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An Exploration of Effective District Practices For Enculturating and Retaining Kentucky's Newest Teachers in the Profession

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AN EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE DISTRICT PRACTICES FOR ENCULTURATING AND RETAINING KENTUCKY'S NEWEST TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

2023

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

AN EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE DISTRICT PRACTICES FOR ENCULTURATING AND RETAINING KENTUCKY'S NEWEST TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION

The teaching profession within P-12 education has more beginners in the field than ever before, growing the profession by 48%, which outpaces the 19% growth in student enrollment. The most common teacher among all practicing in America's schools is someone in her or his first year of teaching. The decreasing levels of experience in the profession has led to increased rates of attrition because beginners have the highest attrition rates with up to 50% leaving the field within the first five years. Research conducted on teacher retention has focused on why teachers leave the field; hence, a major gap in the research is the limited discussion on the influences that make teachers decide to stay in the field. If 50% of teachers are leaving the classroom within the first five years of their career, then 50% of new teachers are staying. Who are they? Where do they teach? What is keeping them in the profession? This study focuses on finding these answers by focusing on districts with high retention rates in search of the answer to the retention problem. This qualitative study examines what works well and how to facilitate those practices, to provide the answer many educational leaders seek.

KEYWORDS: teacher retention, Kentucky, superintendent, positive organizational scholarship, semi-structured interviews

Cari Lea Boyd

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AN EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE DISTRICT PRACTICES FOR ENCULTURATING AND RETAINING KENTUCKY'S NEWEST TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION

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For my parents.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

All occupations experience some loss of newcomers, but teaching is an occupation with attrition and migration rates that are about 4% higher among the newest members in the field when compared to other professions (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lortie, 1975; Ingersoll et al.,2018a; Veeman, 1985). Historically, teaching has been one of the largest, if not the largest, occupational groups in the nation, and data show that it is growing. In the last two decades, the teaching force has increased at a rate over 2.5 times that of students, with a 48% increase in the number of certified teachers nationally (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2018a: Mervis, 2010). Research, however, shows that large portions of these newly prepared teachers never actually teach, thus indicating that completing a teacher preparation program and obtaining a teaching license does not necessarily increase the existing teacher supply (Mervis, 2010). Despite some loss of qualified teachers before employment, data show our nation is still producing enough teachers to cover increases in student enrollment and retirement. However, this is not the case when the loss of teachers before retirement are included in the data (Ingersoll, 2011; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Mervis, 2010).

Studies examining 1- to 4-year retention rates of beginning teachers find that 12% of new teachers leave the profession by the end of their first year; 31% leave within three years; and almost 50% leave the profession within five years. These numbers include the 9.5% that leave before completing the end of their first year (Davis & Waite, 2006; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Riggs, 2013). In addition to

leaving, the migration of teachers from school to school, or district to district, intensifies the problem by creating a "revolving door" with high flow in, through, and out of schools.

Another contributing factor in the high rates of teacher attrition is role changing, which includes taking a position in administration or another educational position in a K-12 school, reducing work hours to part time, or becoming a substitute teacher instead of a full-time teacher of record. By the eighth year of teaching, 70% of teacher attrition is the result of a role change rather than departure from the profession completely (Quartz et al., 2008). On the other hand, retirement from teaching in K-12 schools accounts for only 12% of the annual turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Combined, these statistics show that reports of a teacher shortage in America may not be due to a lack of qualified applicants annually as some suggest, but rather, the shortage could be the result of new teachers exiting the teaching profession long before they reach retirement age (Davis & Waite, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001, 2011, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018a).

The recent pandemic has only exacerbated teacher shortages nationwide, making the situation even more dire than it had been. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were approximately 10.6 million educators working in public education in January 2020; today there are just 10 million, for a net loss of 600,000 educators. Unfortunately, it is only getting worse with a staggering 55% of educators now planning to leave education sooner than they originally planned. The staff shortages that existed pre-pandemic have deepened to a level that has now has 90% of public school educators reporting that they are experiencing burnout (NEA, 2022).

High rates of teacher attrition do not affect all schools equally. In fact, the largest variations in the flow of teachers out of schools is not equally distributed across states, regions, and districts. The largest departures by location are those between different schools, often within the same district. Notably, there is an annual reshuffling of significant numbers of teachers from poor to more affluent schools, from high-minority to low-minority schools, and from urban to suburban schools (Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll et al., 2018a). High-poverty schools suffer a turnover rate of approximately 20% every calendar year, which is 50% higher than turnover in more affluent schools (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2018a).

Equally as alarming, the results of a study conducted by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) indicated that half of the teachers who leave the profession are among the most effective in the field. TNTP labeled these teachers, who are in the top 20% of classroom effectiveness, *Irreplaceables* because they are so valuable that they are almost impossible to replace after they leave (TNTP, 2012). Unfortunately, effective beginning teachers who work in high-poverty, high-minority, and urban public schools are the most likely to leave (Ingersoll, 2011, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll et al., 2018a). In historically underserved communities, the problems that cause teacher turnover are more pronounced (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Furthermore, high rates of attrition make it difficult for schools to attract and retain effective teachers; therefore, low-income and minority students who attend hard-to-staff-schools (for example, schools with higher proportions of minority, low-income, and low-achieving students) are too often taught by the least experienced and least effective teachers (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Burkhauser, 2017;

Haynes, 2014).

Efforts to solve the attrition problem have historically focused on recruiting teachers into high-poverty schools with minimal attention given to induction and retention after they are hired (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 TNTP, 2012). As a result, teacher turnover continues to plague public schools that serve low-income communities, thus making it increasingly difficult to sustain any progress made toward improvement in teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Ingersoll et al., 2018a).

Investigating the reasons teachers move or leave has led researchers to discover that the most common reasons are related to personal issues, unsatisfactory working conditions, or professional challenges (Darling-Hammond & Walsh, 2017; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll 2003; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Ingersoll et al., 2018). The following are examples of these issues, conditions, and challenges:

- Personal issues: inadequate salary or changes in finances, stress, medical issues, relocation of a spouse's job, age, involuntarily transfers, termination, retirement
- Working conditions: negative school climate, student behavior problems, large class sizes, violence and safety concerns, extra duties or time demands, prescheduled break and lunch time, inadequate facilities and resources
- Professional challenges: lack of support from administrators, colleagues, community, and parents; lack of participation in decision-making at the school level; lure of work outside education; problems with subject or grade-level assignment; lack of professional development and training; feeling incompetent in

the profession. (Ingersoll, 2000, 2001, 2003; Kelly, 2004; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Strong, 2009)

Using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), Ingersoll (2003) found that the organizational factors of administrative support, teacher input in decision-making, aspects of school culture (mainly, student discipline), and salary were most often cited as the primary causes for high rates of teacher attrition.

Compensation

About 20% of the time, inadequate salaries are reported as the main reason beginning teachers leave their school, district, or career completely (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll, 2019; Mervis, 2010; Strong, 2009). With an average starting salary of $42,000, teachers make 23.5% less than all other recent college graduates and 30% less by mid-career (Allegretto, 2022; Darling-Hammond & Walsh, 2017; NEA, 2022; Riggs, 2013). Notably, teacher salaries have been decreasing compared to other careers since the 1990s and are often below the cost of living index. When adjusted for inflation, teachers are actually making 4% less now than they were in 2019-2020, undoing all the gains that were being made previously in national salary increases. In more than 30 states, mid-career teachers who are the head of a family of four are eligible for multiple forms of government assistance and making less than they were more than a decade ago (Darling-Hammond & Walsh, 2017; NEA, 2022).

Researchers found that when teachers' salaries are increased to an amount that is similar to other careers requiring a 4-year degree, attrition from the profession decreases substantially (Murnane & Olson, 1990; Theobald & Gritz, 1996). An analysis of the

Current Population Survey (CPS) indicated that a 1% salary increase reduces a teacher's chance of quitting by 2.11%. The same CPS data suggested that a 10% salary increase would reduce attrition rates by 5% (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997). Additionally, Stinebrickner (1998) posited that new teachers tend to value wages over improving working conditions when deciding whether to remain in the field, and that a 25% raise in salary would increase the length of beginning teachers' careers by 50%.

Working Conditions

In the last decade, researchers discovered that although personal circumstances (for example, salary) influence teachers' decisions about whether to stay in their schools, move to a different school, or leave teaching completely, it is dissatisfaction with organizational conditions that are the strongest predictors of turnover. Retention rates vary widely among schools serving similar student populations, suggesting that differences in school climate strongly influence teacher turnover (Burkhauser, 2017; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teachers in the United States are assigned more teaching hours and have less planning time than teachers in other parts of the world; and American teachers are increasingly doing their work with fewer resources and less support. Resources continue to decline with most states spending less on education today than they did 10 years ago; only 15% of teachers report collaborative work environments, which is down from 30% from just a decade ago. Teaching has become more challenging due to the growth in child poverty, homelessness, and trauma, while accountability pressures remain prevalent despite these increasing barriers (Darling-Hammond & Walsh, 2017).

As researchers have attempted to identify which components of organizational

conditions affect turnover the most, they found that teachers' perception of their principals is the most important factor in their career decision and the only statistically significant predictor of attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2019). Identifying which perceptions of their principals specifically attribute to teachers' professional decisions to stay or leave is difficult because leadership and management strategies vary considerably. However, teachers repeatedly cite that lack of adequate support from school administrators is a big issue they face (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Strong, 2009). This notion suggests a need to significantly increase the support programs administrators provide to teachers. The support for beginning teacher mentoring programs may help address the issue. Research has suggested that effective induction and mentoring programs not only increase teachers' satisfaction and retention, but also improve their instructional capacity and therefore increase student achievement (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Preparation

In recent years, a significant body of research focused on the amount of teacher preparation as a potential leading cause of attrition during the first three years. Researchers have examined teachers' subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills in relation to the amount of preparation they received in each area. For example, Darling-Hammond (2000) examined the relationship between routes to teaching and retention in the field. Her findings indicated that higher retention rates exist with those who have higher levels of preparation. For example, 84% of teachers with a master's degree

remained in the profession after three years compared to 53% of those with only a bachelor's degree, and 34% of those who had attended an alternative certification program. More than 40% of all new teachers entered the profession following a nontraditional or alternative route to certification. Furthermore, a growing body of research suggested that alternative routes to teaching increases supply-and-demand issues and leads to higher attrition rates of beginning teachers due to the absence of formal preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ingersoll, 2012).

Additionally, America's newest mathematics and science teachers who received alternate routes to certification are leaving the field at rates higher than any other group. Many of these teachers have advanced degrees in mathematics or science, suggesting they possess a strong depth of subject knowledge; however, they often report never receiving training in teaching methods or strategies. The result is first-year attrition rates of 18.2% for these new science teachers and 14.5% for new mathematics teachers. These statistics are notably higher than the 12.3% rate for all other teachers nationwide (Ingersoll, 2012). Variations in types and amounts of education and preparation that new teachers receive make a difference in the likelihood of whether they will remain in teaching. The biggest issue revealed in the research was lack of pedagogical preparation that new teachers receive, thus producing an attrition rate of 24.6% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2012). Such studies pointed to the continued importance of providing preservice teachers with the skills and strategies to deliver their content knowledge to students that engages them in active learning. Teachers who know how to present content that leads to high levels of student learning are those who are most likely to remain in the profession (Ingersoll,

2012; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017 Strong, 2009).

Education in Kentucky

During the 1980s, Kentucky's education system was among the worst in the nation. Kentucky ranked 50th in adult literacy and for adults with high school diplomas, 49th in college enrollment, and 48th in per pupil and per capital expenditures in public schools. Only 68% of all ninth grade students in Kentucky graduated from high school within the traditional four-year curriculum. In fact, more than 48% of the Appalachian population was functionally illiterate. In every category used to measure academic achievement, Kentucky scored in the bottom 20-25% nationally (Hunter, 1999). The dismal education system in Kentucky led to an even larger economic problem, however. With the most poorly educated workforce in the nation, companies rejected the idea of relocating to Kentucky, creating a cycle of unemployment and poverty (Blanchard, 1991; Hunter, 1999).

In the spring of 1983, major reform efforts began to occur in Kentucky's educational system. The National Commission on Excellence Education (NCEE) had just issued *A Nation at Risk,* a report that painted a picture of mediocracy and warned of a dismal future for our nation. Kentucky, like many other states, used the report as a springboard for discussions among many stakeholder groups about the status of education throughout the commonwealth (Clements & Kannapel, 2010). About the same time *A Nation at Risk* was issued, members of the former committee on Higher Education in Kentucky's Future, a group chaired by Edward Prichard, were in the process of preparing their own report for higher education when they began discussing the need for improvements in elementary and secondary education in Kentucky. These discussions

prompted the creation of the Prichard Committee of Academic Excellence (also called the Prichard Committee), a non-profit, independent, volunteer citizen's advocacy organization. The goal of the Prichard Committee was to publicize the need for improvements in Kentucky's public schools and build support for major education reform legislation. From 1983 to 1989, the Prichard Committee stimulated dialogue among citizens, educators, and the business community on school improvement (Hunter, 1999).

During the 1984 session of Kentucky's General Assembly, Governor Martha Layne Collins (1983-1987) presented several education reform proposals and increased revenues to pay for them, which were then rejected by the General Assembly. Instead of accepting defeat, Collins set about to create positive working relationships with legislative leaders, especially with those who had developed expertise in educational policy. The result was unprecedented cooperation between the governor and legislature, which continued throughout the remainder of the Collins administration. These relationships led to education reform policies, enacted by the General Assembly in 1985 and 1986, which were supported by a small revenue enhancement package and no major tax increase (Blanchard, 1991). The new policies focused primarily on educational issues including class size, teacher pay, and teacher preparation, which included the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP). When it was signed into law in 1985, KTIP mandated that all first-year teachers in Kentucky and all out-of-state teachers with fewer than two years of teaching experience complete a one-year internship while employed in any accredited Kentucky school. The new program formalized a system of induction and mentoring to guide and assess beginning teachers in Kentucky's schools (Grossman & Davis, 2012).

Education in Kentucky underwent another major reform movement with the passage of Senate Bill 1 in 2009. Known as *Unbridled Learning*, the law called for a) academic standards that were more rigorous than before; b) a new system of assessment and accountability; c) a focus on college and career readiness for all students by high school graduation; and d) the development of highly effective teaching.

The development of an effective teaching force took precedent in 2013 with the passage of House Bill 180, an act related to educator effectiveness and evaluation, which mandated implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) as the new evaluation system for all certified educators in Kentucky. Designed to promote continuous professional development, PGES focused on the necessary skills to become a highly effective educator by providing regular feedback to all certified teachers (Davis, 2014). At the start of the 2015 school year, PGES entered the final stage of implementation, which included full alignment of PGES and KTIP standards. The congruency between KTIP and PGES made the transition from the first year of teaching to each subsequent year a continuous process without gaps in the professional development of beginning teachers (EPSB, 2014).

However, budget cuts during the 2018-2019 legislative session led to elimination of several unfunded programs, including KTIP. As a result of budgetary constraints and lack of available funds, the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) announced that KTIP would be suspended during that biennium budget, which was in place until June 30, 2020 (EPSB, 2018). On May 13, 2018, EPSB called a special meeting to take action on the certification process affected by the suspension of KTIP. During the meeting, it was decided that teacher candidates who had completed an education program

and had met all statutory and regulatory requirements, would be issued a five-year professional certificate until KTIP was no longer suspended or until it was removed from statute (EPSB, 2018).

Problem Statement

Operating under the principle that the most important influence on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teachers and administrators who serve them has put teacher development at the forefront of educational initiatives in Kentucky. The goal is to improve the teaching force through carefully managed teacher recruitment, organizational development, and professional learning focused on improving student achievement. Efforts to recruit quality educators within the commonwealth include a) partnerships between school districts, colleges, and universities; b) collaboration with higher education administration and faculty; and c) promoting teaching careers through recruitment services, workforce diversification initiatives, grants, and scholarships for educators, as well as development programs for Kentucky's future educators (Baker, 2012).

The ability to recruit and develop a high-quality teaching force is mutually dependent on the ability to retain effective teachers (KBE, 2015). Despite the push to recruit and retain quality teachers, there are still high rates of teacher attrition in many schools and districts throughout the commonwealth. This was evident during the April 2015 meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education when a trajectory for newly hired teachers in Kentucky was reported. The report, based on statistics of new teachers hired to serve in public schools at the start of the 2009 school year, showed that after one year, 71.6% of the teachers remained in the same school, 76.9% worked in the same district,

and 82.1% were still teaching in Kentucky. Two years after being hired, however, only 55.7% of new teachers were employed in the same school, 62.8% worked in the same district, and 70.3% remained in the profession and were still teaching in the commonwealth (KBE, 2015).

Stakeholders across Kentucky expressed concern about teacher attrition and migration of those who remain in the profession following the Board of Education's report. One group of concerned stakeholders, the Prichard Committee (2015), posed the following series of questions for other stakeholder groups across the state regarding teacher preparation programs:

- Are graduates equipped with the best skills to start their teaching careers?
- Do they have an understanding of the work that will be required in a way that keeps them from being surprised and disappointed by the actual experience?
- Do we accept anyone who is interested into our programs or do we recruit students who have the capacity to do the job with passion and effectiveness?
- Do we ask about the effectiveness of our program and act to improve what does not work?

The Prichard Committee (2015) also posed the following additional questions to school leaders:

- Are new teachers given the best support we can provide?
- Is the working environment and professional community the kind that make new teachers want to stay in their schools?
- Are we asking all new teachers what we can do better?
- What must change so we can attract and keep new teachers who possess the

ability to do this important work?

Significance of the Study

Developing and retaining quality teachers is at the center of current educational initiatives in Kentucky. Despite the recent focus on teacher recruitment, development, and retention, many schools and districts across the commonwealth still struggle to raise teacher retention rates. If improving student achievement in Kentucky is dependent on a quality teaching force, there must first be an improvement in the retention of teachers in public schools. Findings have explained various reasons for high rates of attrition, but if the goal is to keep teachers in the profession, the answer is discovering what motivates them to stay.

This qualitative study aims to uncover motivating factors that increase teacher retention rates through interviews with district leaders. Superintendents in districts with retention rates that are consistently above the state average were interviewed to find what they are doing to keep teachers in their district. Results of this study not only add to the growing body of research on teacher retention, but also complement and inform the existing research that tends to focus on why teachers leave the profession.

Research Question

The primary research question used to guide this study was: *What leadership strategies are the most effective district practices for successfully enculturating teachers into the profession and retaining them at the school in which they work?*

Overview of the Methodology

The purpose of this study is to identify what motivates beginning teachers to stay in their current school, district, and in the teaching profession. Qualitative methods (such

as semi-structured interviews with superintendents) were conducted in districts that have teacher retention rates above the state average.

Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study are associated with the literature on teacher retention. As shown in Table 1.1, the following terms were used throughout the study and their definitions are based on research and professional literature.

Table 1.1

Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Attrition	*Attrition* is a term used for those leaving the teaching profession before retirement. It is also commonly referred to as *teacher turnover* (Grossman & Davis, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).
Beginning Teacher	A *beginning teacher* has 0-4 years of professional experience. In Kentucky, teachers are awarded tenure on the first day of their fifth year of professional service and are therefore considered *experienced teachers*. Some literature includes teachers in their fifth year as a beginner, which may create small differences in the research. Other terms used in place of beginning teacher include: *new teacher*, *novice teacher*, and *in-service teacher (*Grossman & Davis, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).
Mentoring	*Mentoring* is the process of helping new teachers improve their professional practice and engagement. It is what a mentor does to develop a new teacher into an effective educator (Wong, 2004).
Teacher Induction	*Teacher induction* is an organized developmental process that focuses on three components: training, supporting, and retaining new teachers (Grossman & Davis, 2012; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). Teacher induction may also be a system-wide support process. This continuous professional development is used in schools to retain new teachers and improve the effectiveness of all teachers (Wong, 2004).
Teacher Migration	*Teacher migration* is the movement of teachers among schools. This movement may include movement to a school within the same district or it could be moving to a school in a different district or different state (Grossman & Davis, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Teacher migration is also referred to as *teacher mobility*.

Table 1.1 (continued)

Teacher Retention	*Teacher retention* is the process of keeping teachers in the profession after they begin their career. The term is also used to describe teachers who remain in the same school in which they were originally hired to teach (Brown & Wynn, 2007; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Summary

This chapter presented the background, purpose, and significance of this study of teacher retention, as well as an overview of education policy in the state where the study is conducted. The introduction to the methodology included the research questions and definitions of key terms. In the second chapter of this study, a review of the related literature on teacher attrition issues and promising practices for increasing the retention of beginning teachers is presented. The third chapter provides a detailed description of the methods, design, approach, and participants of this study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of this study, and the fifth chapter discusses the findings and the implications for policy, practice, and recommendations for future research on the topic of teacher retention.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Teacher turnover raises questions about the stability of the teaching force and the ability of schools to provide effective teachers. In addition to a negative influence on the organizational culture and diminished staff cohesion (Burkhauser, 2017), high rates of attrition also have a negative effect on student achievement (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll, & May, 2011 Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Because teacher attrition rates have been high and enrollment in teacher preparation programs has continually decreased nationwide during the last 10 years, warnings of a teacher shortage are widely reported (Darling-Hammond & Walsh, 2017; NEA, 2022). In recognition of the severity of the problem, researchers have explored why teachers leave the field at such alarming rates. This chapter examines promising strategies school leaders can implement for successful enculturation of new teachers into the field. The theoretical frameworks of *organizational learning* and *positive organizational scholarship* are discussed as leadership strategies to increase the retention rates of beginning teachers.

Induction and Mentoring

During their first years of service, teachers often find themselves in situations in which they were not fully trained because teacher education programs are able to provide only fundamental preparation. Thus, graduating from a teacher education program cannot be considered the end of teacher development. More than two decades of research showed that retention is closely related to a novice teacher's first professional experiences and that schools must provide environments where new teachers can learn

their craft, flourish in the classroom, and succeed professionally (Haynes, 2014). Teachers require special support to become highly qualified veteran teachers, which is possible through ongoing professional development, active participation in authentic professional learning communities (PLCs), and engagement in various structured supports during their beginning years. Crucial to their success and retention, these structured supports are usually in the form of an induction program and mentoring by experienced teachers and school-based administrators. Leaders who support induction and mentoring play a key role in teachers' choice to stay or quit early in their career, and administrators' engagement in supporting new teachers can reduce teacher attrition rates up to an estimated 50% (Haynes, 2014; Hopper et al., 2022; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). According to Feiman-Nemser (2003), beginning teachers require more support than many administrators realize.

> We misrepresent the process of learning to teach when we consider new teachers as finished products, when we assume that they mostly need to refine existing skills, or when we treat their learning needs as signs of deficiency in their preparation. Beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the contexts of teaching. (p. 26)

Both empirical research and anecdotal evidence showed that beginning teachers who receive induction into a school community report higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and retention in the field (Cohen & Fuller, 2006; Fletcher & Strong, 2009; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2011 Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017).

Mentoring support provided by an experienced teacher to a novice teacher has

become a central strategy of teacher induction over the past 20 years. A 2014 survey released by the National Network of State Teachers of the Year and the American Institutes for Research reported that 55% of new teachers identified *access to a mentor* as having the largest impact on their development as a teacher (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2014). A federal analysis found that teachers who are assigned a first-year mentor are significantly more likely to remain in the profession than those who are not assigned a formal mentor (NCES, 2015).

Mentors assist in the professional development of beginning teachers through their ongoing observations, conversations, advocacy, and goal setting that are aligned with standards of quality teaching. Mentors may also model lessons, jointly plan and assist with content knowledge and pedagogy, examine student work and individual learning needs, and discuss ways to navigate school issues (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Strong, 2009). Evidence from research suggested the most effective mentoring programs include three features: 1) highly trained mentors; 2) focused or individualized content; and 3) allocated time for mentoring. These three components provide specific feedback around the strengths and growth needs of beginning teachers within the context of their environment making them less likely to change schools or leave teaching altogether (AFT, 2001; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Induction Policy and Programs

Although teacher induction programs were introduced in the U.S. during the school reform movement of the 1980s; their popularity has increased dramatically during the last two decades and are often implemented following state mandates. In the 1990-

1991 school year, less than half of all beginning teachers nationwide reported participation in an induction program. During the 1999-2000 school year, however, the number of induction programs had nearly doubled, with 80% of all new teachers reporting having a mentor or participating in an induction program (Haynes, 2014; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In 2003, 30 states had adopted formal induction programs for beginning teachers, and 17 of those states made induction programs mandatory and financed them for the states' beginning teachers (Education Week, 2003). Despite the continued need for induction programs, by 2012, several states had lifted their mandates on program implementation, and only 27 states still required an induction program with program length varying amongst those states (Goldrick et al., 2012).

In the last several years, states have made little progress in their policies around support for new teachers. The New Teacher Center (NTC) began monitoring state policy around this issue in 2012 and released updated findings on every state in 2016. Their report focused on how states' policies address the following criteria for providing high-quality induction and mentoring programs: a) educators served; b) mentor quality; c) time; d) program quality; e) program standards; f) funding; g) educator certification or licensure; h) program accountability; and i) teaching conditions. Only three states (Connecticut, Delaware, and Iowa) met the most important criteria for a high-quality system of new teacher support. These three states required teachers to complete an induction program to receive professional licensure, provide at least two years of support for new teachers, and allocate funding for the required induction and mentoring program. While these states were leading the way, they still did not meet all nine of the established criteria for a quality policy (Goldrick, 2016).

Currently, 29 states (see Table 2.1) require induction or mentoring for all beginning teachers, but only 18 of these states require it beyond the first year of teaching. Seven additional states require induction and mentoring for certain groups of new teachers. For example, in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee induction is required only for alternatively certified teachers, while Alaska requires it only for teachers who hold a subject-matter, expert-limited certificate. In Nevada, teachers with a special qualifications license are required to complete an induction program, and teachers in North Dakota who seek a Teaching Alternative Flexibility Endorsement must participate in induction and mentoring activities (Goldrick, 2016). Although new teachers in Kentucky are required by statute to complete a one-year mentoring program, funding was eliminated in the state budget; hence, the program has been suspended indefinitely (EPSB, 2018). Table 2.1 displays the length of time states require new teachers to participate in induction activities.

Table 2.1

State Policy: New Teacher Induction Requirements

Required, with no minimum program length	Required for one year	Required for two years	Required for three years	Required for four years
Colorado	Arkansas	California	Delaware	Ohio
Rhode Island	Kansas	Connecticut	Hawaii	
Wisconsin	Kentucky	Iowa	Louisiana	
	New Jersey	Maine	Maryland	
	New Mexico	Missouri	Massachusetts	
	New York	Vermont	Michigan	
	Oklahoma		North Carolina	
	Pennsylvania		Utah	
	South Carolina			
	Virginia			
	West Virginia			

Initiatives intended to address the developmental needs of teachers at the

beginning of their career are continually being developed at both the national and state level. The criteria established by NTC is one of the most prominent examples of a well-designed, evidence-based induction model for beginning teachers. The NTC model is one that educators and policymakers should use to guide their decisions as they work to improve the instructional effectiveness and retention rates of new teachers (Haynes, 2014). Since 1998, NTC has developed programs and policies that accelerate new teacher effectiveness successfully through district and state partners that build systematic opportunities for new teachers to develop their teaching practice and to continuously improve. As a result, the NTC model has been used in the implementation of induction programs in more than 40 states (Haynes, 2014; Goldrick, 2016).

Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment

California has approximately 150 induction programs that exist under the state mandated and the funded Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programs. All BTSA programs must serve teachers for a period of two years, and all beginning teachers must participate as a requirement for receiving a teaching credential. Administered by the state and coordinated by schools and districts, the BTSA programs include mentoring and use of a formative assessment system (Strong, 2009). Furthermore, the BTSA program collects retention data across California school systems and submits the information to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) annually. Reports are analyzed over four-year periods to determine how many teachers left the public school system and when they departed. Findings showed that 84% of new teachers remain in BTSA-supported systems after four years, while the remaining 16% either leave teaching completely or migrate to a non-BTSA system. This finding can

be compared to the national retention rate of 67% of teachers at the end of four years. Similarly, a comparison study of BTSA-supported and unsupported teachers in the same region of California's public school system found higher retention rates among supported teachers. At the end of two years, 77.6% of the supported teachers remained in the field, whereas only 46.3% of unsupported teachers were still teaching in the region (Strong, 2009).

Members of the NTC at the University of California, Santa Cruz developed one of the most widely recognized BTSA programs to support new teachers in California. In that program, new teachers are paired with full-time mentors: veteran teachers who are carefully selected to match the new teacher according to grade level and subject matter. Mentors, who usually work in the position for three years, and then return to their classrooms, attend an initial five-day training to learn about coaching, mentoring, and using formative assessment tools. During their time as mentors, they attend weekly meetings with peers to discuss issues, read case studies, and solve problems. Mentors observe in the new teacher's classroom at least one hour per week and meet with the teacher afterwards to discuss the observation. Goals are set based on the California teaching standards, and the mentor uses an NTC-developed formative assessment system (Strong, 2009).

Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)

The Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) model is a nationally recognized program that draws on a medical model where doctors mentor interns. PAR has been implemented in Ohio, Maryland, and multiple districts across California. When implementing PAR, expert teachers, who sit on a nine-member advisory board, make decisions on assisting

and terminating teachers, and serve as mentors for new teachers. The expert teachers are identified for their excellence and released from all teaching duties for a period of two or three years. During that time, they mentor new teachers to the profession or district as well as veteran teachers who are experiencing difficulty. A major component of this model, and one that distinguishes it from the others, is that the expert teachers take part in the formal evaluation process. The expert teachers make recommendations about employment to an advisory board every spring. The board members then vote to accept or reject the expert teacher's recommendation on whether the teacher should be rehired. The premise behind this practice is that the mentor knows the teacher's work better than anyone else, and is therefore more equipped to make sound recommendations (Strong, 2009).

Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST)

Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) was developed by two commissioners of education to raise teacher licensure standards and make school spending equal. A major portion of BEST includes working with a mentor or a support team during the first year in the program. Beginning teachers also attend subject-specific seminars to learn the state's teaching standards and portfolio requirements during their initial year of professional practice. The development of a teaching portfolio, which documents the relationship between teaching practices and student learning within a unit of instruction, is created during a teacher's second year in the program. It is then used to assess the teacher's pedagogical knowledge and skills. If the portfolio is rated *unsatisfactory*, the portfolio is revised during the teacher's third year of professional practice. If the portfolio still fails to meet the standards established, the teacher is

ineligible for licensure and may not continue to teach in Connecticut (Strong, 2009). According to Youngs (2002), who examined the BEST program, attrition and migration were much lower among BEST teachers than those who did not participate in the program. In 2009, Connecticut replaced the BEST program with the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program. TEAM was first implemented in the 2010-2011 school year and required all new teachers to participate throughout the two-year induction program (Goldrick, 2016). BEST is still recognized as a quality induction program and is currently being implemented across schools in Washington State (Plecki et al., 2017).

Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP)

The Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) is dedicated to enhancing the professional practice of school employees and the certification process. KTIP mandates that all new teachers and all out-of-state teachers with fewer than two years of teaching experience serve a one-year internship while employed by any accredited public or nonpublic school. Satisfactory completion of the internship year is determined by a vote of the beginning teacher committee which consists of a resource teacher, the school principal or assistant principal, and a teacher educator from a state-approved teacher training institution. All members of the beginning teacher committee complete training, provided by the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB), in the supervision and assessment of beginning teachers. The entire committee is required to meet with the intern a minimum of three times during the internship year. In addition to the three formal committee meetings, the resource teacher is required to spend a minimum of 60 hours working with the beginning teacher. Of the required hours, 20 hours must be spent in the classroom setting, and 40 hours should be in consultation outside of class time. If the

committee determines that the internship year is completed successfully, professional certification is awarded and the year counts as one year of experience toward continuing contract status, retirement eligibility, and benefits for experience increments. If the committee determines the teacher's performance is unsatisfactory, the teacher may be given an opportunity to repeat their internship year one time if employed in a Kentucky school district (Blanchard, 1991).

Statewide implementation of KTIP in 1985 set the stage for new teachers in Kentucky to benefit from induction and mentoring during their first year in the field. Passage of the law formalized the program as an instrument for guiding and assessing first-year teachers. Governed by EPSB, KTIP meets many of the standards for a strong induction program: a) It is highly structured; b) it focuses on the professional growth of the beginning teacher; c) it provides support from a 3-person committee; d) it allows new teachers to observe and be observed by veterans in the field; and e) it provides a designated mentor for teacher's first year of professional practice. The mentoring component of KTIP, which is the primary responsibility of the resource teacher (i.e., a full-time classroom teacher) achieves all three features of an effective program: highly trained mentors, a focus on content, and allocated time for mentoring (Grossman & Davis, 2012). After three successful decades of providing new teachers in Kentucky with supports necessary to facilitate the professional growth, all funding for KTIP was cut during the 2018 legislative session. Without the necessary funding available, KTIP was suspended despite remaining in statute (EPSB, 2018).

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES)

Kentucky began statewide implementation of a new system for mentoring teachers in 2013. Known as the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES), its primary focus is on the necessary skills to become a highly effective teacher by providing regular feedback to teachers on how their work aligns with the Kentucky Framework for Teaching (Davis, 2014). The Framework, developed by Danielson (2014) and adapted for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), is a research-based set of components of instruction, aligned to the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards, and grounded in a constructivist view of learning and teaching. The framework is divided into four domains of teaching responsibility: a) planning and preparation, b) classroom environment, c) instruction, and d) professional responsibilities. The framework also accounts for the Kentucky Teacher Standards, Kentucky's Program of Studies, Kentucky's Core Academic Standards, and KDE's Characteristics of Highly Effective teaching and Learning (Danielson, 2014). Statewide implementation entered Phase 5, the final level of implementation, at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year; PGES results are now used in making personnel decisions for all teachers.

After three years of statewide implementation, PGES was changed to give local school boards greater control over their evaluation plan for certified personnel. Districts were tasked with developing an evaluation committee composed of an equal number of administrators and teachers (i.e., a 50/50 committee) to create a certified evaluation plan for approval by their local board of education. Every 50/50 committee was required to create a plan that was aligned to the Kentucky Framework for Personnel Evaluation while

simultaneously keeping the standards developed by Danielson (2014) as the evaluation criteria for all Kentucky professionals below the level of superintendent. All evaluation plans approved by a local school board required submission to KDE for final implementation approval (KBE, 2017).

Implications for School and District-level Leaders

High rates of teacher attrition are an issue that plagues P-12 education nationally, but the most direct impact is on the school when a teacher leaves. When a school loses a teacher, it also loses that teacher's familiarity with the practices of the school. That is, the school loses a teacher with experience related to the school's curriculum as well as an individual involved with the school's students, parents, and colleagues (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Research suggests that teachers remain in schools where the leaders makes them feel supported and that those who implement induction programs and mentoring strategies reduce attrition rates up to 50% (AASC, 2006; Brown & Wynn, 2007; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Therefore, school leaders need to ensure they implement induction programs in their districts and schools even when they are not mandated to do so by the state. When implementing these programs, a main component must be the assignment of a mentor to the new teacher. This assignment should occur as close to hiring as possible to ensure the new teacher has the guidance of an expert the first time he or she steps into a classroom. Principals who implement and maintain these support systems are those who view new teachers as investments in the future of their school. Further, they understand that they have the responsibility of ensuring their new teachers learn and succeed, just like they have a responsibility to make sure their students learn

and succeed (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Often, these remedies are beyond the scope of what principals can do themselves. However, superintendents are in the position to develop these district-wide programs even when legislatures decline to continue legislation funding. Superintendents are in positions to make suggestions to their school board with regard to meeting district-wide needs. The superintendency should be the seat from which district policy on recruitment and retention programs are developed.

Often, school administrators believe it is the responsibility of university personnel to produce teachers who are well prepared and ready to be successful in the classroom. When program graduates perform inadequately, school administrators often blame preservice preparation (Kestner, 1994). It is undeniably time for school administrators and university personnel to assume joint responsibility for new teacher training, induction, and retention. When colleges of education and school districts work together, new teachers benefit from the collaborative support and feel a sense of continuity from pre-service to in-service training (Halford, 1998).

School district superintendents are uniquely situated and have the organizational levers to implement district-wide programs that both attract and retain teachers through both indirect and direct influences. Murphy et al. (1985) stated that “districts with excellent student achievement have superintendents who are personally involved” in the instructional programs in their district (p. 79). Research on Instructionally Effective School Districts (IESD) identifies several functions that are characteristics of effective superintendents. These five functions include: 1) staff selection and recruitment; 2)

principal supervision and evaluation; 3) establishing clear instructional and curricular goals; 4) monitoring learning and curricular goals; and 5) financial planning for instruction. Each of these five functions identify elements that superintendents have influence over the behavior of principals and teachers who work more directly with the organization's daily activities (Bjork, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

Theories lay the groundwork for a social scientific study, and not only provide the foundational understanding of the abstract ideas embedded in the topic of study, but also align with the researcher's motivations for conducting the study as well as their chosen methodology. Theories are the glue that allows for the components of a research study to work as a whole. Joyner et al. (2018) defined theories as "a series of concepts organized into assumptions and generalizations that lead to a hypothesis" (p. 130). It is this basis that allows for analysis of the data that the researcher collects.

The conceptual orientation for increasing teacher retention rates in Kentucky's public schools draws upon the literature of organizational theory with the concepts of organizational learning and positive organizational scholarship. The combination of these theories builds on human relationships to produce and sustain the collective capacity that help organizations learn, adapt, and thrive (Cameron, et al., 2003).

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning, an organizational theory concept, examines models and theories about the ways an organization learns and adapts (Collinson & Cook, 2007). Noted throughout the literature in multiple disciplines, the idea of organizational learning increased in the late 1980s and includes diverse perspectives by theorists in the field

(Schulz, 2002). For example, Gill (2010) suggested that organizational learning requires the continuous development of leadership that strives "to create a culture in which learning is the rule, not the exception … and remove the barriers to learning and reward behaviors that facilitate learning: risk taking, action learning, feedback and reflection" (p. 27). By encouraging all members of an organization to reflect critically and ask questions about their own learning, individuals become responsible for supporting organizational learning through knowledge and information sharing. When individuals learn, it fosters and maintains organizational-wide learning and individuals aim high to create and gain desired results (Senge, 1991).

Organizational learning creates a culture of inquiry where all members feel safe to engage in ongoing reflection about where they currently are and where they are going. School leaders that continuously use the self-reflection processes to determine professional development needs of teachers increase learning among all stakeholders (Gill, 2010). Organization members that know how to be active, instead of passive, about continuous learning and improving develop the necessary skills for capacity building (Stringer, 2009). In schools, organizational learning is cultivated by partnerships between administrators and teachers who work together to create a strong school community (Del Favero, 2003). These partnerships include the work of administrators and experienced teachers who serve as mentors in training and supporting new teachers through the process of knowledge sharing (Cooner & Tachterman, 2004).

Positive Organizational Scholarship

Positive organizational scholarship (POS), a relatively new development in the field of organizational theory, "is concerned primarily with the study of especially

positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members" (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 4). With a focus on words such as *excellence*, *thriving, flourishing, abundance*, *resilience*, and *virtuousness,* POS seeks to understand the best of the human condition. In POS, researchers emphasize theories of excellence, extraordinary performance, positive deviance, and positive spirals of flourishing (Cameron et al., 2003).

POS, which emphasizes the science of positive organizational dynamics, consists of three concepts: positive, organizational, and scholarship. Meant to emphasize conditions that create positive consequences for people and organizations, the use of the word *positive* recognizes potential patterns of excellence. It uncovers new understanding by examining the conditions and processes that create these positive patterns. It focuses on the exemplary, vivacious, and prosperous aspects of the theory. POS examines positive events within organizations as well as positive organizational contexts, hence the use of the word *organizational*. Through this lens, organizational theory can be used to understand, explain, and predict the causes and consequences of positive states usually ignored in the field. Research, teaching, and practice are key elements in *scholarship* and requirements for POS to experience success and sustainability (Cameron et al., 2003).

Establishing a foundation in science is how most concepts develop longevity. Therefore, POS seeks to establish a theory-based foundation for positive incidents within organizations. Researchers conducting organizational studies have examined the role of POS on leadership to determine if the desire for positivity transfers to organizations: Results suggest that positive leaders have positive followers. Studies have also found increased wellbeing, commitment, and productivity among members of organizations with positive leadership. Similarly, optimistic leadership is linked to follower satisfaction

and retention (Caza & Cameron, 2008).

These findings suggest the POS lens is appropriate for a study on the retention of beginning teachers. The main influence, cited in teachers' decision to stay or leave their school, is administration and his or her leadership (Brown & Wynn, 2007). Therefore, administrators who practice the theories of POS are likely to have positive followers who are committed to the field and are successfully retained members of the school. Exploring this idea further could substantiate the idea of POS in schools as a promising leadership practice for not only increasing teacher retention but also improving school culture.

Summary

The teaching profession within P-12 education has more beginners in the field than ever before, growing the profession by 48%, which far outpaces the 19% growth in student enrollment. As a result, the most common teacher among all practicing in America's schools is someone in her or his first year of teaching. The decreasing levels of experience in the profession has led to increased rates of attrition because beginners have the highest attrition rates with up to 50% leaving the field within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2013; Ingersoll et al., 2014; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018a).

The research conducted on teacher retention has historically focused on why teachers leave the field; hence, a major gap in the research is the limited discussion on the influences that make teachers decide to stay in the field. If 50% of teachers are leaving the classroom within the first five years of their career, then 50% of new teachers are staying. Who are they? Where do they teach? What is keeping them in the profession? Thus, there is merit in considering the use of the research methods associated with positive organizational scholarship to answer these questions. Focusing on schools with

high retention rates may be the answer to the problem. An examination of what works well and how to facilitate those practices, despite other obstacles, could provide the answer many educational leaders seek.

The goal of this chapter was to provide a review of the related literature on promising practices for increasing the retention of beginning teachers. Induction programs and mentoring were discussed as options for inducting beginning teachers into the field to decrease attrition rates and return stability to the nation's largest occupation. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the methods, design, approach, and participants of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Developing and retaining quality teachers is a major priority in Kentucky's public schools. Despite the focus on teacher recruitment, development, and retention, many schools and districts across the commonwealth still struggle to raise, or even maintain, teacher retention rates. There are research findings to explain the various reasons for high rates of attrition; however if the goal is to keep teachers in the profession, the answer is discovering what motivates them to stay. Therefore, this study aims to uncover motivating factors that increase retention rates of beginning teachers in Kentucky schools.

When I began this study, I had a plan for how the research would be conducted. I had requested and was given permission to conduct the study in a large district in Central Kentucky. My plan was to conduct focus group interviews with beginning teachers, focus group interviews with mentor teachers, and semi-structured interviews with principals. In the course of developing this plan the pandemic hit and school systems closed for extended periods of time. My initial study site stayed closed longer than many other Kentucky districts, hired a new Superintendent, hired a new Director of Human Resources, and shut the door to all research that wasn't tied to a grant and/or funds. The study I had planned to conduct was no longer an option. Today, I believe strongly that conducting that study would provide significant data for attacking the teacher shortage issues in many Kentucky schools and districts. If the goal is to retain teachers, their voice in the process may be the key to answering what works.

Once my original study plan was no longer an option, I had to quickly pivot and

make major changes to my study. Therefore, this study aims to uncover motivating factors that increase retention rates of beginning teachers in Kentucky schools by conducting interviews with superintendents in districts with retention rates consistently above the state average. Results of this study not only add to the growing body of research on teacher retention but also complement and inform the existing research that tends to focus on why teachers leave.

I used semi-structured interviews in this qualitative study to answer the following research question: What leadership strategies are the most effective district practices for successfully enculturating teachers into the school in which they work?

Ethical Considerations

Ethical dilemmas are a possibility during research; therefore, the researcher must have a plan for identifying and addressing them should they occur. The regulations outlined by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) provide a strong foundation for this process but the honesty and integrity of the researcher is crucial. Analyzing the study to recognize its strengths and weaknesses and to review the truthfulness of the findings is the responsibility of the researcher. The integrity of the researcher must exist as an ethical consideration for the entirety of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009).

This research was conducted using human subjects therefore, it is important for the researcher to be open and honest with all participants, allow for voluntary participation, receive informed consent, minimize harm or risk to the participants, ensure privacy through anonymity, confidentiality, and secure storage of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). This study had minimal risk for participants. Participation in this study was voluntary and all participants gave consent prior to being interviewed for the

study. The participants also gave verbal consent to the interview being audio recorded before the interview began.

The sharing of sensitive information about personal and professional decisions is discussed throughout the study; therefore, to protect the identity of the superintendents and their school district pseudonyms are used throughout this report. All information directly linked to the districts and schools (i.e., web sites, statistics, publicity, reports) is thus not cited or included with references. In addition to the use of pseudonyms, I ensured the confidentiality of participants by housing all information connecting participants to their pseudonyms in a secure location that only I could access. All electronic information was stored on my personal, password protected computer.

Research Sample

The research sites and individuals in this study were selected using purposeful sampling, a selection strategy where particular settings and people are deliberately selected to provide information that is relevant to the questions and goals of the study (Palys, 2008). Other sampling methods were not used because they would not provide the information needed to answer the research questions in this study. It was necessary for the study participants to work in districts where the retention of teachers has been successful in order to discuss the promising strategies that have been used.

I used the Kentucky Department of Education's School Report Card site to purposefully identify districts of interest. During my search, I analyzed the data on teacher retention. The districts with retention rates above the state average were my districts of interest. Once I had my prioritized list, I contacted the superintendent of those districts to request participation. My contacts all took place electronically. A follow up

email was sent to those who did not reply within a week with the same request as the initial email. After successfully getting superintendent volunteers for the study, I set up electronic interviews with each participant. All interviews were scheduled on a day and time convenient to the participants. Interviews were conducted via zoom or google meet based on the preference of the participant. To be courteous of the participants' time, I limited each interview to one hour. All interviews were audio recorded then transcribed. Each individual transcription was sent to the corresponding interviewee to confirm the accuracy of all reported data.

The rich descriptions gained from the data provided information to those who work at the study site about what they are doing well to increase teacher retention. The information was communicated as promising practices for other schools in the district that may not have achieved similar success in retaining beginning teachers. These methods thus utilize a "main strength of qualitative research, which is its ability to elucidate *local* processes, meaning, and contextual influences in particular settings or cases' (Maxwell, 2013, p. 99).

Interview Protocol

I requested and was granted permission to use interview protocols developed by Kathleen Brown and Susan Wynn for a study they conducted on teacher retention issues (see Appendix A). In their study, Brown and Wynn (2007) conducted semi-structured interviews with principals in order to identify common characteristics and strategies that principals use to retain teachers. Their questions focused on issues such as a) leadership style and characteristics; b) school climate and culture; c) the decision-making process; d)

the principal's role in recruiting, retaining, and mentoring teachers; and e) teacher support systems.

To ensure the interview questions used by Brown and Wynn (2007) would also work for my study, I employed the Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) Framework (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) as a tool for finalizing interview questions. The IPR has four phases for researchers: 1) aligning interview questions with research questions; 2) constructing conversation through inquiry; 3) receiving feedback on interview protocols; and 4) piloting the interview protocol. I utilized all four phases of the IPR framework to strengthen the reliability of the interview protocol for my study specifically.

Field Test of Focus-Group Interview Protocol

Before conducting interviews with superintendents, I used cognitive interviews to evaluate my questions. Fowler (2013) says cognitive interviewing is an effective method for evaluating questions. Cognitive interviews were defined by Presser et al. (2004) as "the practice of administering a survey questionnaire while collecting additional verbal information about the curvy responses; this additional information is used to evaluate the quality of the response or to help determine whether the question is generating the sort of information that its author intends" (p. 45).

One of the main purposes of cognitive interviewing is to "detect potential sources of response error associated with the targeted questions (Presser et al., 2004, p. 24). I worked with a convenience sample of two superintendents from neighboring districts to work through the cognitive interview process. The superintendents were purposefully chosen based on easy access for interviews. Both superintendents were leading districts I

had or was working in as an educator. Neither of these superintendents were leading districts I had identified as study participants.

First, I asked the two participants to answer my interview questions. I conducted the first one in person and the second one over the phone. I kept track of the time to make sure the interview didn't last more than an hour. The first interview took 50 minutes and the second one took 56 minutes. After each interview, I asked the superintendent if the questions were clear or if anything needed to be reworded. This revealed the need for a minor change to one question that they both thought was too lengthy. I separated that question into two individual questions. I also made minor changes to the wording of two other questions to encourage answers that are more descriptive, and to maintain alignment with the goals of positive organizational scholarship. All changes were made based on guidelines for effective questioning. According to Hatch (2002), it is important that interview questions clearly communicate what the researcher expects from the informant. Informants should be able to understand the questions so that they can feel comfortable sharing their thoughts (Hatch, 2002).

After revising my interview questions, I sent them to both superintendents electronically for a final review. I followed my electronic communication with them with a brief phone call where they both indicated that the revisions improved the clarity of the questions. This process is supported by Cohen (1988) who states that the importance of feedback on questions is to ensure the success of the questions being asked.

Interviews for this study were semi-structured. I asked open ended questions and closed ended questions. All closed ended questions were asked to elicit specific information from each participant (see Appendix B).

Selection of Participants

I chose to interview superintendents in Kentucky to determine what they were doing to retain teachers in their district. My choice to used superintendents was based on the idea that they have a district-wide focus. Superintendents are uniquely situated to solve problems versus principals who may understand the issues but are limited in their ability to solve district-wide problems.

I used the Kentucky Department of Education's School Report Card site to purposefully identify school districts of interest. During my search, I analyzed the data on teacher retention across three years of accountability for all 171 Kentucky school districts. In school year 18-19 the state turnover rate was 18.4 so all districts in the state with turnover rates below that were identified as districts of interest. School year 19-20 did not have any state data due to the Covid-19 pandemic and school closures. Data for the year 20-21 was analyzed next. The turnover rate during that time fell to 16.2. I then used my initial list of districts of interest to identify which districts were still outpacing the state average. I repeated this process for data from the 21-22 school year which showed turnover rates increase to 20.4 on average for the state. At the end of this three year period I had a total of 68 school districts that were consistently retaining their teachers better than the state average. Table 3.1 illustrates data used for identifying potential participants.

Table 3.1

Participant Selection

School Year	State Turnover %	Total Districts of Interest
2018-2019	18.4	99
2020-2021	16.2	79
2021-2022	20.4	68

For all 68 identified districts I then located the contact information for the superintendent of the school system using the same Kentucky Department of Education's school report card site. I used this information to create an initial distribution list. Next, I cross-referenced the list with each district's website to ensure all contact information was current and made adjustments as necessary. Using my Kentucky public school email address, I then sent an email to all 68 superintendents requesting their participation in my study. I used my school email address because the "*@districtname*.kyschools.us" email was unlikely to be blocked by other districts' firewalls or marked as "junk," and therefore should have gone directly to the recipients' inboxes. In the email (see Appendix C), I included an informational statement about the study including why they were selected along with an invitation to participate. I sent two additional emails with the same request for participation in my study before I was able to secure five superintendents as study participants. I sent each of the participants an electronic copy of the informed consent form prior to scheduling an interview time (see Appendix D).

Interviews

Five superintendents volunteered and gave consent to participate in an interview for my study. I used email to communicate with each superintendent about a preferred day and time for the interview to take place. I also asked each participant if they preferred

to conduct the interview via zoom or google meet. I was able to honor the requests of each participant for time and mode to conduct the interview (see Table 3.2). I used Microsoft Outlook to send a calendar invitation that included the zoom or google link for the interview. I also sent an electronic copy of the interview questions (see Appendix B) to each superintendent along with the calendar invite. The following table shows the data collection schedule for the interviews.

Table 3.2

Data Collection Schedule

Interview	Date	Participants	Method
1	June 24,2022	Superintendent A	Zoom Meeting
2	October 21, 2022	Superintendent B	Zoom Meeting
3	January 12, ,2022	Superintendent C	Zoom Meeting
4	January 23, 2023	Superintendent D	Zoom Meeting
5	April 10, 2023	Superintendent E	Google Meet

Participants included superintendents leading five different districts in Kentucky. The districts represented were in five different counties and four different regions: Eastern Kentucky north, Northern Kentucky, Cumberland, and the Fourth Region. Three of the superintendents lead independent districts while the other two lead traditional school districts. The superintendents in this study are from districts ranging from 3 schools to 7 with student populations of 1,500 to 2,500. The participants have served as a superintendent from 5 years to 26 years; and have been educators 20 to 45 years with each of them serving Kentucky schools exclusively (see Table 3.3).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from five Kentucky superintendents. Semi-structured interviews start with a predetermined set of questions to guide the conversation but they allow for room to explore ideas presented by participants

as questions are discussed. I conducted these interviews via zoom or google meet and audio recorded each one with permission from the participants. Using the record function allowed me to listen fully to the interview without having to take extensive notes at the same time. This also allowed me to listen to the recordings multiple times during the analysis process to ensure I didn't miss any crucial information (Merriam, 2009).

After each interview, I used the transcription feature in zoom or google meet to transcribe the recording of the interview. Once the transcription was complete I listened to the entire interview while reading the transcript. I revised the transcript as needed. I listened to the recording a second time while reading the transcript for each interview to increase the accuracy of my transcript. Once I completed the transcription process, I sent a copy of the transcript to the respective participant for review and to verify the accuracy of the data. This process is known as participant review and it provides validity to the data collection process (Creswell, 2013). The following table shows the profiles for each participant.

Table 3.3

Participant Profiles

Participant	Kentucky Region	District Size	Student Population	Path to Superintendency (roles and certifications)
A	Eastern Kentucky, North	7 schools	1,935	Certified secondary math and science teacher, High School teacher, High School principal, Director of Pupil Personnel, Superintendent, 28 years in public education with 8 as superintendent

Table 3.3 (continued)

Participant	Kentucky Region	District Size	Student Population	Path to Superintendency (roles and certifications)
B	Northern Kentucky	3 schools	1,508	Certified secondary history, high school teacher, Athletic Director, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel, Assistant Principal, Elementary Principal, Chief Academic Officer, Superintendent, 28 years in public education with 9 as Superintendent
C	Fourth District	6 schools	2,459	Certified middle school science and social studies, Middle School teacher, Middle School Principal, Superintendent, 18 years in public education with 6 as superintendent
D	Northern Kentucky	4 schools	1,797	Certified secondary social studies, history, geography, middle and high school teacher, Assistant Principal, High School Principal, Instructional Supervisor, Director of Federal Programs, District Assessment Coordinator, Superintendent, 26 years in public education with 5 as superintendent
E	Middle Cumberland	5 schools	2,563	Certified K-8, Elementary teacher, Middle School mathematics teacher, elementary Guidance Counselor, Director of Special Education, Superintendent, 45 years in public education with 26 as superintendent

Data Analysis

This study utilized one-on-one interviews with superintendents to collect data. I utilized Creswell's (2002) six steps for analyzing qualitative data to analyze the data collected during the interviews with the participants of this study:

> 1) Organize and prepare the data for analysis; 2) read through all the data; 3) begin detail analysis with a coding process; 4) use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories of themes for analysis; 5) determine how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative; and 6) make an interpretation or meaning of the data. (p. 191)

After all transcripts were verified by the participants I read through each one again to look for emerging themes, to arrange information into smaller sections, and to highlight important ideas or quotes. This allowed me to begin the process of organizing the data, also known as category identification (Creswell, 2013). As I took notes about each transcript, I used the framework of Positive Organizational Scholarship to maintain a focus on data that had the potential to answer the research question.

Validity and Reliability

Attempts to eliminate threats to validity and reliability were included in the research design. To establish trustworthiness and integrity, the strategies I used for this study, each discussed below, include pilot testing, collection of rich data, respondent validation and expert review.

Threats to the validity of the interview protocol were addressed by administering a pilot-test of the semi-structured interview questions. The participants of the pilot test were representative of participants in the full study. Conducting the pilot test allowed me

to determine if the interview questions worked as intended and what revisions needed to be made to the interview protocol.

Interviews with intentionally selected individuals supported collection of rich data with enough detail to generate a picture of what was going on in each district. Descriptions of the interview participants and their answers were provided while also ensuring anonymity of the participants. Rich, thick descriptions were obtained by recording all interviews and transcribing them verbatim. This allowed for eternal validity and increased the chances of the results transferring to other settings (Merriam, 2009).

Respondent validation, also referred to as member checks (Maxwell, 2013) was used to ensure accuracy. This strategy allowed regular feedback about the data collected and the conclusions that were made by the researcher. This was achieved by sending all transcripts to those interviewed to ensure accuracy. During data analysis, participants were asked to confirm interpretations of what they said during the interview. None of the superintendents asked for corrections to the transcripts I sent them. Using respondent validation is the best way to avoid misinterpretations and to identify the researcher's personal biases (Maxwell, 2013).

Role of Researcher

Researcher bias is one of the threats to validity often discussed in relation to qualitative research. Because it would be impossible to eliminate the researcher's theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens it is important to understand how these influence the study and its conclusions (Maxwell, 2013). As a former elementary school teacher and secondary school administrator, it is not possible for me to remain unbiased on this topic. My experience working in public education for 24 years and in different contexts has led

to personal biases that I am aware exist. My ability to understand and explain these biases as they occurred during data collection and analysis will be noted. I also followed Creswell's (2014) suggestions for researchers to always take a reflective approach throughout the study.

Summary

This chapter presents the methods used for this exploration of strategies used by superintendents to retain beginning teachers in Kentucky's schools. The purpose of the study and research questions were revisited. The study participants were described. The process for data collection and analysis was presented with attention given to validity and the role of the researcher.

In Chapter 4, I share the results of this study and present my conclusions from the research. In Chapter 5, I will conclude with a discussion of the overall findings from this qualitative study and share implications for future research on the topic of teacher retention.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews with five superintendents serving Kentucky districts to answer the research question: What leadership strategies are the most effective district practices for successfully enculturating teachers into the profession and retaining them in the school in which they work? In this chapter, I present the findings from the interviews as they relate to the research question.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual orientation for increasing teacher retention rates in Kentucky's public schools draws upon the literature of organizational theory with the concepts of organizational learning and positive organizational scholarship. The combination of these theories builds on human relationships to produce and sustain the collective capacity that help organizations learn, adapt, and thrive (Cameron et al., 2003).

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning, an organizational theory concept, examines models and theories about the ways an organization learns and adapts (Collinson & Cook, 2007). Noted throughout the literature in multiple disciplines, the idea of organizational learning increased in the late 1980s and includes diverse perspectives by theorists in the field (Schulz, 2002). For example, Gill (2010) suggested that organizational learning requires the continuous development of leadership that strives "to create a culture in which learning is the rule, not the exception … and remove the barriers to learning and reward behaviors that facilitate learning: risk taking, action learning, feedback and reflection" (p. 27). Organizational learning creates a culture of inquiry where all members feel safe to

engage in ongoing reflection about where they currently are and where they are going. School leaders that continuously use the self-reflection processes to determine professional development needs of teachers increase learning among all stakeholders (Gill, 2010). Organization members that know how to be active, instead of passive, about continuous learning and improving develop the necessary skills for capacity building (Stringer, 2009). In schools, organizational learning is cultivated by partnerships between administrators and teachers who work together to create a strong school community (Del Favero, 2003).

Positive Organizational Scholarship

Positive organizational scholarship (POS), a relatively new development in the field of organizational theory, "is concerned primarily with the study of especially positive outcomes, processes, and attributes of organizations and their members" (Cameron et al., 2003, p. 4). With a focus on words such as *excellence*, *thriving, flourishing, abundance*, *resilience*, and *virtuousness,* POS seeks to understand the best of the human condition. In POS, researchers emphasize theories of excellence, extraordinary performance, positive deviance, and positive spirals of flourishing (Cameron et al., 2003).

POS, which emphasizes the science of positive organizational dynamics, is meant to emphasize conditions that create positive consequences for people and organizations. It uncovers new understanding by examining the conditions and processes that create these positive patterns. It focuses on the exemplary, vivacious, and prosperous aspects of the theory. POS examines positive events within organizations as well as positive organizational contexts. Through this lens, organizational theory can be used to understand, explain, and predict the causes and consequences of positive states usually

ignored in the field (Cameron et al., 2003).

Establishing a foundation in science is how most concepts develop longevity. Therefore, POS seeks to establish a theory-based foundation for positive incidents within organizations. Researchers conducting organizational studies have examined the role of POS on leadership to determine if the desire for positivity transfers to organizations: Results suggest that positive leaders have positive followers. Studies have also found increased wellbeing, commitment, and productivity among members of organizations with positive leadership. Similarly, optimistic leadership is linked to follower satisfaction and retention (Caza & Cameron, 2008).

These findings suggest the POS lens is appropriate for a study on teacher retention. The main influence, cited in teachers' decision to stay or leave their school, is administration and their leadership (Brown & Wynn, 2007). Therefore, administrators who practice the theories of POS are likely to have positive followers who are committed to the field and are successfully retained members of the school and district. Exploring this idea further could substantiate the idea of POS in schools as a promising leadership practice for not only increasing teacher retention but also improving school culture.

Superintendent Interviews

I interviewed five Kentucky superintendents to gain insight about what they were doing to consistently retain teachers in their district at a level better than the state average. In this section, I present the findings from the interviews.

Participants

Five superintendents participated in my study. Four of the five participants hold Doctoral degrees. The participants included superintendents leading five different

districts in Kentucky. The districts represented were in five different counties and four different regions: Eastern Kentucky north, Northern Kentucky, Cumberland, and the Fourth Region. Three of the superintendents lead independent districts while the other two lead traditional school districts. The superintendents in this study are from districts ranging from 3 schools to 7 with student populations of 1,500 to 2,500. The participants have served as a superintendent from 6 years to 26 years; and have been educators 18 to 45 years with each of them serving Kentucky schools exclusively. Profiles of the school districts in this study can be found in the following table.

Table 4.1

Profiles of Participant Districts

Participant	**22-23 Turnover Rate**	**22-23 Starting Teacher Salary**	**22-23 Economically Disadvantaged**
Superintendent A's District	16.3%	$37,947	76.9%
Superintendent B's District	19.8%	$43,360	15.7%
Superintendent C's District	18.8%	$42,893	56.6%
Superintendent D's District	13.2%	$42,448	38.8%
Superintendent E's District	12.1%	$38,000	69.7%

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, saturation of data is reached when evidence of the same recurring code and categories appear in the data (Merriam, 2009). Saturation occurred with data across all five school districts in four major categories: 1) grow from within; 2) invest in people; 3) pay and benefits; and 4) mentoring and enculturation. The following

section presents the findings of promising practices for retaining teachers under these categories or themes that emerged during data analysis.

Grow from Within

All five superintendent participants talked about the teaching force in their district as permanent members of the community. During interviews the participants were asked *what makes teachers stay in this district* and overwhelmingly, each superintendent mentioned that the employees in the district report that they have always lived there and that working for the school was always their goal. Superintendent A immediately responded,

> We often know who our future educators are when they are still students in our district. Being an educator here is a family tradition and we nurture that. Our high school is our pipeline. Their moms, aunts, and cousins are teachers here. Their dads are coaches here, so we make sure they know early that they are welcome to be a lifelong part of our district. They leave to go to college and then they return to live here and raise their family.

He continued by using himself as an example noting that some of his family were graduates of the district and now his children were as well.

Superintendent C said, "we hire our graduates." He talked about the employees in his district being active in the local churches and attending community events together. He added "most of our teachers can be found at every Friday night football game because someone in their family is playing in the game, cheering on the sidelines, or performing at half-time." He added that the community and the schools "are part of their identity" and that "they simply couldn't allow themselves to work elsewhere"

> When asked *what makes teachers stay in this district* Superintendent E answered, I don't believe we have a single teacher in this district that's not from this part of Kentucky. I'm certain we don't have any teachers who are from outside Kentucky. Our teachers are here because they want to be HERE. This is their home. This is their children's home. They teach in this district because of the investment in what they love.

In the middle of answering a different question, the Superintendent paused and said "you know what I was wrong before" after a brief silence she said "we do have a teacher who grew up in another state. She's from Kansas. Her husband grew up here though" she chuckled to herself and noted "sometimes we let an outsider in, I guess."

Superintendent B echoed the sentiments of the other participants "Teachers that live here want to teach here." When asked if many of them were alumni of the district he said "Yes, some of them are from here originally and have returned to work here. Others have moved here due to the desirable location." When asked to elaborate, he said "This is a top notch district. People want to work here and want their kids to go here." He added that the district was so desirable that "the location and reputation" of the district was what lured him there to serve as Superintendent.

Invest in People

In each of the semi-structured interviews the idea of investing in people kept coming up. The participants discussed building relationships with the teachers in their districts and nurturing their growth as professionals. Superintendents A, C and D all said, "We value the staff, and they know it." Superintendent A elaborated by talking about

celebrating teachers to make sure they know that the great things they are doing are noticed.

> We do traditional things like teacher of the month awards, highlighting different teachers in our district newsletter, and recognizing teachers at monthly Board of Education Meetings. But I also like to send handwritten notes and cards to celebrate the achievements and milestones of teachers. If a teacher in my district gets a graduate degree I send a congratulations card. If a teacher has a baby, I send a card. If a teacher is grieving the loss of someone dear I make sure I send a note of support. And if you are at work on your birthday I do even better, and hand deliver a cupcake from the local bakery. It takes so little of me, and it means so much to them.

He continued to elaborate by adding that he encourages other district administrators to find ways to do similar things adding "and principals, I constantly ask them what are you doing to invest in the people in your building?" He concluded the comment by saying "I want my district to do more than build relationships. I want to cultivate a family."

Superintendent C talked briefly about the extra stuff he does to build personal relationships by talking about an annual tradition.

> At the end of every school year, we have a big cookout. I stand behind a grill and make hamburgers, hotdogs, and chicken for the entire district. It's one of my favorite events of the year even though I endure hours of smoke blowing in my eyes. Employees are welcome to bring a dish to share but it's not a requirement. I just want them there to be able to exhale for another year completed.

He then shifted his focus to talk about investing in his staff professionally. "They all have

professional goals and I make it my business to know what they are so I can help them achieve their goals." He also touched on leadership growth and opportunities in the district for those that aspire to lead beyond the classroom "I identify teachers who want to lead and ones who should lead then I do whatever it takes to provide them with the opportunities to nurture those skills." When asked if he sees success with that he quickly responded "Yes! Every one of my buildings is run by a principal who was first a teacher in this district."

Superintendent B talked about investing in people by walking next to them as a main strength in this leadership. "I don't ask them to do anything I haven't or wouldn't do myself." He backed this up by explaining that the teachers in his district know that if they are required to do something then he is going to do it as well. "I teach a class every year. I am the teacher of record for one of the AP classes at our high school and have been every year since taking this job." When I asked if this means he takes on all teaching duties for that class he quickly replied "For sure! I go all out! I even compete with the other AP teachers for the highest pass rates. It keeps me grounded in the real work" He also talked about being an avid reader of leadership books "I read to learn new strategies or emerging methods." The Superintendent added that this also allows him to grow others. "Often when reading, I think of someone in my district who would connect with the message and then I can't wait to share it with them." I asked about his method for sharing and his reply was "sometimes I reach out right away by texting a quote to them…other times I hand the book over to them the next day." I asked if this method had widespread effects in his district to which he replied "It's our norm. We are lifelong learners here."

Pay and Benefits

The five districts represented in this study are not among the highest paying districts in Kentucky. The five districts have a starting salary range of $36,000 to $43,300 for first year teachers with a bachelor's degree. Each of these salary ranges fall well below the highest starting salary in the state of $50,000 for teachers with the same rank. However, all five participants noted that they are addressing concerns related to teacher compensation. They reported "advocating for competitive salary structures" and it was clear they each had a strong understanding of the link between financial stability and job satisfaction. Superintendent C said, "Districts that prioritize competitive wages are more successful in retaining their teaching staff." Superintendent E had recently convinced the Board in her district to overhaul the salary schedule. "We were well below the state average and hadn't provided a raise in years. Our teachers were struggling to get by." I asked her what she was able to accomplish.

> I got our Board of Education to increase everyone by five percent. We added yearly increments across the board. The salary increase every five years on the schedule is now slightly larger than the increase in other years. We started giving employees the choice on when they received their summer pay either all at once in June or spread out bi-weekly like it is the rest of the year. That was something they had been requesting and there was no reason not to get it done. There was resistance in some of these changes and the teachers knew it, but they also knew I wasn't going to give up on them. I think it made a real difference for the folks who work here.

When asked specifically about pay all five superintendents indicated that they had

advocated for teacher raises at least once since taking on their position. Superintendent A added “I think it now has to be discussed annually. Teachers won’t settle to pay below their worth and we have to recognize that as the leaders.” Superintendent C even went as far as to say, “Everyone knows what teachers are making in Jefferson and Fayette and they are not afraid to mention that. Our teachers deserve that too and we have to keep pushing our districts to get them a bit closer whenever we can.”

In addition to salary schedules, several participant districts are providing benefits that help supplement paychecks or relieve financial burdens. Superintendent C said his district has a childcare center where the rates are deeply discounted for staff members. “The cost of childcare is astronomical. We make sure we relieve most of that cost for our employees. Superintendent B has a similar program in his district. “If you work here your kids are welcome here free of charge regardless of residency” he explained in regard to the district policy on paying tuition to attend if you are outside the attendance boundaries of the school. Superintendent E implemented an outside–the-box initiative in her district.

“One thing teachers complain about no matter where they work is how much time administrators take from them at the beginning of the school year. So, I implemented an alternative calendar. I take two weeks before their contract days begin. During that time our initiatives are rolled out. Intense training is provided. New people get acclimated and introduced to colleagues. It’s our official kick-off to the new year and gets everyone on the same page. For the first week I pay them. The second week I give them professional development credit. They get enough PD that they don’t need any more for the rest of the year and I make it known that they don’t have to get any more hours unless they want to for their own benefit. Once my two weeks are done their contract days begin and that’s

when they can get into their rooms and get set up for the year. They love this and have been so incredibly thankful for the new approach. I really hope the new person keeps it going. I think they might revolt if they don't."

Mentoring and Enculturation

Mentor programs are a common strategy used by superintendents to support new teachers. Pairing new educators with experienced mentors helps them navigate the challenges of the profession, fosters a sense of belonging, and reduces feelings of isolation. Such support systems have proven effective in increasing teacher retention. In Kentucky, mentoring beginning teachers is still required in statute, so all five Superintendent participants were able to reference how their district was upholding this requirement when asked the question *What is your role in retaining new, effective teachers*? All five Superintendent participants answered this question with traditional models of mentoring that seemingly were created using the old KTIP program as the springboard for their district established program. All five superintendents said, "they are assigned a mentor teacher" and that they have a year-long program that consists of monthly professional development tailored to the needs of their new teachers. Superintendent A said what every other Superintendent echoed during their interview.

> We assign all new teachers a mentor teacher in the building. If the new teacher has an issue with something, if they need help navigating a process or working with a difficult student they have a partner they can go to. The mentor teacher is there to teach them the ropes. They help them learn how to be a teacher and a valued member of this district from the first day they walk in the building.

Superintendent C made a comment that was unlike any of the other participant comments when he said,

> I don't know. We lost two teachers last year to a neighboring district. That bothers me because it hasn't happened in the past. We are going to have to figure out why it happened and then we are going to make improvements. We are fortunate in that we still get quality applicants so we replaced the two we lost with strong teachers, but things could change, and we might not be as fortunate next time. I don't live in a bubble here. I know the teacher shortage is real and only getting worse. I have colleagues that cannot staff their schools. I don't want that to happen here and the first way to avoid it is to keep the teachers I've already invested in.

Some of his sentiments were shared by two other participants. Superintendent B said, "If I hire you I'm going to do whatever I can to keep you." While discussing the topic of mentoring, Superintendent D also said, "If I work hard to get you here I'm going to work just as hard to keep you here and I expect my building level administrators to do the same."

At the end of the interview, Superintendents were asked, is there *anything else you would like to say about the teacher shortage teacher recruitment and retention, or teacher support?* Superintendent A took the opportunity to say, "As the shortage gets worse districts are going to have to get creative." Superintendent D said "Recruit, hire, retain, and engage teachers. We've always done it but it's getting harder, so we need to keep hunting the stuff that works." Superintendent C finished by saying

> We are lucky. From my seat it hasn't been hard to keep good teachers. I run a

> destination district. People want to teach in our schools. We don't have a lot of vacancies annually and when we do we rarely have to hire a brand new teacher fresh out of college. Our hires are seasoned educators and are just new to us. So, I've talked here about the things we are getting right but the truth is…if this teacher shortage starts to hit us too…If we have jobs that go unfilled like some of my colleagues are reporting…well the truth is I just don't know. I hope things turn around before I have to find out if our stuff, our practices, would work in tougher circumstances.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this qualitative study about teacher retention in Kentucky's public schools. The findings focused on five districts where Superintendent participants discussed what their school district was doing well to have retention rates above the state average over the last 5 school years. The four promising practices that emerged as themes from conducting semi-structured interviews were: 1) grow from within; 2) invest in people; 3) pay and benefits; and 4) mentoring and enculturation. Each of these practices were discussed with specific examples and quotes given by participants.

In Chapter 5, I discuss these findings and present my interpretation of what it means for teacher retention in Kentucky today. I also discuss implications for further research based on the study findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Teaching is an occupation with attrition and migration rates that are about 4% higher among the newest members in the field when compared to other professions (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Lortie, 1975; Veeman, 1985). Studies examining 1-year to 4-year retention rates of beginning teachers reveal that 12% of new teachers leave the profession by the end of their first year, 31% leave within three years, and almost 50% leave the profession within five years. These numbers include the 9.5% that leave before completing the end of their first year (Davis & Waite,2006; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2018a; Riggs, 2013).

The recent pandemic exacerbated teacher shortages nationwide making the situation even more dire. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 10.6 million educators were working in public education in January 2020. Today there are just 10.0 million for a net loss of 600,000 educators during the recent three years. In 2010, the ratio of hires to job openings in education stood at 1.54, while six years later in 2016 the ratio was 1.06. At the time this study was conducted, there were only 0.59 hires for every opening. Unfortunately, the statistics concerning teacher recruitment and retention at the time of this study was completed had worsened: A staggering 55% of public school educators report they now plan to leave the field education as a career sooner than they originally planned. The staff shortages that existed prior to the COVID pandemic have deepened to a level that now has 90% of public-school educators reporting that they are experiencing burnout (NEA, 2022).

Problem Statement

Operating under the ideal that the most important influence on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teachers and administrators who serve them has put teacher development at the forefront of educational initiatives. The goal is to improve the teaching force through carefully managed teacher recruitment, organizational development, and professional learning focused on improving student achievement. Efforts to recruit and retain quality educators include partnerships between school districts and colleges and universities, collaboration among P12 educators and higher education administration and faculty, and enhanced promotion of careers in P-12 education through recruitment services, workforce diversification initiatives, grants and scholarships for educators, and enhanced development programs for future educators (Baker, 2012).

The ability to recruit and develop a high-quality teaching force is mutually dependent on the ability to retain effective teachers (KBE, 2015). Despite the push to recruit and retain quality teachers, high rates of teacher attrition in many schools and districts throughout Kentucky have exacerbated the problem, which is why this study was conducted.

Purpose of the Study

Developing and retaining quality teachers is at the center of educational issues nationally and locally in Kentucky. Despite a continued focus on teacher recruitment, development, and retention, many schools and districts across the commonwealth still struggle to raise teacher retention rates. Because improving student achievement in Kentucky is dependent upon a quality teaching force, there must first be improvement in

the retention of teachers in public schools. Previous research findings describe reasons for high rates of attrition; however, since an important goal is to retain current teachers in the profession, discovering what motivates them to stay is important.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to uncover motivating factors that increase teacher retention rates in public schools in Kentucky. For numerous reasons, it was necessary to gather data for this study from district leaders, rather than practicing teachers and principals. Five superintendents in districts with retention rates consistently above the state average were interviewed to identify reasons why teachers in their district remain . Results of this study not only add to the growing body of research on teacher retention but also complement and inform the existing research that tends to focus on why teachers leave.

Research Question

Using semi-structured interviews to identify promising practices and existing conditions that enhance teacher retention, I was able to answer the overarching research question: *What leadership strategies are the most effective district practices for successfully enculturating teachers into the profession and retaining them in the school in which they work*?

In this chapter, I discuss the four themes that emerged as promising practices for retaining teachers as reported by principals during participant interviews. The discussion of my findings includes questions to consider for future exploration of ways to enhance teacher retention. This chapter also includes an overview of the limitations of the study.

Grow From Within

The first promising practice to retain practicing teachers that emerged from the data was that "growing your staff from within the district" was an effective way to improve teacher retention. All five participating superintendents provided input on their strategies and opportunities to retain teachers.

District Familiarity and Size

The superintendents in this study all sit at the helm of a small district where a large majority of their staff live. There seemed to be two different ways that this happened. The first were teachers who were born and raised in the district and returned to their district when seeking employment. For many teachers, working in the district where they lived and completed P-12 education was a lifelong plan. Further, the superintendents asserted that their districts were known as "a place that you should live, work, and send your children to school" While some of the teachers in their districts they were alumni who intentionally returned to teach after completing teacher preparation, others intentionally moved their families to the district for various reasons. Once employed as a teacher, they did not want to leave. This finding spoke directly to the need to keep teachers from departing from their school through revolving doors. According to the literature on teacher retention, those leaving the profession through migration from school to school or district to district intensifies the retention problem (Quartz et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017).

Teacher Retention and Nepotism

It is crucial to mention that working conditions within Appalachian areas of Kentucky have frequently been described as *centers of nepotism* within many careers—

perhaps most often public education. Within some Appalachian rural school districts, referring to employees as "family" is more exclusive than inclusive. This reality may surprise, perhaps even affront, some readers. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that Kentucky has a truly unique culture due to its history and topography. I am not suggesting that nepotism in its purest form is a promising practice to use as a teacher-retention practice; rather, the superintendents interviewed in this study recognize and appreciate that many educators working in their district are grateful to be working there and have no plans for relocating. Findings in this study suggest that intentionality in creating a recruitment-and-hiring pipeline from high school to career may incentivize the process of returning home to strengthen their school as an alumni educator.

Recruitment of Staff

Districts that do not already have these conditions naturally can implement programs for recruitment of their future teaching staff. Recruiting future teaching staff could begin at the district high schools with career pathways developed that allow high school students to learn about teaching as a career prior to entering college. Students who complete this career pathway during high school and indicate that they will major in education could be given scholarships by the local board of education for every year or semester they remain an education major. If the students promise to return to their local district after college, they could be offered a signing bonus when hired for their first teaching job in the school district. This would not only create a pipeline in the district that incentivizes their graduates returning home to their community, but it would also impact the beginning salary of the teachers when initially hired.

Invest in People

Teachers remain in schools where the leaders make them feel supported (Brown & Wynn, 2007; Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In this study, a second promising practice that emerged from interviews with superintendents was the idea of continuously investing in and supporting the people that work in their district. All superintendents interviewed in this study talked about going beyond relationship building. They described how knowing their people well and investing in them professionally was another strategy they used to retain teachers in the district. They understood that investing in the development of new teachers was a critical investment in the future of their schools. They understand they have a responsibility to help novice teachers learn and succeed, just like they have a responsibility to make sure their P12 students learn and succeed (Haynes, 2014; Ingersoll et al., 2018a)

Relationships

Relationships is a word used often in public education rhetoric. Educators—both administrators and teachers—often talk about the importance of "knowing your students" and "building relationships with them" so that the student will know they are important. Educators talk about cultivating relationships inside school buildings to create a culture that "feels like a family" . Likewise, they also talk about working to build relationships with the parents and the community members at large. The superintendents interviewed for this study not only mentioned those strategies but expanded upon them. Somewhat surprising due to the nature of these districts, only one superintendent used the word "relationship." Instead, they talked deeper about "their people"—about knowing who they were and what their professional goals and expectations were. They talked about

helping parents attain the things they wanted for their children with regard to future careers.

The superintendents also talked about developing strengths and nurturing the things that needed more attention. When the superintendents talked about investing in their people (both teachers and students), it felt less like they were a superintendent or boss but rather more like they were talking as a coach, best friend, and big brother all rolled into one.

Future Research

Further research on the impact of cultural changes such as the ones that exist in the five districts where this study was conducting is needed. Two potential questions for research are: Do leaders who successfully create a culture where the people are deeply known increase retention of their employees? What impact does this strategy have on student learning?

Pay and Benefits

A third practice that has proved to increase retention rates of teachers is ensuring a focus on salary schedules and implementation of additional benefits for employees. Inadequate salaries are the main reason beginning teachers leave their school, district, or career over 20% of the time (Ingersoll, 2019; Mervis, 2010; Strong, 2009). All five superintendents in this study discussed their efforts to improve the salary schedule for the teachers in their district.

Relationships

None of the superintendents interviewed for this study talked about how much the teachers in their district are paid—nor did they mention any specifics concerning salary.

Instead, they discussed advocating for raises and making small changes in the salary schedule that improved the pay in their district personnel annually. Increasing teachers' salaries, to an amount that is similar is other careers requiring 4-year degrees, reduces attrition up to 25% according to researchers (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll, 2013; Stinebrickner, 1998). The superintendents in my study also asserted that the dollar amount on a paycheck was the only thing they could do to improve monetary issues. Thus, they discussed perks they have been able to implement in their districts like reduced child-care costs and free gym memberships. The superintendents interviewed in this study asserted that advocating for better pay for teachers—even when not successful—was important and effective in keeping staff in the district. .

Future Research

Research on public-school teacher salary and how it relates to teacher retention is needed to see if salary and benefits truly impacts a teacher's decision to stay or to leave. The three districts in Kentucky with the highest salary scale consistently had retention rates *at or below the state average*. This finding suggests that salary alone is not enough to make a teacher stay in a district. Conducting a study on the impact of pay could provide insight for districts who are analyzing salary schedules. It would also be informative to research what factors are more powerful than high salary rates in retaining teachers. If a teacher is working in a high paying district, what are the factors that could outweigh that and still lead to attrition?

Mentoring and Enculturation

A fourth promising practice that proved to increase retention rates of teachers was the researched-backed strategy of developing a mentoring program to serve beginning

teachers in the district. Research indicates that new teachers need a mentor to guide and direct a new employee successfully into the culture of the school. Mentoring support provided by an experienced teacher to a novice has been a successful induction strategy for over 20 years and has the largest impact on their development as a teacher (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2014). Induction and mentoring can reduce teacher attrition rates up to an estimated 50% (Haynes, 2014; Hopper et al., 2022; Ingersoll, 2012). Having a formal mentoring program is still required in Kentucky—although it is no longer being funded by in school budgets. Because mentoring is required, all five superintendents discussed what policies are used in their district surrounding this promising practice.

Mentoring new teachers was discussed extensively—because it is a practice that each superintendent supported and encouraged. All five participants easily described the program their district uses and how it benefits the teachers. Although supportive of teacher mentoring, all five superintendents seemed to lose their passion when talking about this topic. The responses to my questions were much more restrained and lacked enthusiasm like the other topics of discussion earlier in their interviews. While their mentoring programs are based on research and achieve what research calls *strong programs,* it seemed more like they were carrying out a mandate than engaging in teacher development and retention..

Because funding for KTIP was removed as an essential funding item on the commonwealth budget, the legislature now requires districts to implement—and pay for--their own mentoring program in Kentucky. Nonetheless, a search of current funding within Kentucky school districts suggests that all are continuing with their own

mentoring programs. It would be informative to ask superintendents of Kentucky public schools about ways they are providing support to new or novice teachers despite not receiving external funds. For example, is there a better way to do this and still achieve the desirable goals? Do monthly meetings have to be part of the program? Does the mentor have to observe the mentee? Are there alternatives that could work better?

Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, as the researcher for this qualitative study, I served as the sole data collector and therefore could have introduced researcher bias into the study because I am a Kentucky educator—both teacher and administrator—with over 23 years of experience. During the study I was cognizant of this possibility, and thus, I worked diligently to minimize my personal perspectives and expectations throughout. Another limitation is the low number of study participants: Only five superintendents were interviewed for this study due to recruitment challenges. Thus, findings from this study are not representative of all districts in Kentucky. Additionally, all study participants serve as district superintendents. Unfortunately, it was not possible to recruit other personnel (i.e., principals, experienced teachers, new teachers). Interviews with different stakeholders would potentially have added valuable information. Additionally, all study participants serve as superintendents of small, rural districts

Another limitation of this study is that data were gathered via a single hour-long interview because it was not possible for me to conduct site visits for numerous reasons. It is possible that a participant's interview was impacted by unknown factors (i.e. illness, emotion, distractions) on the day of the interview. Despite these perceived limitations, there is significance in my study and implications for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for retaining teachers described by the interviewed superintendents could begin at the district high schools with career pathways. If developed with the goal of recruiting future teachers to that district, high school students to learn about teaching as a career prior to entering college. Those who complete this district-designed and administered career pathway during high school could select undergraduate preparation geared toward addressing district's future needs (e.g., preschool, elementary, secondary). As a recruitment strategy, the local school board could provide scholarships for every year or semester potential hires remain an education major during their postsecondary education. If the student promises to return to their local district after college, they could be offered a signing bonus when hired for their first teaching job in the school district. This would not only create a pipeline in the district that inspires their graduates to return home (something that many students living in rural areas want to do). It would also impact the beginning salary of the teachers when initially hired.

Conclusion

This qualitative research study examined promising practices for retaining beginning teachers in the profession and in the school where they work. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five superintendents who are leading districts with retention rates consistently above the state average. At the time that this dissertation was being finalized, the data for the 2022-2023 school year was released. Each of the participating districts achieved retention data significantly better than the state average of 24.9% turnover. This indicates that positive strategies employed by these districts have

proven to be effective for at least the last five years. Further, these data indicate that what the superintendents are doing works and could improve the retention rates of teachers in other districts in Kentucky.

Findings of this study show that growing teachers from within the district, investing in people who work for the district, focusing on salary and other benefits, and providing mentoring to new teachers are all effective ways to improve retention rates. Further research is needed to determine if these strategies are effective in larger districts in Kentucky. Most importantly, the concepts of Positive Organizational Scholarship—the framework used to conduct this study—needs to be shared and used more widely to reveal what is working well to improve conditions in all Kentucky schools. Positive Organization Scholarship can be much more effective in making effective change—rather than looking only at problems of practice.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. PERMISSION TO USE INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

From: "Brown, Kathleen M" <BrownK@email.unc.edu>
Subject: RE: Research Interest
Date: February 9, 2014 1:25:45 PM EST
To: "Susan Wynn, Ed.D." <susan.wynn@duke.edu>, "Boyd, Cari" <cari.boyd@scott.kyschools.us>
Cc: "Ferrigno, Tricia" <tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu>

Ditto from me Cari. Have at it!

I wish you the best in this important work. Greetings to Tricia for me, Kathleen :)

Dr. Kathleen M. Brown
Professor and Coordinator of Educational Leadership & Policy
UNC-CH School of Education
CB# 3500, 120 Peabody Hall
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
(919) 966-1354 OFFICE
(919) 962-1693 FAX

From: Susan Wynn, Ed.D. [susan.wynn@duke.edu]
Sent: Sunday, February 09, 2014 1:17 PM
To: Boyd, Cari; Brown, Kathleen M
Cc: Ferrigno, Tricia
Subject: RE: Research Interest

Hi Cari,
I'm delighted to hear that you found this piece useful. It is fine with me for you to use these interview questions, if it's okay with Dr. Brown, my co-author on these pieces. I also did quite a bit of research for about five years on beginning teacher retention. I administered a survey to first and second year teachers to see what factors contributed to their decision to remain in the school, remain in teaching, or remain in the profession. Consistently, over five years of administration of the survey, principal leadership was correlated most highly with their decision to remain at their school site (this was in comparison to school climate and to an extensive mentoring support system in place). Anyway, best of luck to you, and feel free to contact me via email if you have further questions.
Dr. Wynn

Susan R. Wynn, Ed.D.
Director, Secondary Teacher Preparation Program
Associate Professor of the Practice

Program in Education
Duke University
919.660.2403

From: Boyd, Cari [mailto:cari.boyd@scott.kyschools.us] **Sent:** Friday, February 07, 2014 9:21 PM **To:** BrownK@email.unc.edu; Susan Wynn, Ed.D. **Cc:** Ferrigno, Tricia **Subject:** Research Interest

Drs. Brown and Wynn,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Cari Boyd and I am in my third year of doctoral studies in educational leadership at the University of Kentucky. I am currently working on the prospectus under the advisement of my chair, Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno. I am contacting each of you because my research interest is on beginning teacher retention and I recently read your article *Teacher Retention Issues: How Some Principals Are Supporting and Keeping New Teachers.* This article provided me with a great deal of inspiration and with your permission I would love to replicate parts of your work. I would also be grateful if you would allow me to use your interview questions that were administered to principals and teacher focus groups. I will, of course, fully reference your work and give all credit where due. In addition, if you have any words of advice, or encouragement, they are most welcome. I look forward to your reply.

With gratitude,
Cari Boyd

APPENDIX B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS FOR SUPERINTENDENTS

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1) Tell me about your career in education. Were you a teacher, principal, instructional supervisor, etc.? When, where, how long?
2) Why did you decide to take on your current role and did you feel prepared? Why/why not?

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

1) How do you describe your leadership style? How would your colleagues (teachers, administrators, perhaps parents) describe your leadership style?
2) Do you feel you are an instructional leader? Why/why not?
3) Describe the climate and culture of your district. How are decisions made?

C. ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

1) Generally speaking, what do you see as the principal's main role?
2) What supports do principals in this district provide to new teachers?

D. TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1) Describe the hiring process for teachers in your district. What do you look for in new teachers?
2) What does the new teacher orientation/induction process look like?
3) What is your role in retaining new, effective teachers? Do you support them? How?
4) How do you know if your new teachers are being successful?
5) How much autonomy and/or influence do new teachers have in this district?
6) What is the role of other teachers in retaining new, effective teachers? Do they act as mentors, collaborate, and/or provide collegial support? How?
7) What strategies/activities do you use to create a good, supportive working environment for all teachers?
8) What makes teachers stay in this district?
9) Why do you think some beginning teachers leave the teaching profession?
10) Is there anything else you would like to say about the teacher shortage, teacher recruitment and retention, or teacher support?

APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT LETTER

Re: An Exploration of Effective Practices for Enculturating and Retaining Kentucky's Newest Teachers in the Profession

Dear: Superintendent

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a voluntary research study about teacher retention. This study is being conducted by Cari Boyd at the University of Kentucky.
You are being asked to participate in a single interview session about your knowledge of teacher retention practices in your district. The interview will take place via zoom or google meets and will last no longer than one hour.
I am asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for my research study about Teacher Retention. I am asking you because your school district has retention rates higher than the state average. By participating you would be able to highlight and recognize retention practices that have been successful in your district. This study requires that you have direct knowledge of the practices and policies surrounding teacher retention in your district. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

If you are willing to volunteer for this study please respond to this email stating that you are willing to participate and please provide information on when you may be available for the interview to be conducted. If there are specific times that do not work please include that information in the written response.

If you would like additional information about this study, please contact Cari Boyd of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership at clwall3@uky.edu or (859) 536-5010

Thank you for your consideration, and once again, please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested in learning more about this project.

Cari Boyd
Principal Investigator
University of Kentucky

APPENDIX D. INFORMED CONSENT

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

KEY INFORMATION FOR AN EXPLORATION OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR ENCULTURATING AND RETAINING KENTUCKY'S NEWEST TEACHERS IN THE PROFESSION

We are asking you to choose whether or not to volunteer for a research study about Teacher Retention. We are asking you because your school district has retention rates higher than the state average. This page is to give you key information to help you decide whether to participate. We have included detailed information after this page. Ask the research team questions. If you have questions later, the contact information for the research investigator in charge of the study is below.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

This qualitative study aims to uncover motivating factors that increase teacher retention rates through interviews with district leaders.

By doing this study, we hope to learn what motivates beginning teachers to remain in the field. Your participation in this research will last about 2 hours.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?

To highlight and recognize the practices that are successful in your district for new teacher retention.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

WHAT ARE KEY REASONS YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS STUDY?

If you do not have time to devote to the study or if you do not have direct knowledge of the topic.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding this study or you want to withdraw from the study contact Cari Boyd of the University of Kentucky, Department of Educational Leadership at clwall3@uky.edu or (859) 536-5010

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact staff in the University of Kentucky (UK) Office of Research Integrity (ORI) between the business hours of 8am and 5pm EST, Monday-Friday at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

DETAILED CONSENT:

WHERE WILL THE STUDY TAKE PLACE AND WHAT IS THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF TIME INVOLVED?

The research procedures will be conducted at your primary place of employment. You will need to be present once for an interview during the study. The visit will take about one hour. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is one hour over the next six months.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in a single interview session about your knowledge of teacher retention practices in your district. The interview will take place at your place of employment and will last no longer than one hour.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

We do not know if you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. However, if you take part in this study, information learned may help others.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

You may be asked questions that do not reflect positively on your district. You may skip these questions or any other interview question that you wish to for any reason.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?

When we write about or share the results from the study, we will write about the combined information. We will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is.

CAN YOU CHOOSE TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EARLY?

You can choose to leave the study at any time. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

If you choose to leave the study early, data collected until that point will remain in the study database and may not be removed.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

WILL YOU BE GIVEN INDIVIDUAL RESULTS FROM THE RESEARCH TESTS/SURVEYS?

Generally, tests/surveys done for research purposes are not meant to provide results that apply to you alone.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 15 people to do so.

I am being guided in this research by Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

WILL YOUR INFORMATION BE USED FOR FUTURE RESEARCH?

Your information collected for this study will NOT be used or shared for future research studies, even if we remove the identifiable information like your name.

PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE YOUR VERBAL CONSENT. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH, PLEASE ASK THE INVESTIGATORS NOW.

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VITA

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023-Present Fayette County Schools, School Based Instructional Coach

2019-2023 Bourbon County Schools
High School Assistant Principal, 2019-2022
Middle School Assistant Principal, 2022-2023

2013-2019 Scott County Schools
Georgetown Middle School Principal, 2016-2019
Georgetown Middle School Dean of Students, 2013-2016

2010-2013 James Lane Allen Elementary, 5th Grade Teacher

2009-2010 William Wells Brown Elementary, Professional Staff Assistant

2001-2009 Lansdowne Elementary, English as a Second Language Teacher (K-5)

2000-2001 Linlee Elementary, 3rd Grade Teacher

EDUCATION

2009-2011 University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
- EdS in Educational Leadership
- Kentucky Principal Certification, Level 2
- Supervisor of Instruction Certification

2000-2004 University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY
- Master of Arts in Education
- Rank 1 in Elementary Education
- Endorsement for Teaching English as a Second Language

1995-1999 Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY
- Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education