

The problem of teacher retention

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



One of the biggest problems facing schools in America is teacher retention. Teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates. With the new phenomenon occurring, the students are at the short end of the stick. Numerous studies have been conducted which states, on average 40% of new teachers quit the profession in five years or less. What exactly is driving the problem?

Researchers have used data from school districts and national surveys of teachers and schools to demonstrate that there are common factors that push teachers either to leave their schools or leave the profession all together. The most significant factors include low salary, student behavior issues, lack of support from school administration, and an inability to participate in decision-making. Studies have also stated that teachers may also be more likely to leave if they are resistant to using prescribed curriculums or are discouraged from modifying their instruction. Over time, individual school environments affect teacher attrition more than district measures such as teacher salary, student demographics, or urban settings.

Teacher retention may affect student learning in several ways. First, in high-turnover schools, students may be more likely to have inexperienced teachers who in turn are less effective. Second, high turnover creates instability in schools making it more difficult to have coherent instruction. Third, high turnover can be costly in that it takes time and effort to recruit teachers. With these three factors, turnover can reduce student learning if more effective teachers decided to leave.

The purpose of the paper is to review literature on contributing factors of teacher retention and suggested solutions to the problem. The following questions will be the focus of the paper: What contributes to teachers leaving the field? How has “ No Child Left Behind” effect teacher retention? What can be done to retain good teachers? What impact do school administrators have on teacher retention? Many studies have been conducted on the consequences of teachers leaving the profession of teaching.

The first study that is important to understand is titled, “ How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement”. The scientific article discusses how teacher turnover rates can be high, particularly in schools serving low income, non-white, and low-achieving student populations (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). The article is broken down into “ Compositional” Explanations, “ Disruptive” Explanations and Data. The compositional explanations is one mechanism by which turnover may directly affect students. This explains that there is a difference in quality between teachers who leave and those who replace them, then student achievement can change. The article discusses disruptive explanations which explains how all members of a school community are vulnerable, including staying teacher and their students. Lastly the article discusses the data behind teacher turnover and student achievement. The data was drawn from the New York City Department of Education and the New York State Education Department. The data shows the effect of turnover is driven by the relative effectiveness of teachers who leave a school, as compared to those who replace them.

The second research report attempts to explain, what brings on teacher burnout. Teacher burnout is one of the leading causes of teacher attrition, so it is important to thoroughly understand, what causes the burnout and what can be done to stop it. The research report titled, “ Factors Influencing Stress, Burnout, and Retention of Secondary Teachers thoroughly explains those factors listed above”. The article examines the stress, burnout, satisfaction, and preventive coping skills of nearly 400 secondary teachers to determine variables contributing to these major factors influencing teachers (Fisher 1). Statistics were conducted that found the burnout levels between new and experienced teachers are significantly different, with novice teachers having higher burnout, but their difference in stress levels was not statistically significant. A one-way ANOVA study was conducted to determine if there is a significant difference between the stress and burnout levels of new and experienced teachers. Research shows that up to fifty percent of teachers leave the profession by the close of their fifth year of experience. The data collected in this study reveals many interesting and relevant facts about stress and burnout that teachers face (Fisher 27). It appears just measuring the years of experience in the profession may not be adequate and further investigations should be conducted using more in-depth studies.

The next research report focuses on teacher turnover as well as teacher shortages. The research report titled is “ Teacher Turnover and Teacher Shortages: An Organizational Analysis”. Teacher shortage has gained media attention for the past 30 years. In the early 1980s, a series of highly published reports began to focus on teacher attrition. The studies predicted a dramatic increase in the demand for new teachers primarily resulting from

two converging demographic trends-increasing student enrolment and increasing teacher attrition due to a “ graying” teaching force (Ingersoll 500). The inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers has since been cast as a major educational problem, received widespread coverage in the national media. With the problem being identified, programs have been created to dwarf the problem. Programs such as Teach for America started to lure the best and brightest into the teaching professions. The article attempts to extend existing theory and research by examining teacher turnover from an organizational perspective.

The organizational perspective describes how school staffing problems cannot be fully understood without closely examining the characteristics of the organizations that employ teachers and also examining turnover at the level of the organization. Data shows that the demand for new teachers is not primarily due to student enrollment increases but to preretirement turnover. The data shows that teacher turnover is, a sizeable phenomenon and moreover that these departures are a major factor behind the demand for new hires. Not all of the departures result in permanent loss of teachers. One form of this revolving door is represented by temporary attrition, teachers who leave then return in later years. The results show that among public schools, teachers in high-poverty schools have higher rates of turnover than those in more affluent public schools. The article reaches a few interesting points. For teachers to remain at a high poverty campus there needs to be a sense of school community and effectiveness. If the school provides mechanisms for the protection of academic freedom and job

security and mechanisms for voicing opposition, those who disagree with school policies will be less likely to exit.

The next research report examines the questions behind teachers quitting. The research report is titled, “ Why are New Teachers Leaving the Profession”? The article focuses on new teachers who leave the profession in Canada. The article breaks down the exact definition of teacher drop-out, why are teachers leaving the profession, impacts of drop-out on cost and quality, the drop-out teacher: an international problem. According to the scientific article, teacher drop-out is an interdisciplinary problem that can be viewed from an economic, organizational, psychological, or education perspective.

Usually, the word drop-out is referred to students but in Canada it is referred as young teachers who leave the profession. The section of why teachers leave the profession is presented in four sections; Task-related factors, individual factors, social environment and socioeconomic conditions. Teacher drop-out is becoming problematic in two respects: the cost incurred and the consequences for the quality of teaching. Lastly, the drop-out teacher is becoming an international problem, with 46% of new teachers leave their job in the first five years of service. All though the paper focuses on teachers leaving the profession in America, it is important to understand that America, can solve its teacher attrition problem, by studying different countries. By doing so, it will be able to compare data and findings with a different perspective on the issue. Data Collection and Participants data are used to compare teachers that quit and stay. To mitigate the methodological bias,

the analyses systematically included a comparison of the two groups to highlight any differences. Data Analysis collected from the questionnaires were mainly quantitative (responses to closed questions), but also qualitative (responses to open-ended questions).

A total of 34 dropout teachers participated in the survey. At the time of dropping out, 70.3% of respondents had five or fewer years of teaching experience. According to the article, the argument that teachers are particularly inclined to abandon the profession during the induction period. The key informants on teacher drop out comprised of 167 respondents. The informants agreed that too much work to be done at home and a too heavy workload were the main causes of attrition. What can be done to prevent attrition was also discussed in the article; the main responses to the question were reducing isolation, more communication and collaboration with colleagues and other school actors. The million-dollar question is what can be done to prevent teacher attrition. Based on the article, better support in general and better administrative support as well as university training that better provides the requisite skills will reduce attrition. The most often cited need by the respondents concerns an aspect of professional induction mainly mentoring.

The next research report focuses on teacher retention as well as teacher attrition. The report is titled, “Teacher Retention and Attrition: Views of Early Career Teachers”. The paper reports on an aspect of a large-scale longitudinal study on early career teachers’ decisions to remain in or leave the profession. The overarching research question was: Why do some early

career teachers choose to remain in the profession and why do others choose to leave? This paper describes and analyses the experiences of teachers participating in the study and highlights implications for teacher retention. Six themes are outlined in the findings of the study. Collegiality and support, student engagement and behavior management, professional learning, workload and isolation. It appeared that student engagement and student behavior are significant factors for teachers, especially new one. Professional learning offsite is also critical for teachers to stay in the profession. Most teachers also stated they needed a less workload and more time to collaborate with teams. To retain teachers, the paper argues for teacher education programs and school leaders to focus on developing and supporting the six themes above. It further highlights the importance of support for teachers that will help them through the challenges of the early years.

The next research paper is titled, “ Stemming the Revolving Door: Teacher Retention and Attrition in Arctic Alaska Schools”. This study used a mixed methods approach to identify and understand factors that contribute to current teacher retention and attrition in rural Alaska’s public K-12 schools (Creswell, 2007; Kleinsasser, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Archival data were retrieved from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (2014), analyzed by descriptive statistics to document teacher retention in 10 rural school districts between 2009-2013, and compared to data of three Alaskan urban districts. Institutional approval and participant informed consent were obtained prior to data collection. All certified teachers (N= 820) from ten rural Alaska school districts were identified from the

current district employee database and cross referenced with the Alaska National Education Association (ANEA). The survey was administered using the online platform Qualtrics.

The next research is titled, “ Principal Support is Imperative to the Retention of Teachers in Hard-to-Staff Schools”. A non-experimental correlational design was chosen because it allows for a relationship between variables to be established and studied without manipulation of the participants (Cozby, 2007). A survey was used to obtain information from the participants. The participants responded regarding their experiences of perceive support, received support, and how they feel support affects teacher retention. Support, as used in this study, was defined as the principal taking an active role in assisting, encouraging, and displaying approving attitudes towards teachers. In addition, the participants were asked how important is this kind of support for them to stay or leave their positions. The four domains of support being researched are: emotional, technical, instructional, and environmental supports.

The next research examines the, “ New Teacher Center Induction Model”. The What Works Clearing identified one study of the NTC Induction Model that falls within the scope of the teacher training, Evaluation, and Compensation topic area and meets WWC group design standards. This one study meets WWC group design without reservations. The study included 413 beginning teachers in 199 elementary schools in eight urban school districts.

The next research is titled, "Teacher Retention in a Teacher Resiliency-Building Rural School". The general design of this study incorporated the use of archival data review, survey, small group interviews, and observations. The design used archival data reviews and an assessment survey developed by Henderson and Milstein (2000) to collect baseline data needed to determine from a professional perspective whether Nurtureville Elementary was a legitimate teacher resiliency-building school. The study used the observations and small group interviews to collect data regarding selected barriers to Educator Resiliency, as identified by Milstein and Henry (2000). The intent was to use these data to demonstrate differences in practices and processes between a traditional versus a teacher resiliency-building school.

The next research is titled, "Teach Louisiana Consortium: A Fifth Year Program Evaluation". This evaluative study collected data from mid-October 2007 until mid-February 2008. Surveys were mailed to all 251 of the TLC practitioners.