concern revolved around

changes in socio-economic structure of school districts, desires to transfers to higher achieving schools, and competitive salaries and benefits. One respondent agreed with many of the other personnel directors by stating, "The rapidly changing demographics have provided a shock to long-term teachers in our county and caused a number of citizens to move from the county and/or caused some veteran teachers to retire earlier than originally planned." The remaining respondents (52) reflected on their county not having a retention problem because achievement was high, teachers were treated as professionals, their locations were resourceful, incentives were desirable, and opportunities for professional growth were evident. Table 6 illustrates the statistical descriptions of this question.

Table 5

Abbreviated Descriptions of Open-ended Questions' Statements

| Statements Shared on Survey	Abbreviated Form
There is not necessarily a problem retaining teachers. I do see a great migration of teachers who have dedicated their careers to other counties and are in the last laps of education and are seeking a more educationally friendly environment.	Teacher Retention
Over 95% of our staff indicated that they enjoyed working here and would recommend our system to other prospective teachers. Word of mouth is our strongest recruitment strategy. Our motto says it all…."World Class Education with Hometown Values."	Workplace Uniqueness
A Retention Specialist position is funded through NCLB funding. She develops and implements programs in the areas of induction, mentoring support and training, Critical Friends Group support and training, teacher surveys, and system-wide teacher recognition.	Strategies for Retention
Administrators have a yearly retreat where teacher retention is a top priority. We evaluate the number of teachers who left the system and give an evaluation form of sorts to determine why they left and if there was anything that could have been done to make them stay.	Retention Evaluation

Table 6

Descriptive Data for Question 1: Do you feel your county has a problem with retaining teachers?

Descriptive	Statistics
Yes	17
No	52
No Response	15
Mean	1.9762
Standard Deviation	.62046

The next question was, "Of the factors listed on the previous pages, what are the five most essential ones needed to retain teachers in your county?" Percentages ranged from 1% to 86% in determining the top five essentials factors. The personnel directors determined that support from building level administrators (86%), competitive salaries/benefits (64%), positive school climate (63%), discipline of students (48%), and availability of resources (34%) were the five factors most essential for retaining teachers. The factor that was most desirable was support from building level administrators. The factor that was least desirable of the seventeen factors was sense of efficacy, which was surprising because so often teachers want to feel empowered. Figure 1 displays the break down of the data collected from the personnel directors to determine the top five factors needed to retain teachers in Georgia.

Figure 1.

The Factors Impacting Teacher Retention According to Personnel Directors' Survey and the Percentages of Personnel Directors Who Identified each Factos. Please note the top five factors are bracketed for ease of reference.
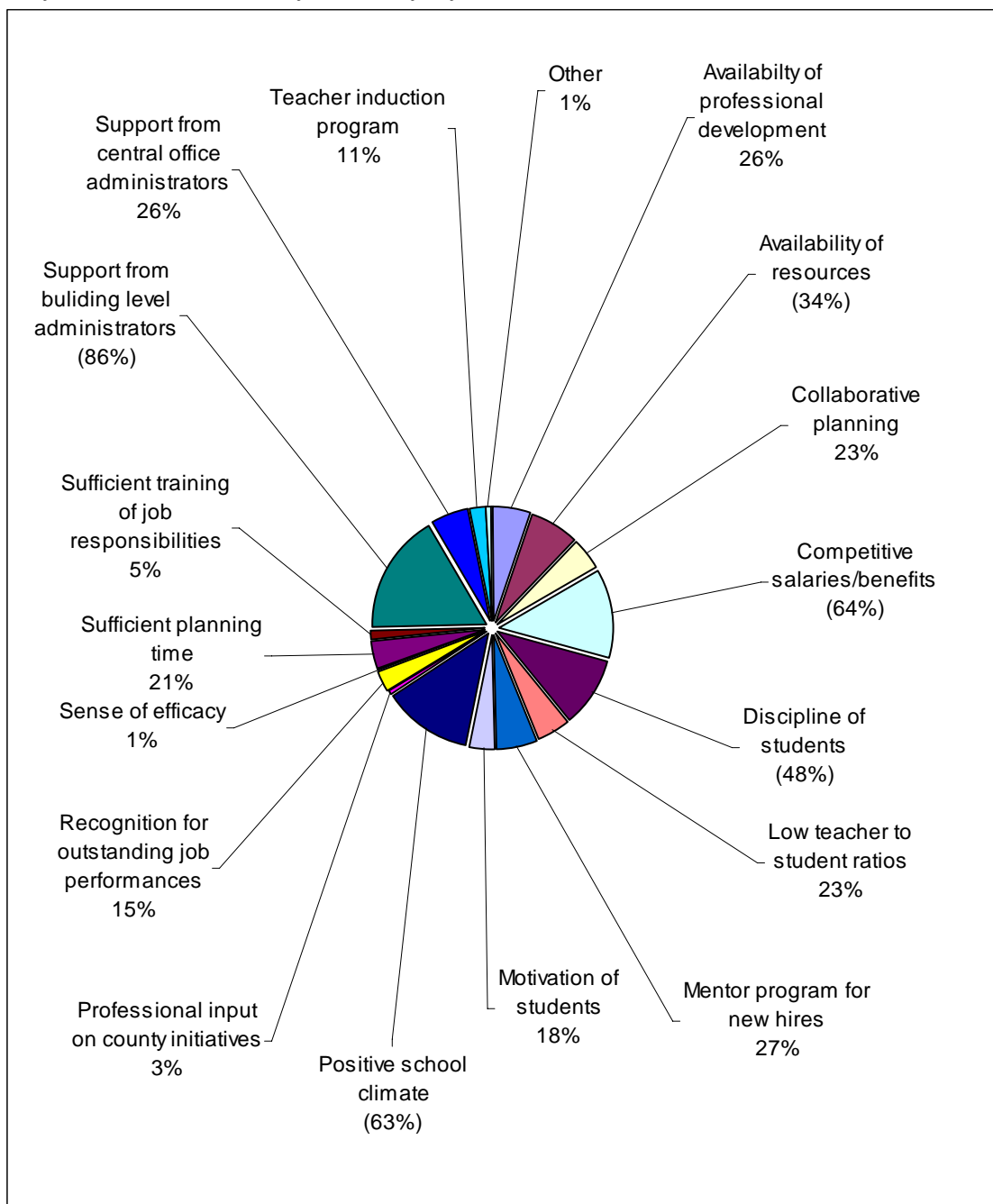
The third question asked, "Do you feel your school district is a unique place to work? If yes, why?" Many of the personnel directors felt their school system was unique. Forty-two personnel directors felt their county was unique; whereas, twenty-seven personnel directors did not feel their county was unique. Some of the characteristics that made their system unique were location, size of district, student achievement, level of professionalism, high standards, great values, positive atmospheres, few discipline concerns, cooperative planning between administration, and respect from the community. One district had a theme of, "We are Family," reflecting many of the characteristics in the previous sentence. The districts that were identified as not being unique, personnel directors' comments mainly focused around the fact that the districts were very large and some lacked progression. One particular respondent shared that private schools are more influential in their district, which was surprising for that type of comment to be made in the state of Georgia because private schools tend to be most influential in states that authorize the use of vouchers. Table 7 provides the statistical analysis of the third question.

Table 7

Descriptive Data for Question 3: Do you feel your system is a unique place to work?

Descriptives	Statistics
Yes	42
No	27
No Response	15
Mean	1.6786
Standard Deviation	.76301

Question four asked, "What strategies or programs are being used by your county to retain teachers? How effective are these programs?" An abundant number of personnel directors felt their use of teacher/leadership academics, mentor programs, induction programs, and competitive salaries/benefit packages are very effective. Some of the other strategies that appeared to be somewhat effective included smaller class sizes and monetary incentives. Many of the respondents shared that monetary incentives are mainly being phased out due to budget constraints. Two of the six strategies that stood out from the many strategies listed included the hiring of a Retention Specialist through "No Child Left Behind" funding to develop, implement, and evaluate programs to increase teacher retention and to develop a 5-year strategic plan to train teachers on how to cope with their changing demographics for the sake of teacher retention. The remainder of the six strategies that stood out included school districts making an effort to balance workloads, allow early release days so new teachers can have peer observations,

implement the Georgia Reach to Teach program, and provide bonuses for teachers who

sign their third consecutive contract.

The final question asked, "How does your district evaluate teacher retention

yearly?" The majority of the personnel directors shared that their retention rate was

presented to the board at the end of each academic year. Many school districts utilize

surveys in order to receive feedback. Although exit interviews can be so insightful, only

12 out of the 84 personnel directors expressed that their counties conduct exit interviews.

Two personnel directors shared that their counties actually debrief their administrators on

the results of the data collected on the annual retention rate. An alarming finding was that

35 of the personnel directors were unsure of exact measures taken by their system to

evaluate their retention rate.

Summary

The researcher has compiled a conglomerate amount of information and reduced

it categorically in order to answer the proposed research questions. The researcher chose

to share some of the qualitative data rather than all of the data based on interpretative

biases and personal values. The process of categorizing and pattern seeking was used to

summarize information shared by participants.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research was utilized by the

researcher with hopes of clarity on the factors that affect teacher retention in not only

Georgia, but throughout the United States of America. The methods were used to

complement each other in providing the best research results. The interviews provided a

broader spectrum of issues that needed to be included on the survey. The overarching

research question asks what strategies are currently being used in Georgia to retain

teachers in the absence of a state-wide teacher retention policy. The researcher

discovered that there were few strategies that were "outside of the box". Majority of the

strategies appeared to be universal, which resulted in similar retention rates from county

to county in Metro Atlanta and counties within an hour radius; however, the strategies did

not appear to be resourceful in rural and poverty-stricken areas.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

As a former recruiter and current administrator, the researcher conducted this study to research the effectiveness of strategies that are currently being used in Georgia to retain teachers due to the fact that Georgia does not have a retention policy. A review of the related literature revealed that teacher retention has taken a front row seat in education. Lawmakers, administrators, and members of society have realized that there is a problem attracting and retaining teachers in the schools in the United States of America. Extra initiatives have been put into place to attract and retain teachers, but the question is the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Some measures school districts are taking to address retention include the establishment of mentor and teacher induction programs. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2007), an induction program that runs smoothly and efficiently must have six key features: (1) strong principal leadership, (2) high-quality providers of the induction program with dedicated staff resources, (3) additional support for new teachers, (4) incentives for teachers to participate in induction activities, (5) alignment between induction, classroom needs, and professional standards, and (6) an adequate and stable source of funding. Some efforts also included bonuses, collaboration with colleges and universities, increase in resources and professional development, and equivalent placements of teachers according to their certification. The factor that was most reflective amongst participants in this study was whether teachers were attracted to intrinsic factors

such as school climate, support from administrators, and the availability of resources or extrinsic factors that included salary, bonuses, and locations.

The study was intended to answer the overarching question, "What strategies are currently being used in Georgia to retain teachers in the absence of a state-wide teacher retention policy?" This research question was investigated through the following sub questions:

1. What are school districts doing to retain teachers?

2. How effective are these strategies as perceived by personnel directors in school districts?

3. What are specific challenges perceived by personnel directors in retaining teachers?

4. How do these strategies and challenges vary by school districts' individual characteristics?

Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were chosen because the topic of teacher retention proved to be situational and difficult to measure with one approach alone. The approaches allowed the researcher to acquire more information. The information gathered included a comprehensive analysis of teacher retention.

Analysis of Research Findings

The data for teacher retention in Georgia was analyzed and organized. The research questions prompted and guided this study as it progressed. Personnel directors were an avid part of this study. According to the survey and interview results, majority of the personnel directors felt their county did not have a problem retaining

teachers, which was surprising because research studied indicated that teacher retention is

a national problem (Darling-Hammond, 2003). They discussed effectiveness and

ineffectiveness of the measures that many of their counties were choosing to take in order

to address the retention concern that is not only in Georgia, but the entire United States of

America. The evaluation measures differed from county to county. The challenges that

were shared in retaining teachers appeared to change based on demographics and

availability of resources.

The survey administered to personnel directors contributed information about

their perceptions regarding the retention of teachers in Georgia. The list of strategies

included in the survey was rated by the participants regarding what was currently being

done in school systems to retain teachers. A clearer view of these strategies was provided

by the six interviewed personnel directors because they are trained and experienced

individuals who often have first impressions of teachers entering and exiting school

systems. The interviews added insight to the relationship of these strategies and teacher

retention.

Norton (1999) made a very important comment when he stated, "….the key to

addressing shortages lies…in schools and classrooms where teachers must find success

and satisfaction. It is there they will decide whether or not to continue to teach." The

survey respondents rated the top five strategies they felt were most important to teachers

by weighted values in order as follows: support from building level administrators,

competitive salaries/benefits, positive school climate, discipline of students, and

availability of resources. Through this research, it became clear that teachers are more

attracted to intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards represented

not only building level factors, but general professional concerns. Extrinsic rewards

represented external preferences and personal concerns. The findings of this research

reciprocated the findings of Polka (1997), when he found that people possess five key

personal needs or dispositions that must be met for personal and/or organizational

satisfaction and productivity with them being: challenge, commitment, control, creativity,

and caring.

The interview process revealed several other perceptions that can hinder school

systems from retaining teachers. When funding plays a vital role in what school systems

can offer, some systems are more financially capable of providing appealing options to

veteran and novice teachers. A lack of administrative support to personnel directors

appears to deplore the many avenues that could be explored in order to make the

profession of teaching more enticing. In order to see a significant change in mindset,

which many personnel directors thought was a valid concern, Polka et al. (2000)

expressed that there are six professional needs and expectations needed to deal with

significant changes: communication, empowerment, assistance in decision-making,

leadership, opportunity for professional growth, and time.

<center>Discussion of Research Findings</center>

Some of the research findings of this study were consistent with related research

in the field. According to this study, the researcher identified the same reasoning for

teachers staying and leaving their school districts as the research and literature. Some of

the reasons stated for counties not having retention concerns included high levels of

achievement and professionalism of teachers, ideal locations, desirable incentives, and

opportunities for professional growth. Although some personnel directors felt their

county did not have retention concerns, the researcher found that to be untrue because it is apparent that every county can benefit from the use of certain strategies to retain teachers. The personnel directors that felt their county experienced problems with retaining teachers responded with answers that included socio-economic changes in demographics, the desire of teachers to be at higher achieving schools, competitive salaries and benefits, and mindset constraints from central level administrators. Mindset constraints are referred to as a person's thoughts, based on previous experiences, preventing them from thinking towards the future.

According to the focus levels of school systems on factors that affect teacher retention in Georgia, the areas of primary focus were collaborative planning, mentor programs for new teachers, support from building level administration, and teacher induction programs. Each of these factors' importance had been researched extensively through the years by Darling-Hammond and Ingersoll. The primary factor that appeared to be most effective in teachers determining to stay at a particular school was the support of building level administration. Blanchard and Warghorn (1997) stated, "Personal concerns are the most overlooked and under-managed concerns in the change process. If change is to be successful, people need to recruit the help of those around them. We need each other. That is why support groups work when people are facing changes or times of stress in their lives (pgs. 159-160)."

Strategies that are currently being utilized in Georgia include competitive salaries, mentoring programs, signing bonuses, retention bonuses, and professional development. Through literature, the two factors that appear to be most important to teachers in general were bonuses and mentoring programs. Personnel directors feel the factors that are

perceived to be most needed in Georgia are competitive salaries and professional development. The interviewed personnel directors expressed the fact that although many of the counties are utilizing the mentoring programs and professional development, a great number of them are choosing not to utilize bonuses because of initial ineffectiveness and a lack of funds to conduct this program. Researchers discussed the importance of targeting paraprofessionals to return to school for certification, as well as providing the opportunity for retired teachers to return to the classroom without demolishing retirement benefits. Although these strategies appear to be very rewarding, no county in Georgia indicated that they have such an initiative.

Intrinsic factors outweighed extrinsic factors throughout the study. Support from building level administrators (86%) carried the highest percentage, with competitive salaries/benefits (64%) and positive school climate (63%) averaging almost the same percentage. Factors that also carried large percentages included discipline of students (48%), availability of resources (34%), mentor programs for new hires (27%), availability of professional development and support from central office administrators (26%), and collaborative planning and low teacher to student ratios (23%). Throughout this study researchers expressed the importance of the school climate being positive and administrators showing support, especially in hard to staff schools. Researchers shared the fact that successful schools were successful because of high achievement, low discipline concerns, professionalism, and collaboration.

The review of literature offered a large amount of information on teacher retention and strategies that could increase retention, but there was very little research that discussed the impact personnel directors have on the topic. In interviewing the

personnel directors, that was not surprising because they shared the fact that their influence was very limited when it came to county mandates. Personnel directors expressed the need to be a part of the recruitment strategies and performance management on the administrative initiatives of retention.

Conclusions

Although the state of Georgia does not appear to have an issue overall with teacher retention, according to recent statistics, it is apparent that there are some strategies school districts can consider implementing now in order to prepare for the future. The education profession in Georgia can benefit from becoming more marketable in such a competitive world. Administrators of urban, poverty-stricken, and suburban counties need to modify their mindsets in order to address the diverse needs of teachers and students. Financially, school systems need to be mindful of teacher retention because using the most recent national data from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, an estimated $12, 500 is used on every teacher who leaves a school district.

Teachers are constantly expressing a lack of support from building level administrators. Although many administrators are unaware of the impact they have on the daily successes and failures of teachers, they are truly a key source of the future teachers we may witness in our classrooms. Teachers are seeking empowerment, collaboration, respect, resources, and support from administrators, peers, students, and parents. They are only demanding the respect that most other professionals receive in their profession. Senator John Edwards (D-NC) , who is a former Vice President candidate, stressed at a recent speaking engagement that the experiences and support he benefited from as a child

are not available to enough of today's students. He shared the following in a speech given

on CNN October 12, 2004:

> Without the combination of support from loving parents, terrific teachers, and public schools at every level, I would never be standing here today. Unfortunately, that combination is getting harder and harder to find in America. Too many kids are trapped in schools that don't work. Too many kids who beat the odds and succeed in school can't afford to go to college, even as kids with the most advantages get special privileges. We have to change that. In America, no child should be able to take success for granted, and every child should be able to go as far as his God-given talents and hard work will take him.

Many teachers feel this change came about because of how society has depicted the

educational systems and the lack of respect for educators.

Through this study I learned that extrinsic factors are not as major of an issue to

teachers when determining their job satisfaction. Teachers seek happiness and the

opportunity to perform their job well. They are not extensively concerned about salaries,

bonuses, or locations when it comes to being a part of a successful school. That was

surprising in one manner when one looks at the economic challenges of today, but in

another manner it made total sense that happiness should come first.

The program that appeared to be the most beneficial from the review of literature

and the study was mentor programs. Mentor programs are intricate parts to teacher

retention. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) reiterated the importance of mentoring programs by

explaining how they reduce attrition, which allows school districts to utilize funds spent

on recruiting, hiring, and developing teachers more effective and provide their students

with teachers who have growing expertise. They create a foundation, guidance, and

support for new teachers. Some counties discussed the need to expand their programs to

as many as three to five years to address the statistic that 2 out of 5 novice teachers will leave the profession after only five years.

<p align="center">Implications</p>

The results of this study have significant implications for educators on all levels who are concerned with increasing or preparing for the future of teacher retention. The results are useful for central office and building level administrators in making decisions on the needs of teachers. The information gained through this study shows the effects intrinsic factors have on the education profession. Each of the factors studied through this research has results that can be used in the development of future teacher retention programs throughout the state of Georgia.

Statistical analysis of the data collected in this study indicated that teamwork between all stakeholders is beneficial to teacher retention. Stakeholders include administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the community. This study implied that a district will not be successful in retaining teachers if there is not a sense of teamwork. Teamwork includes assistance in all areas of the profession, such as management, planning, discipline, and resources. Colleagues are important to all teachers, but new teachers truly rely on their assistance. New teachers are given a plethora of duties starting the minute they enter the building, and it is impossible to learn how to complete each assigned task without assistance. When teachers work together under a supportive administration, duties are accomplished efficiently and effectively. This also gives new teachers an opportunity to see that everyone can benefit from one another. Professional interaction is a vital key to teacher retention.

This study has concluded with a presentation of various information pertaining to what affects teacher retention. The researcher believes the figure and tables are most useful to interested researchers of this topic because they offer direct details of what factors truly affect teachers and summaries of open-ended questions. When administrators start taking the top five factors that are important to teachers seriously, a change in teacher turnover rates will occur. Teachers want to feel appreciated and supported by their administrators.

<p style="text-align:center">Recommendations</p>

It is recommended that counties in Georgia continue or begin to evaluate their teacher retention plan in order to attract, induct, and retain teachers. There needs to be ongoing support from central office administrators, building level administrators, and colleagues. Teachers' wants and needs should be heard by all stakeholders of education. Allowing teachers to be a part of the decision-making process encourages collaboration and a sense of belonging. A study of the effects intrinsic and extrinsic factors have on teacher retention can stimulate further inquiry and may help in clarifying how effective some techniques may be. Collins (2001) stated, "When you start with an honest and diligent effort to determine the truth of the situation, the right decisions often become self-evident…You absolutely cannot make a series of good decisions without first confronting the brutal facts. (p. 70)" This statement is true because as administrators we are so quick to assume what our teachers want instead of just asking their desires. Instead of assuming, the implementation of an "exit interview" system by the Human Resource Department will be very beneficial in all counties.

Certain school districts in Georgia are more affluent than others, which causes the concern of teacher retention to be less apparent. For school systems that have more challenging circumstances, it is important that you make yourself marketable in order to attract the same magnitude of teachers as the next system. Personnel directors need to be utilized to assist with this matter. They are usually the individuals to have initial contact with interested teachers, as well as contact with teachers when they decide to make a career change. Their expertise can assist in so many ways when a system looks at attracting and retaining teachers.

Principals are key factors to the climate of schools. Teachers seek visibility and guidance. Although many counties have a mentor program, many times teachers are seeking assistance from administration to ensure support. A positive and supportive administrator can set the tone to foster collegiality. It is apparent that teachers of various years of experience are seeking administrative support, resources, support from colleagues, positive environments, and professional development. We simply cannot afford to lose good teachers through negligence of their needs. Evans (2001) suggested that leadership can shape work contexts that either match or are at odds with what teachers want in relation to equity and justice, pedagogy or androgogy, organizational efficiency, personal relations, collegiality, self-conception and self-image.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Further Study</div>

Teacher retention is a topic that will be of greater concern in the future. Further studies can only intensify some of the findings of this researcher. As more researchers offer outlets to school districts, one will be able to witness greater efforts being established in recruiting and retaining teachers not only in Georgia, but all over the

world. Further studies will allow researchers the opportunity to compare and analyze retention rates across various domains. There are numerous factors affected by teacher retention that can be further researched because until the big picture is analyzed, society will continue to see changes in education.

Dissemination

The researcher will share the findings of this study with not only colleagues, but administrators throughout the state of Georgia through an educational consultant agency. The information and results of this study will be discussed through power point presentations, pamphlets, and round table forums. The researcher will also share this information with future administrators to prepare them for how to effectively and efficiently accommodate teachers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LITERATURE MATRIX

AUTHOR(S)	STUDY	PURPOSE	CONCLUSIONS
Allen, Michael	Teacher recruitment, preparation and retention for hard-to-staff schools	Defines the central problem, which is the insufficient supply of effective teachers for all students, including high-poverty and minority students.	Four key questions were addressed by educators and policymakers.
Blackburn, Kathryn, M.	Elementary school principals' perception of their role in teacher retention	Mixed method study using its primary source of data collection through interviews	All principals believed that a positive work climate is associated with teacher retention and that the principal had an influence on the climate.
Bobek, Becky, L.	Teacher resiliency: A key to career longevity	Examine strategies that encourage resiliency for teachers	Teachers who can use their resources to develop resilience will successfully confront the ongoing challenges of teaching and prevail within the profession.
Claycomb, Carla Hawley, Willis, D.	Recruiting and retaining effective teachers for urban schools; Developing a strategic plan for action	Analysis discusses ways to address the persistent challenge of ensuring that students who attend urban schools are taught by highly effective teachers.	Quality schools depend on quality teaching. Quality teaching depends on the development and implementation of comprehensive strategic plans to recruit and retain highly effective teachers.
Darling-Hammond, Linda	Teacher retention	Investigate why teachers quit and how they might be better induced to stay	The dynamics of school systems are important predictors of the decision of teachers to leave their current position.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF STATES WITH RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION POLICIES

STATE	RECRUITMENT POLICY PRESENT	RETENTION POLICY PRESENT	INDUCTION/ MENTORING POLICY PRESENT
Alabama	√		
Connecticut	√	√	√
Florida			
Georgia			
Idaho	√		√
Kentucky			
Louisiana			
Mississippi	√		√
Nevada			
North Carolina	√		√
Virginia	√	√	√

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Personnel Director,

My name is Natasha N. Griffin. In addition to being an Assistant Principal in the Henry County School System, I am currently enrolled in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern University. In an effort to complete my dissertation, I am conducting a survey to examine personnel directors' perceptions of current and ideal programs that are being used in Georgia school systems to retain teachers. The information I gather through my research can be used by educators to provide insight on programs and strategies that are being utilized to retain qualified teachers in Georgia.

The purpose of this letter is to request your assistance in gathering data for making recommendations for school systems to use in regards to enhancing teacher retention. If you agree to participate, the researcher will use the information you provide to compare information provided by other personnel directors throughout the state of Georgia. Completion of the attached survey will indicate permission to use the provided information in the study. Please be assured that your responses will be confidential. The data will be reported in percentages and in summary form. No individualized information will be shared in this study. All provided information will be summarized to provide an overall description of what strategies and procedures are currently being used to retain qualified teachers in Georgia. The study will be most beneficial if every question is answered; however, if you choose to not respond to certain questions, the provided information will be used in the study. The information gathered from this study will be published in my dissertation, which will be on public file.

You are welcome to contact me if you have any questions or concerns at (770) 914-1889 or (770)957-9505. My e-mail address is natashagriffin@henry.k12.ga.us. My academic advisor is Dr. Walter Polka who can be contacted at (912) 486-0045 or wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu. Your rights and concerns as a research participant are available at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 681-5465.

Thank you for your participation in this study. The survey should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. The results of the study will provide Georgia educators with valuable information on increasing teacher retention in their counties.

Respectively,

Natasha N. Griffin

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Interview Questions

1. Do you feel your county has a hard time retaining teachers? If yes, why?

2. What are some things your county is doing to retain teachers?

3. How successful are these programs?

4. In retaining teachers, what are some strategies you have found to be less effective?

5. With proper resources, what are some strategies you would want to use to retain teachers?

6. How is the retention rate evaluated in your county?

7. What resources do you feel will aide in retaining teachers in your county?

APPENDIX E

SURVEY FOR PERSONNEL DIRECTORS

Personnel Director Survey

Section 1:

Directions:
Below is a list of recognized factors that influence teachers to remain in a particular school or district. Please place a check in the column that best represents what you personally feel is your school system's focus in retaining teachers.

Factors	No Focus 1	Some Focus 2	Primary Focus 3
Availability of professional development			
Availability of resources			
Collaborative planning			
Competitive salaries/benefits			
Discipline of students			
Low student/teacher Ratio			
Mentor program for new hires			
Motivation of students			
Positive school Climate			
Professional input on county initiatives			

(continued) Factors	No Focus 1	Some Focus 2	Primary Focus 3
Recognition of outstanding job performances			
Sense of efficacy			
Sufficient planning Time			
Sufficient training of job responsibilities			
Support from building level administrators			
Support from central office administrators			
Teacher Induction Program			

Please make additional comments on factors listed above if needed:

Section 2:
Please write a short answer for the following questions.

1. Do you feel your county has a problem with retaining teachers? If yes, why? If no, why?

Section 2 (continued)

2. Of the factors listed on the previous pages, what are the five most essential ones needed to retain teachers in your county?

    *

    *

    *

    *

    *

3. Do you feel your system is a unique place to work? If yes, why?

4. What strategies or programs are being used by your county to retain teachers? How effective are these programs?

5. How does your county evaluate teacher retention yearly?

Thank you so much for participating!!

APPENDIX F

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-681-5465	Administrative Annex
	P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719 Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Natasha Griffin
1096 Rowanshyre Circle
McDonough, GA 30253

CC: Dr. Walter Polka, Faculty Advisor
P. O. Box 8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
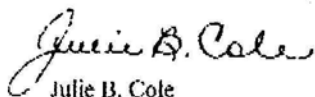(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: July 31, 2006

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07009**, and titled **"The Retention of Teachers in the State of Georgia in the Absence of a State-Wide Retention Policy"**, it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol, you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,

Julie B. Cole
Julie B. Cole
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs