Intention to Leave Teaching: a Study of Louisiana Elementary School Teachers Early in Their Careers.

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INTENTION TO LEAVE TEACHING: A STUDY OF LOUISIANA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS EARLY IN THEIR CAREERS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and
Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Educational Leadership,
Research, and Counseling

by
Karen Callender
B.S. Louisiana State University, 1983
M.Ed., Louisiana State University, 1993
December 2000

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to those people in my life that have somehow contributed to this effort.

To my mother, Pearl Achee Callender, who instilled in me the skills of hard work, perseverance, and the desire for excellence that lead to success,

To my father, Thomas James Callender, Jr., who modeled serving in leadership roles throughout my life,

To my mentor, Virginia Gough, who first encouraged me to seek a leadership role in education,

To my teacher and friend, Cynthia Young Wren, who believed in my abilities to achieve this goal,

To Lisa and Alexander Prejean who loved and supported me throughout this endeavor.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the intention to leave teaching of teachers early in their careers and the variables: teacher self-efficacy, teacher age, school size, community type, socioeconomic background of student population, student discipline, and salary. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to investigate these relationships. Survey data were collected from kindergarten through fifth grade teachers in Louisiana public schools, and interviews were conducted with those reporting the highest intention to leave. The quantitative data revealed school size to be significantly related to teacher intention to leave teaching, and teacher self-efficacy, student SES, and discipline to be significantly related to teacher intention to change schools. The qualitative data taken from the teacher interviews indicated student discipline and teacher salary as top reasons for teachers leaving teaching. In addition to low teacher salary, data from the qualitative analysis also suggested teacher preparation programs, mentoring for new teachers, and discipline policies and procedures as areas of concern in relation to teacher intention to leave. The participants in the qualitative portion of this study represented teachers who survived the first few years of teaching but who indicated their continued desire to leave teaching. This group of teachers may represent burned out and entrapped teachers.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition is a concern for researchers who make supply and demand predictions as well as for personnel who are responsible for filling vacant teaching positions. During times when the supply of teachers is low and the demand for teachers is high, teacher attrition is viewed as a critical issue. In the 1950s, when the baby boomers were in school, a large number of teachers were hired to accommodate the rising student enrollment. Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple, & Olsen (1991) reported that many of these teachers were reaching retirement age. It was predicted (Walker, 1991) that half of the teachers in the United States would need replacing by the turn of the century due to a combination of teacher retirement and teacher attrition. In 1985 Hidalgo suggested that teacher shortages would grow by the turn of the century due to teacher retirement, curriculum requirements, changing urban demographics, growing career opportunities for women and minorities, and tougher teacher credentials.

More recent findings suggested that the teacher shortage will continue into the twenty-first century. The need for new teachers is estimated to be 2-2.5 million for the years between 1998 and 2008 (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Hammond pointed out that although teacher preparation programs in the United States supply enough graduates to fill the need, shortages of teachers in certain subject areas and geographical locations continue. Hussar, (1999) reported similar figures for teacher needs. He suggested that
between 1.7-2.7 million newly hired teachers will be needed by the 2008-2009 school year due to teacher retirement and teacher attrition.

The overall attrition rate reported from the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow Up Survey data was 6.6% for public school teachers and 11.9% for private school teachers (Whitener, 1997). Other studies using National Center for Educational Statistics data also noted the attrition rate for teachers nationally to be around 6% (Hammer & Rohr, 1992; Gerald, Horn, & Hussar, 1990).

A number of researchers identified the serious problem of teacher attrition in the first few years of teaching (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane, Singer, Willett, 1988; Murnane et al. 1991 Gordon, 1991; Frantz, 1994 and Shen, 1997). Huling-Austin (1986) found that new teachers leave two and a half times more often than veteran teachers did. He also noted that the attrition rate of new teachers does not decrease to the overall teacher attrition rate of 6% until the 5th or 6th year. The author reported that as many as half of all new teachers leave during their first seven years of teaching and most of them do so by year four. Others found similar high statistics for new teachers. Grissmer and Kirby (1987) found the attrition rates among inexperienced teachers to be 20-25%. Heyns (1988) identified a 30-40% teacher attrition rate after five years of teaching. Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Berry (1987) found the new teacher attrition rate to be 40% after two years of teaching. In a study of new teachers, Frantz (1994) found Louisiana’s attrition rate of 65% to exceed that of the national average. The percentage of teachers leaving after two years ranged from 22% - 70%, depending on
the district. If educational administrators expect to avoid a cycle of inexperienced teachers being hired, working only a few years and then leaving the profession, only to be replaced by yet other inexperienced teachers, they will need to understand why new teachers leave the teaching profession.

Some research indicated factors that may contribute to teacher retention. Murnane, Singer, and Willett (1988) and Frantz (1994) found that the older a teacher is when entering teaching the more likely it was that he or she would remain in teaching. The reasons for this difference between younger teachers and more mature teachers are suggested but rarely explored directly. Shen (1997b), using NCES data from the School and Staffing Survey and the Follow Up Survey, found that teachers with less experience were more likely to leave or move to a different school. Chapman's findings indicated that the type of first teaching experience was an important indicator of teacher attrition (Chapman, 1984). Some researchers suggested that mentoring for new teachers made a difference in their retention (Odell and Feraro, 1992 & Darling Hammond, 1999). Ornstein (1976) asserted that professional development in-services provided for new teachers were ineffective in that it came too late.

Goodlad (1984) suggested that the main reason for teacher attrition was similar to that of other professions. He stated that teachers were willing to enter teaching and earn less wages because of the anticipated intrinsic rewards, but when they became frustrated and dissatisfied with their own performance, they considered quitting. McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens and Yee (1986) claimed that teaching conditions
did not allow teachers to develop a sense of self-efficacy; the feeling that one is able to meet students' needs. On the other hand, Trentham, Silvern, and Brogdon (1985) found that teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy claimed that they would select teaching again as a career choice.

With the predicted teacher shortage into the 21st century and the alarmingly high attrition rate of beginning teachers in mind, I investigated factors that may be related to teacher attrition. I explored attrition by looking at the self-efficacy of teachers in their first few years of teaching and determined its relationship to teachers' intention to leave the teaching profession. I also examined the relationships between teacher intention to leave teaching and the variables teacher age, community type, student SES, and student discipline.

**Statement of the Problem**

In a 1994 study of beginning teachers, Frantz highlighted the exceedingly high attrition rate for teachers teaching in Louisiana schools. The overall annual attrition rate of 13% for Louisiana teachers was more than twice the national rate of 6%. The teacher attrition rate for new Louisiana teachers was also higher than national rates cited by researchers. Grissmer and Kirby (1987) found rates of attrition for inexperienced teachers to be 20-25%, while Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Berry (1987) noted that attrition rates among teachers with two or less years experience was as high as 40%. The average rate of teacher attrition for new teachers in Louisiana schools within the first two years of teaching was 65% according to Frantz (1994). Almost three fourths
of the subjects in the Frantz (1994) study were elementary teachers. Because elementary teachers as a whole typically have lower attrition rates than middle and high school teachers one would have expected the attrition rate to be lower than the national average, but instead it was higher. With this study I attempted to investigate more thoroughly this problem in Louisiana schools.

Numerous studies have indicated that teacher attrition is greatest in the early years (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane et al., 1988; Murnane, et al., 1991; & Shen, 1997b). Literature is bountiful regarding the problems of beginning teachers. Henry (1986) identified discipline, parent difficulties, and lack of teaching materials as reasons for new teachers leaving teaching, and pointed out that new teachers are given the toughest teaching assignments.

There is little research on how teachers' perceptions of their abilities affect attrition. Nevertheless, some studies identify reasons for attrition that may be part of a larger source of attrition: teachers' perceptions of their teaching inefficacy. For example, two of the top five reasons for teachers leaving teaching identified in a Louisiana study (Frantz, 1994) hinted at signs of teachers' sense of inefficacy. Student discipline was identified as the number one reason given consistently for teachers leaving. Among the reasons for poor discipline cited by teachers during focus group interviews were teacher inability to handle the discipline problems and the lack of adequate pre-service training in discipline and management. Teacher disillusionment, which also ranked among the top five reasons teachers indicated as explanations for new
teacher attrition in the Frantz (1984) study, may also point to further teachers’ feelings of inefficacy. Frantz explained that teachers believe they cannot make a difference in the education of students due to great variances in student abilities, such as mainstreamed special education students.

Research exploring the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher attrition is limited. The problem I addressed in this study was an area of research regarding teacher attrition that has received very little exploration: the relationship between teachers’ intention to leave teaching and their sense of their own inefficacy. Throughout this study the term teacher efficacy refers not to efficacy as determined by some external objective measurement, but to individuals’ sense of their own efficacy or inefficacy as teachers.

To explore the link between teacher self-efficacy and teacher attrition, I used a mixed methodology including both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Most research that investigates teacher attrition is quantitative in nature and lacks data regarding teachers’ perspectives of why they remain in or leave teaching. Quantitative data is gathered by way of close-ended surveys and does not mirror teachers’ feelings or thoughts regarding teacher attrition. In this study, I gathered information using qualitative methods as well as quantitative methods. This provided me with the opportunity to obtain the perspectives of teachers regarding the topic of attrition.
Purpose

Through this study, I hoped to provide information that would help researchers understand why some teachers leave teaching while others stay. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers’ early sense of self-efficacy in their careers and the likelihood of them leaving teaching. In addition, I investigated the relationship between teacher intention to leave teaching and the following variables: teacher age, community type, school size student SES, and student discipline.

Significance of the Study

This study supported theory regarding teacher attrition, provided implications for practice and accented a new problem associated with teacher attrition in Louisiana. With this study, several facets of Chapman's teacher retention model, namely personal characteristics of the teacher (teacher age), several variables involving environmental influences (student SES, student discipline, and community type), and educational preparation (course work and field experiences) were addressed. Chapman (1984) considered a teacher's decision to remain in or leave teaching to be a direct result of their satisfaction. He asserted that a teacher's satisfaction is a result of a combination of the following: a teacher's personal skills, educational preparation, initial commitment to teaching, quality of his/her first employment experience, external and environmental influences, and integration into teaching. With this study, teachers’ perceptions of their skills were measured rather than the skills directly.
Both qualitative and quantitative results of this study provided support for Chapman’s teacher retention model (1984). The environmental factors of school size and discipline and the external factor teacher salary were all found to be significant factors pertaining to teacher intent to leave in this study.

In addition to support for theory, this study provided implications for practitioners. School districts incur high costs as a result of teacher attrition due to recruiting, training, and mentoring (Adam & Dial, 1993; Theobald, 1990). In addition to financial costs, teacher attrition has an effect on the continuity of programs (Theobald, 1990), student performance (Bempah, Kaylen, Osburn, & Berkenholz, 1994), and school effectiveness (Ingersoll & Rossi, 1995). Attending to the problems identified in this study that can be altered, such as discipline and salary, and that are associated with teacher attrition could indirectly impact school budgets, student learning and school effectiveness.

This study extended the earlier work of Frantz (1994) regarding the tremendous problem of early attrition of new teachers in Louisiana by highlighting the phenomenon of teacher entrapment identified by LeCompte and Dworkin (1991). The teachers in this study who indicated that they intend to leave may be part of the group of teachers who are burned out and have a desire to leave, but lack alternative careers.

**Research Questions**

Prior research indicated that there was a significant relationship between teacher attrition and the variables of teacher age, community type, student SES, and student
discipline. With this study, I investigated to find out what additional influence the variable teacher self-efficacy may have on potential teacher attrition, specifically teacher intention to leave teaching, beyond what is currently known.

**Research Question One**

Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching?

**Research Question Two**

Is there a significant relationship between teacher age and teacher intention to leave teaching?

**Research Question Three**

Is there a significant relationship between community type and teacher intention to leave teaching?

**Research Question Four**

Is there a significant relationship between student SES and teacher intention to leave teaching?

**Research Question Five**

Is there a significant relationship between student discipline and teacher intention to leave teaching?
Research Question Six

Does teacher sense of self-efficacy provide additional influence on intention to leave teaching beyond what is currently known about the influence of teacher age, community type, student discipline, and student SES?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' sense of self-efficacy early in their careers and their intention to leave teaching. This chapter reviews research and literature related to teacher attrition and teacher efficacy. The first section discusses theories of teacher attrition presented in the literature as well as specific findings of research on this topic. The second section reports on the literature regarding teacher self-efficacy theories and findings.

The literature presented in this section was identified by way of computer searches using Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Dissertation Abstracts International, Internet searches, as well as other indexes such as Mental Measurements Yearbook and Tests in Print. Additionally, Louisiana State University's card catalog system LOLA was used to determine which of the articles, texts, microfilms, and microfiches were available as well as to search for other books on the topics related to this dissertation. The bibliographies in the articles and texts proved to be especially good sources of relevant information on the topics in question.

Teacher Attrition

In this section, theories of teacher attrition/retention are presented. The types of teacher attrition research are then identified and the results of studies on this topic are explained. Next, some problems associated with teacher attrition research are discussed. Finally, specific findings of previous studies on teacher attrition are reported.

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The literature on teacher attrition generally falls into several categories: teacher characteristics, student/family characteristics, school characteristics, and district characteristics.

**Theories of Attrition**

Several theories of teacher attrition have been presented in the literature. Chapman's (1984) theory of teacher attrition is based on social learning theory and Holland's theory of career choice. He asserted that teacher retention is dependent on teachers' personal characteristics, educational preparation, commitment when they began teaching, first teaching experience, external/environmental influences, and professional and social integration into teaching which includes values, skills/abilities, and accomplishments. He stated that these factors influence satisfaction and directly impact a teacher's attrition/retention behavior.

Grissmer and Kirby (1987) suggested that teacher attrition is influenced by "life cycle events" and "career patterns". Life cycle events include marriage, migration, birth of children, entry of children into school, and retirement. Changing to more favorable teaching jobs or changing to a profession out of teaching are career patterns that influence teacher attrition. The human capital a person possesses also plays a role in teacher attrition according to Grissmer and Kirby (1987). The amount of knowledge and skills one has regarding the occupation of teaching, the district one works for and the specific school one works in also play a role in teacher attrition.
Several authors subscribe to the human capital theory of teacher attrition. Murnane and Olsen (1989), Grissmer and Kirby (1987), and Hafner and Owings (1991) purport that teacher attrition is influenced by teachers making conscious employment decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis. Researchers that support the human capital theory assert that teachers will weigh the difference between the benefits of remaining in teaching and the benefits of other occupations and then choose accordingly.

Chapman's social learning theory and Murnane's human capital theory are the two theoretical underpinnings of Hafner and Owings' (1991) theory of teacher attrition. These authors claim that teacher retention is influenced by career satisfaction and satisfaction with pay. They claim that teacher background characteristics, teacher early educational preparation, and social variables influence career satisfaction. External and environmental influences as well as the human capital one possesses determine one's satisfaction with pay.

A number of researchers (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane, J., Singer, J., & Willett, J., 1988; Murnane, J., Singer, J., Willett, J., Kemple, J., & Olsen, R., 1991) noted a U-shaped pattern of attrition which indicates that a large number of teachers leave teaching very early and similarly large numbers leave very late in their careers. The latter obviously corresponds to teacher retirement. The reasons for early attrition are not so apparent.
Methods Used in Attrition Research

Research on teacher attrition typically uses one of two methods. The first type is a cohort study in which a group of teachers is followed over an extended period of time. The National Longitudinal Studies of the High School Class of 1972 and the Chapman (1984) study of the University of Michigan teacher graduates are examples of cohort studies. The second type of study used in investigating teacher attrition involves tracking the percentages of teachers who remain employed in a given school, district, or state from one year to the next.

Methods of research used in studying teacher attrition have been improved with the development and use of the Proportional Hazards Model (Murnane et al., 1988; Murnane, Singer & Willett, 1989). Prior to the use of this model, the true length of teachers' careers was underestimated because the total years teaching for teachers who were still teaching at the culmination of a study were not known. One method to overcome this problem is to dichotomize the years of teaching. This method involves placing all teachers in a study into two groups according to years of experience. For example, if teachers were divided into two groups (those who taught five years or less and those who taught six years or more), teachers leaving after year one would be considered the same as a teacher who taught for five years. Dichotomizing years of teaching is not advantageous for predictive purposes and much specific information is lost with this method.
Survivor Analysis used in the Proportional Hazards Model as described by Murnane and his colleagues corrects for loss of information by dichotomizing years of teaching and thereby increases predictive ability (Murnane et al., 1988). Survivor Analysis contains two functions: the survivor function and the hazard function. The first provides information describing how likely it is that a teacher will remain in teaching beyond the first year, and each year after. From the survivor function one can determine the median lifetime, which is a statistic that describes the length of time that passes before 50% of the teaching force leaves teaching.

The hazard function describes the risk of leaving at any given time. It indicates how risky or hazardous each year of teaching is. By comparing hazards for teachers for different variables, such as age and gender, one can determine if risk of leaving is related to specific characteristics of teachers. The major advantage of the Proportional Hazard model is that it takes into account the teaching time of teachers who are still teaching at the end of a study. This method also can include more than one predictor at the same time, looks at the effects of predictors, and ascertains whether effects of predictors are static or dynamic across teachers' careers.

**Definitions of Attrition**

Varying definitions of attrition sometimes cloud findings more than they verify previous research. Different studies define a "stayer" or "leaver" in different ways. For example, former teachers could include those who have left teaching both temporarily and permanently, or the definition could be limited only to those who have left teaching
for other careers. Former teachers could be defined as those who left a particular school, district, or state. The definition could also refer only to teachers who left public systems or it could include teachers in private and parochial schools as well. Those who left voluntarily as well as those who were asked to resign could also be considered former teachers.

The way in which a researcher defines the reserve pool can make a difference in teacher supply and demand data. Most studies count only new graduates in the reserve pool, but Murnane (1987) indicated that the pool of available teachers might be considerably larger. According to him the number of teachers returning to teaching is growing, yet these re-entering teachers are not considered part of the available applicant pool. In most studies on teacher attrition, the assumption is made that a teacher leaving is doing so voluntarily. Singer and Willett (1988), in their study of St. Louis teachers between 1969 and 1981, found that a number of teachers leaving were not leaving by choice. For most years, the number of teachers leaving involuntarily is small, but in years of major staff reductions, involuntary layoffs may constitute a large portion of the teachers retreating.

**Variables Studies in Attrition Research**

Teacher attrition research involves the investigation of teacher, student, school and district variables, with the majority of research focusing on the characteristics of teachers. Gender, school level taught, age, race, NTE score, satisfaction, and subject level taught are the most frequently studied variables related directly to the teacher.
Other teacher variables include salary, intelligence, social class, commitment, availability of other jobs, presence of children in the home, experience, GPA, education, and first teaching experience. Researchers also examine student variables such as economic status, ability, and race to determine the relationship of these variables to teacher attrition. Family variables correlated with teacher attrition involve family or household income. School variables studied in relation to teacher attrition include school type, location, size, level, enrollment, and pupil/staff ratio. Salary is the most widely studied district level variable related to teacher attrition. Other district variables explored in research related to teacher attrition include expenditure per student and assessed valuation as well as the education level of the residents of the district.

**Teacher Characteristics**

Most of the research on teacher attrition and retention focuses on characteristics of the teacher. Gender, age, subject level taught, salary, intelligence, race, social class, commitment, satisfaction with teaching, satisfaction with one’s teacher preparation program, presence or absence of children in the home, and experience are the variables found in the literature that are explored to predict teacher retention and attrition. The match between a teacher's skills and the availability of other jobs requiring those skills is another area focused on when looking at the relationship between a teacher's characteristics and the probability of attrition.

The relationship between gender and attrition is not clear-cut. Studies are conflicting regarding which gender leaves teaching earlier. Most studies identified
women as having a higher rate of return than men (Heyns, 1988; Murnane et al., 1988; Murnane, R., Singer, J., & Willett, J. 1989; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Beaudin, 1993).

The authors of several studies asserted that gender's relationship to attrition is a function of age (Murnane, R. J. & Olsen, R. J., 1989; Theobald, 1990). Murnane and his colleagues found that in teachers age 30 or younger, women had shorter teaching periods than men, while in older teachers the attrition rate was similar for both genders (Murnane et al., 1988). Because young women frequently return to teaching and are often unemployed during their absence, some authors (Murnane et al., 1991) suggest that young women retreat due to childbearing. Theobald (1990) identified gender differences in older teachers. He reported that older male teachers are less likely to stay in teaching than older female teachers are. Heyns (1988), also found gender differences in attrition. Heyns' initial findings indicated that men left at a higher rate than women. However, when school level was controlled for, she found that women left at higher rates than men. The Kirby and Grissmer (1993) study provided evidence that women have a higher annual but lower permanent attrition rate than men do. The 1993 Beaudin study indicated that more women leave teaching than do men. The Frantz (1994) study, which focused on new teacher attrition, discovered that a greater percentage of new male teachers left teaching than new female teachers. In a 1996 study, Konanc found male teachers more likely to leave teaching than female teachers. Only as teachers neared retirement were women more likely to leave than males. Hafner and Owings (1991) did not find a significant correlation between gender and attrition.
It is well documented in the literature that high rates of attrition are found among teachers age 35 or younger (Dworkin, 1980; Theobald, 1990; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Frantz, 1994). More recent studies by Whitener (1997) and Shen (1997a & 1997b) indicated that this trend is still occurring.

In the late 1980s, much information was reported regarding the attrition rate of teachers as it varies with the different subjects taught. Specific types of science teachers, namely chemistry and physics teachers, remain in teaching less than teachers who teach other subject areas (Murnane et al., 1988, Murnane, R., Singer, J., & Willett, J., 1989, Murnane et al., 1991; Murnane & Olsen, 1989; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993). Two studies by Murnane and his colleagues attributed this high early attrition rate to the lucrative salary opportunities outside of teaching available to those trained in chemistry and physics. Although salary opportunities in business and industry for math teachers equal those for chemistry and physics teachers, the rate of attrition for math teachers is much lower than that of chemistry and physics teachers (Murnane et al., 1988, Murnane et al., 1989). One explanation for this oddity (Murnane et al., 1988 and Murnane et al., 1989) is that math teachers who remain in teaching do not have the qualifications such as computer or calculus training that is required in jobs that offer generous salaries. Murnane, Singer, Willett (1988) in their study of Michigan teachers found that English teachers have relatively short teaching spells similar to those of chemistry and physics teachers. They noted that biology teachers had the longest first teaching spells while
elementary, math and social studies teachers’ first teaching spells fell somewhere in the middle.

In a study of teachers from North Carolina, Mumane, Singer, and Willett (1989) found that English, chemistry, and physics teachers have the shortest first teaching spells. They found that biology teachers had the longest first teaching spells. Social studies, math, and elementary teachers’ first teaching spells fell in between.

Kirby and Grissmer (1993) reported that teachers of chemistry, physics, English, and biology had the highest attrition rates. Special education teachers had the next highest attrition rate followed by elementary teachers. Finally, math teachers were reported to have the lowest attrition rate.

More recent studies indicate that the areas in which there is a shortage of teachers remains the same as in the past. Croasmun, Hampton, and Herrmann (1998) found current teacher shortages highest in bilingual education, special education, physics, chemistry, math, and computer science. According to Urban Educator (1996), the findings identified in the Croasmun, Hampton, and Herrmann study are particularly true of urban schools. Darling-Hammond (1999) reported the areas of math, special education, and science teachers to be in short supply.

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (1990) described the teacher attrition rate in special education as critical. They found only teacher attrition in bilingual education to be greater. The United States Department of Education (1990) data indicated that the number of students requiring special education

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services was increasing while the number of new special education teachers was decreasing.

All studies that include salary as a variable indicate that salary does make a difference in teacher retention (Murnane & Olsen, 1989; Murnane et al., 1991; Murnane et al., 1989; Rickman & Parker, 1990; Theobald, 1990; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Frantz, 1994; Shen, 1997a; Shen, 1997b; & Stinebrickner, 1998). There is a positive correlation between salary and teacher retention. Although Murnane, Singer and Willett (1989) found this trend to exist at both elementary and secondary levels, the effects of salary on elementary teachers were less than on secondary teachers. The authors attributed this to the lower opportunity costs elementary teachers have compared to secondary teachers. It was noted that the effects of salary on attrition diminished over time and vanished after the eighth year of teaching (Murnane et al., 1989; Murnane et al., 1991).

The authors offered three possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, they assert that new occupations seem less attractive to teachers once they have mastered teaching and have developed relationships in the work setting. Second, they claim that occupational alternatives become more limited as one gets older. Third, the authors suggest that teachers who would have been sensitive to salary would likely have left during the early years of teaching. Rickman and Parker (1990) found that if a teacher's salary accounted for a large portion of the family's total income, the teacher was more
likely to leave teaching than if the salary would make up a small portion of the total family income.

In two separate studies, Shen (1997a & 1997b) found salary to be related to teacher retention. In one study, she found higher salary to be positively correlated with teacher retention. In the other study, she found that teachers who remained in their same school had higher salaries than teachers who changed schools or left the profession.

In a number of studies, some measure of intelligence (GPA, standardized test score, NTE score, or college ranking) of teachers was correlated with the teacher attrition rate. Chapman (1984) did not find GPA to be a significant variable for attrition. Others, (Murnane et al., 1989 and Murnane et al., 1991) found higher NTE scores to have a positive correlation with leaving behavior of teachers for both new and experienced teachers. It was suggested in Who Will Teach? Policies That Matter that a higher retention rate among blacks than whites may be due to low test scores which indicate lower opportunity costs and not simply a race factor. These authors also point out that private school teachers typically have higher test scores and have greater attrition than public school teachers do. In a more recent study Konanc (1996) looked at two measures indicating the academic level of the teacher. Konanc found NTE examination scores of those leaving to be higher than those who stay. Likewise he found teachers who ranked in the top quartile of colleges were more likely to leave than those ranked in the bottom quartile. Chapman (1984) found that a teacher's first experience teaching was more strongly related to attrition than academic performance.
The 1988 Heyns study compared standardized test scores of current teachers who took no breaks from teaching, former teachers, teachers who exited and re-entered the teaching force and teachers who were trained but never taught. Heyns found that the teachers who were trained but never taught scored higher on standardized tests than teachers who taught. The former teacher group scored a little better than those still teaching on standardized tests. Teachers who took breaks from teaching scored higher than those who never left. High school grades were better for current teachers than for former teachers.

The amount of graduate work done was also correlated with teachers' attrition rates. Heyns (1988) found that current teachers were more likely to have enrolled in graduate course work and obtained advanced degrees than former teachers were. Marso and Pigge (1995) also found that teachers who continue their education teach longer than those who do not. Theobald (1990) found that male teachers holding master's degrees are twice as likely as male teachers who do not have graduate degrees to leave their current positions. The author explained that in many cases men gained higher degrees to qualify for higher paying positions. Females acquiring an advanced degree usually indicate greater commitment to the teaching field rather than credentials to be used to leave the classroom.

Most studies reported that race was not found to be an important factor in a teacher's attrition from teaching. Hafner and Owings (1991) and Murnane and Olsen (1989) found race not to be a significant factor in their teacher attrition research.
Dworkin (1980), too, found race not to be significant if class was considered. One study indicates that black teachers were less likely to leave teaching than whites after controlling for district differences (Murnane et al., 1991). It was also suggested that a higher retention rate among black teachers as compared to white teachers may be due to lower opportunity costs because of lower NTE scores (Murnane et al., 1991).

Two studies explored the relationship between social class and teacher retention. Dworkin (1980) found that teachers from high or medium socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to quit than teachers of low socioeconomic or farm backgrounds. Heyns (1988) found that more teachers tended to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds than the non-teachers do. She also identified former teachers as having a slightly higher socioeconomic background than current teachers have.

A relationship between teacher commitment and teacher retention was found in the literature. Chapman (1984) found initial commitment to teaching to be the greatest individual predictor of retention in teaching. Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) pointed out that teachers in different career stages have different needs to remain committed to their work. These authors claimed teachers who are discontented with their work may choose to leave a particular school or even leave the profession altogether. Yee (1990) claimed that some teachers enter teaching uncommitted and plan to stay only a short time in teaching.

One intrinsic value addressed in the literature related to teacher attrition is satisfaction. A number of studies indicated that there is a relationship exists between
teacher satisfaction and teacher retention. In a 1991 study, Hafner and Owings found that satisfaction with job and satisfaction with pay were significant predictors of retention in teaching. In this study, teachers who taught and then moved into other jobs indicated greater satisfaction with pay than all current teachers (those who started early or late). Teacher groups who were no longer teaching indicated that they were less satisfied with their last job than were current teachers. Teachers still teaching indicated that they had low satisfaction with pay but high satisfaction with their last job.

Heyns (1988) found that current teachers more often reported that they were satisfied all or most of the time with their jobs than former teachers. She also found that almost 50% of the former teachers expressed the desire to return to teaching. Chapman (1984) found teachers to be less satisfied with their jobs and less satisfied with life than people in other professions. In addition, he noted that teachers who left teaching were less satisfied with their current jobs than teachers who were trained but never taught.

Whiteford (1990) identified career satisfaction as the main influence on a teacher's decision to stay in or leave teaching. Sweeney (1991) found teacher satisfaction with teaching, especially student teaching, to be a strong predictor of teacher retention in the first year of teaching. In a study of urban schoolteachers, Hall, Pearson, and Carroll (1993) found teachers who planned to quit had low satisfaction with their current job and salary.

Two studies involving special education teachers also indicated that teacher satisfaction is related to a teacher's decision to remain in or leave teaching (Gernsten,
1995; Singh & Billingsley, (1996). Gernsten (1995) found that principal support impacted a teacher's satisfaction and indirectly a teacher's decision to remain in or to leave a teaching assignment. Singh and Billingsley (1996) found job satisfaction to have the strongest relationship with intent to stay of all workplace conditions. This study also indicated that principal support influences job satisfaction. One other study addressed the intrinsic values of teaching. Shen (1997b) found teachers appreciation of the intrinsic rewards of teaching to influence teacher retention.

Teacher education programs were variables in two studies related to beginning teaching. Page, Page, and Milton (1983) found that beginning teachers who are satisfied with their education preparation programs are more likely to stay in teaching. One study compared teachers who went through a field-based teacher preparation program with those who experienced a traditional teacher preparation program. Kelly (1997) found that traditionally trained teachers recommended more training in classroom management.

Two studies looked at the relationship between a teacher's marital status and teacher retention. According to Marso and Pigge (1995) ninety percent of unmarried teacher are still working while nearly half of that amount of married teachers are still working. This report found the occupation of one's spouse not to be significant to leaving behavior of teachers. Stinebrickner (1998) also found marriage to be related to teacher attrition.
Two studies provided conflicting results regarding the presence of children in
the teacher's home and the likelihood of teacher attrition. Hafner and Owings (1991)
found that teachers who have no or few children tend to remain in teaching. Heyns
(1988) found that teachers with no children are more likely to leave teaching.
Stinebrickner (1998) found fertility to be directly related to teacher attrition. In a 1997
study, Whitener identified pregnancy and child rearing as two of the main reasons
teachers left teaching.

Research indicates that experience is positively correlated with teacher retention
(Hafner and Owings, 1991, Murnane et al., 1991, Huling-Austin, 1986, and Shen,
1997a). In the Murnane study, it was found that the risk of a teacher leaving teaching
decreased over time (Murnane et al., 1991). These authors also pointed out that
experienced teachers returning are more likely to be retained than new, inexperienced
teachers. A 1997 study by Shen, using the Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher
Follow up Survey data, found teachers with less experience more likely to leave
teaching or to move to a different school (Shen, 1997a). Some researchers found this
pattern to be more pronounced for women than for men (Murnane et al., 1988; Murnane

One study investigated teachers' perceptions of how simple it would be to get a
job outside of teaching. Chapman (1984) found that teachers more than non-teachers
believe that it would be more difficult to find jobs outside of their current field that
would award them similar pecuniary rewards and benefits.
Several studies suggested that teacher induction is related to teacher attrition. Shulman and Colbert (1989) connected poorly developed teacher induction with early teacher attrition. They cited the practice of beginning teachers being saddled with the same responsibilities as veteran teachers as being problematic for new inexperienced teachers. Others identified mentoring as an important factor in teacher retention. Darling-Hammond (1999) and Stine (1998) both suggested that attempts to increase teacher retention rates should include some form of mentoring and support for beginning teachers. Darling-Hammond (1999) went on to cite districts that have drastically reduced their teacher attrition rates by addressing this issue.

**Student/Family Characteristics**

Research investigating teacher attrition and retention also looked at variables related to students and their families. Research on students included student SES, student ability, and the percentage of minority students in a school. Family variables studied in relation to teacher attrition include family and household income.

The relationship between socioeconomic background and teacher attrition was investigated in one study. Heyns (1988) noted that teachers who had left teaching reported that their former students were from upper or upper middle class SES backgrounds, more often than current teachers.

Two studies investigated the relationship between student ability and teacher attrition. Former teachers in the Heyns (1988) study declared that their students were of
high or average ability more often than current teachers did. In a later study, Frantz (1994) found greater new teacher attrition in districts with lower test scores.

In looking at the relationship between student race and teacher attrition, studies provided conflicting results. Frantz (1994) did not find the percentage of minority students (black and Hispanic) to be a significant factor in new teacher attrition. Heyns (1988) indicated that teacher shortages tended to occur in schools with large minority enrollments. Likewise Shen (1997a) found teachers that changed schools or left teaching were in schools with more minority students.

Family variables of students that were linked to teacher attrition included family and household income. Murnane and Olsen (1989) found that the family median income was not a significant predictor of teacher attrition. Frantz (1994), on the other hand, found household income to be a significant predictor of new teacher attrition. Research is not conclusive on how much impact student and family variables have on teacher attrition.

**School Characteristics**

A number of different studies have explored teacher attrition by looking at the school characteristics. School type, school location, school size, school level, and school student enrollment are among the variables used by researchers to investigate school characteristics related to teacher attrition.

Heyns (1988) and Frantz (1994) explored school type (private or public) to detect variation in teacher attrition. Heyns (1988) found private schools to have a
higher rate of attrition than public schools. Frantz (1994) identified districts in which a
high percentage of students attend private schools as having a higher attrition rate than
those in which the number of students attending private schools is lower.

Heyns (1988) and Frantz (1994) also explored the attrition rates of teachers in
schools in diverse locations (rural, suburban, and urban). Both of these researchers
found that suburban schools have the greatest attrition. Heyns (1988) found attrition in
rural schools to be the lowest while Frantz (1994) found urban schools to have the
lowest rate of attrition. Haberman (1987) found the careers of urban teachers to be only
3-5 years. Haberman went on to claim that the absence of a focus on urban school
issues in teacher education programs has contributed to the high rate of urban teacher
attrition. In a separate but somewhat related study teacher migration from one district to
another was found not to be a function of community type (Boe, Cook, Bobbitt, Weber,
1996).

In investigating school size and its relationship to teacher attrition, Heyns (1988)
reported that small and medium sized schools have a higher rate of teacher attrition than
do large schools. Theobald (1990) found that a high pupil-staff ratio corresponds to
high teacher attrition.

Several studies reported that there were variances in the attrition rates of
teachers at different school levels. A number of research studies indicated that the rate
of attrition was higher for secondary teachers as compared to elementary teachers
(Heyns, 1988; Murnane & Olsen, 1989; Murnane et al., 1989; Murnane et al., 1991).
Murnane, Singer and Willett attributed this pattern to the lower opportunity costs for elementary teachers (Murnane et al., 1989). Elementary teachers are considered "generalists" rather than "specialists" and hence do not qualify for the higher paying positions in the labor market outside of teaching that require specialization in some areas (Murnane et al., 1989, p. 339). One example of this phenomenon is the markedly higher salaries that physics and chemistry teachers can obtain outside of teaching.

**District Characteristics**

Researchers in attrition investigations also probed the relationship between teacher attrition and the wealth and education of community members. Murnane and Olsen (1989) found that the percentage of poor children in the school district is not a significant factor in attrition. Theobald (1990) found that teachers who teach in wealthy districts were more likely to leave than teachers who teach in poorer districts. Frantz (1994) found that low paying districts did not have significantly higher rates of new teacher attrition than high paying districts.

The education level of the community members and its relationship to teacher attrition was explored in two studies. Both Murnane and Olsen (1989) and Frantz (1994) found the median education level of residents not to be a significant factor in teacher attrition. Frantz (1994) did however find the percentage of residents completing high school to be a significant factor related to new teacher attrition.
Summary of Teacher Attrition Research

Existing research is fairly conclusive about determinants of who is likely to leave teaching and when. "Leavers" tend to be teachers who were young when they entered teaching and who had low levels of initial commitment to teaching. Those who are likely to leave would probably have few years of teaching experience and a relatively small amount of human capital. These teachers would likely not come from low SES backgrounds and would perceive their job opportunities outside of teaching as favorable. A "leaver" would most likely have taught in a private secondary suburban school. This group of teachers would be more likely to leave teaching for higher salaries rather than move to a higher paying teaching job in another district. "Leavers" would also likely have taught in schools in which discipline problems were prevalent.

"Stayers" on the other hand tend to be older when they started teaching and have a high level of initial commitment. These teachers also have accrued a substantial amount of human capital throughout their years of teaching. The number of years taught are much higher for continuing teachers compared to former teachers. Teachers who stay in teaching are likely from lower SES backgrounds than the "leavers". For this group of teachers job opportunities outside of teaching seem limited.

Efficacy

The following section includes a review of the literature on teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy. Several theories of self-efficacy are identified and described. I also report on the various findings related to teacher self-efficacy. Much of the research on
teacher efficacy focuses on teacher related characteristics such as teacher behavior, teacher discipline, supervisor ratings of teacher performance, and teacher demographics. Research on teacher efficacy as it relates to student learning and as it relates to curriculum change is also reported in this review. Finally, changes in teacher efficacy and organizational efficacy are discussed.

**Theories of Efficacy**

Several theories of efficacy are found in the literature. Fuller and his colleagues describe Lewin's original efficacy theory developed in 1938 as having a cognitive framework (Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1982). This theory posits that activities that are habitual are not valued as much as work that is not routine. Workers provided with non-routinized tasks are believed to be more motivated and efficacious (Fuller et al., 1982).

Fuller and his colleagues also studied Vroom's 1964 theory of efficacy (Fuller et al., 1982). According to these authors, Vroom proposes that people will have high levels of efficacy and motivation in an activity in which the outcomes are valued and there is great expectation that one will be successful in achieving the outcomes. Although this theory, like Lewin's, is cognitively based, the two theories purport different perspectives regarding efficacy. Vroom suggests that individuals prefer activities to be predictable and routine.

Bandura's theory of self-efficacy incorporates an individual's awareness of the relationship between actions and outcomes as well as one's beliefs in one's abilities to
produce outcomes (Bandura, 1977, 1981, & 1993). Bandura contends that efficacy develops from four sources: one's own past performances, seeing or visualizing others' performances, comments from others on one's performance, and physical behaviors such as sweating or trembling. Bandura identifies four processes through which efficacy produces effects. The processes allow one to visualize one's own ability, compare one's ability to others', view feedback, and realize one's perception of environmental constraints.

Bandura claims that motivational processes are cognitively based and can be viewed through one of three motivation theories: attribution, expectancy-value, and goal (Bandura 1977, 1981, and 1993). Attribution theory suggests that people with high efficacy will blame failure on lack of effort whereas people with low efficacy will blame failure on low ability. Expectancy-value theory purports that motivation is a result of the value placed on certain outcomes and the likelihood that a given behavior will produce a given outcome. Goal theory suggests that individuals strive for contentment from attaining goals they value and that they will increase effort if they are not satisfied by current performance. Bandura claims self-efficacy augments or plays a role in goal determination, effort exerted, and persistence when problems arise. He suggests that highly efficacious people will persist when obstacles emanate, while people with low efficacy will give up when difficulties arise. Affective processes, according to Bandura, are influenced by one's efficacy. He asserts that one's efficacy plays a role in the stress or depression felt in difficult situations.
Gibson and Dembo (1984) applied Bandura's model of self-efficacy to teachers. They identified two factors of self-efficacy, teaching efficacy and personal teaching efficacy. Gibson and Dembo refer to teaching efficacy as an individual's belief about the inability of teachers in general to produce an outcome given the outside influences on the learner. Personal teaching efficacy involves a teacher's belief about an action outcome relationship and his or her ability to achieve the outcome. The authors assert that individuals will not persist if they do not believe that they can achieve the goal, even though they may believe other teachers could achieve that goal. On the other hand, individuals with high personal teaching efficacy may persist in striving for a goal even when generally it is not believed that teachers can achieve a given goal.

Ashton and her colleagues (1983) also patterned their model of self-efficacy after Bandura (1977). The efficacy construct created by these authors includes four dimensions: (1) a teacher's beliefs about cause and effect relationships, (2) a teacher's beliefs about his or her ability to cause a particular effect, (3) a teacher's beliefs about how much teacher influence motivates students, and (4) a teacher's beliefs about his or her ability to motivate students.

Smylie (1990) asserted that self-efficacy influences people's choices, their level of effort and persistence, and their perception and relationship to others and the environment. He also suggested that self-efficacy is influenced by the type of goal or task, context in which the goal takes place, incentives or disincentives for achieving the goal or task, the value individuals place on the goal, and availability of resources to
assist in reaching the goal or the constraints that hinder one's ability to achieve the goal. In describing what self-efficacy is not, Smylie helps to paint a clearer picture of what self-efficacy is. Smylie insists that self-efficacy is not equivalent to outcome expectancy, locus of control, self-worth or self-esteem. Outcome expectancy refers to one's belief that an action influences an outcome, yet does not describe an individual's ability to influence an outcome with a particular action. Locus of control refers to the source of causation, internal or external. Smylie asserted that although this notion is related to self-efficacy, it is not the same as efficacy. Self-esteem and self-worth result from comparing one's self to society's norms and values, but does not necessarily describe one's self-efficacy. Smylie explained that an individual could have high self-efficacy regarding a particular activity that is not regarded by society as valuable and hence have low self-worth. Smylie claimed that one's efficacy is not altered by a single event, but instead it is molded as new information comes in. He suggested that the way new information is perceived and adapted depends on existing self-efficacy, how information is interpreted as well as the nature of the task at hand.

Variables Studied in Self-efficacy Research

Teacher Characteristics

Teacher behavior, teacher discipline, supervisor's ratings of teachers, and teacher demographics are teacher variables investigated regarding teacher self-efficacy. Several teacher behaviors have been investigated in conjunction with teacher efficacy. One study tied self-efficacy to choosing teaching as a career again (Trentham, L. S.,
Silvern, S., & Brogdon, R., 1985). This study indicated that teachers who would choose teaching again as a career have high self-efficacy ratings.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) found differences in teacher behaviors according to their efficacy ratings (high and low). They found that teachers with low self-efficacy spend much more time on small group instruction than do teachers with high self-efficacy. Teachers with high efficacy were found to monitor feedback and check seatwork more often than teachers with low efficacy. Teachers with low self-efficacy spent a portion of class time on games geared to academics, while teachers with high self-efficacy spent no class time on games. No instances were documented of teachers with high self-efficacy criticizing students for incorrect answers, while four percent of interactions between teachers with low self-efficacy and their students involved criticism of students who provided incorrect answers. These authors also noted that the lack of persistence is significantly different for low and high self-efficacy teachers. Teachers with high self-efficacy were found to be better at helping students come to correct answers by questioning them than were teachers with low self-efficacy.

Ashton and her colleagues also found differences in the behavior of teachers with high and low self-efficacy (Ashton, P. T. and others, 1983). These researchers identified teachers with high self-efficacy as people who set high academic standards, focus on instruction, check for student on-task behavior, and have favorable relationships with weak students more than teachers who are classified as having low self-efficacy. Ashton also stated that teachers identified as low efficacy teachers tend to
interact with high ability students more than those teachers identified as having high self-efficacy.

Most studies characterized teacher efficacy as a general perception of whether or not the teacher is capable of making an impact in students' education. Two studies (Emmer and Hickman, 1991; Woolfolk and Hoy, 1990) investigated teacher self-efficacy specifically regarding discipline, management, and control. Emmer and Hickman (1991) did not find a significant relationship between teachers' self-reported efficacy regarding discipline and their supervisors' ratings. Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) looked at the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student control. These authors found that teachers who have high personal self-efficacy (a belief that they can make a difference in students' learning) and high teaching self-efficacy (a belief that teachers in general can make a difference) tend to provide a learning environment that is interactive in which students are partially responsible for their own discipline rather than traditional discipline through control. A negative relationship between teacher self-efficacy and harsh discipline methods was found in the Ashton studies (Ashton, P. T., 1982 and Ashton et al., 1983).

Several researchers looked at the relationship between teacher self-reported efficacy ratings and teacher ratings by supervisors or superiors regarding teacher efficacy (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Bettenhausen & Rogers, 1992; Trentham et al., 1985). While the Emmer and Hickman study and the Bettenhausen and Rogers study did not find a significant relationship between teacher reported efficacy ratings and their
ratings by their supervisors, Trentham, Silvern, and Brogdon did. In the Trentham, Silvern, and Brogdon study, the authors found that teachers with high self-efficacy scores also were given high efficacy scores by their superintendents (Trentham et al., 1985).

Two studies looked at the relationship between teacher demographic factors and self-efficacy. Bettenhausen and Rogers (1992) found no significant relationships between gender, grade levels taught, or type of internship training and efficacy. Trentham Silvern, and Brogdon found that the number of siblings a teacher has is negatively related to the teacher's self-efficacy score (Trentham et al., 1985).

**Student Learning**

Much of the school effectiveness literature links teacher behavior to student outcomes (Brophy and Evertson, 1977). Ashton and her colleagues (Ashton et al., 1982, 1983) investigated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and student learning. In the Ashton studies significant relationships were found between teacher self-efficacy and student achievement (Ashton et al., 1982, 1983). The students of teachers with high self-efficacy ratings scored higher than the students of teachers with self-efficacy ratings that were low.

**Curriculum Change**

The relationship between curriculum change and teacher efficacy was also explored. The Rand Change findings, as reported by McLaughlin and Marsh (1978, indicate that teacher efficacy was the most powerful teacher attribute in the Rand
analysis. In this study, teacher efficacy was found to have a positive relationship with all of the following: the proportion of goals achieved, the amount of teacher change, the total improved student performance, and maintenance of both project methods and materials.

Poole and Okeafor (1989) found that teacher self-efficacy has a negative relationship to curricular change. These authors found that teachers who had high self-efficacy meeting students' educational needs were less likely to implement the curriculum change, where as teachers who are less successful at meeting students' needs seem more willing to embrace a change to improve the situation.

Organizational Efficacy

While most researchers investigate self-efficacy of individuals, a few look at organizational efficacy (Fuller et al., 1982; Loupe, 1994; Ashton et al., 1983). Ashton (1983) found that the organizational factors that contribute to high teacher self-efficacy are team teaching, students not segregated by age, and collegial decision making. Loupe (1994) investigated personal, teaching, and collective efficacy. She found that all three types of efficacy were positively related to school organization effectiveness, although the latter was to a lesser extent. She also noted that the teachers with the highest self-efficacy were in schools with the greatest number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. Chase (1991) in a study of teachers' attitudes toward their work places found that teachers' perceptions of administrative care and concern, staff collegiality, and student capability and attitude were the strongest predictors of self-efficacy.
Changes in Efficacy

Two researchers investigated the changes in teacher self-efficacy. In a qualitative study, Chester (1992) found that teacher efficacy did change during the first year of teaching. In some teachers, efficacy declined while in others it increased. He asserts that collaboration, resources, and feedback from administration influence changes in teacher self-efficacy. In Walker’s (1993) study of specific teaching abilities, she noted that there are differences in teachers’ beliefs about their self-efficacy regarding particular areas of teaching from student teaching to the first year in the classroom. Walker (1993) found that teachers reported that they perceived themselves as more efficacious in grouping students during their first year of teaching than they were during their student teaching experience. On the other hand, teachers rated themselves better in the areas of classroom management and planning for exceptional learners during the student teaching year.

Summary of Teacher Efficacy Research

Differences in the behaviors of teachers with varying levels of self-efficacy are reported in the literature. Teachers with high self-efficacy differ from those with low self-efficacy in the way feedback is given, in how students are monitored, in interactions with students, in the amount of small group instruction, in questioning techniques, in academic standards, in instructional focus, and in relationships with weak students. Student achievement also varies under teachers with different self-efficacy levels. The
way in which teachers discipline is another example of the differences in high and low self-efficacy teachers reported in the literature.

Team teaching, collegial decision making, students not segregated by age, administrative care and concern, staff collegiality, student capability, and student attitude are identified by researchers as contributing to and predicting high teacher self-efficacy. High teacher self-efficacy is associated with choosing teaching again as a career. The literature on teacher self-efficacy indicates that teachers' perception of their self-efficacy changes over time.

Although there is much literature on teacher attrition and teacher efficacy, past investigations have not explored the relationship between these two variables. To fill this gap in research, this study will examine the link between teacher efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching.

**Conceptual Framework**

Literature on teacher attrition and retention is fairly conclusive about which teachers leave the profession early, but explanations as to why some teachers stay while others leave is explored less. Chapman's theory of teacher retention purports that teacher satisfaction is directly related to a teacher's decision to remain in or leave teaching (Chapman, 1984). Satisfaction, according to Chapman, is dependent upon a number of factors: a teacher's personal characteristics, educational preparation, initial commitment to teaching, first teaching experience, social integration, professional
integration, values, skills/abilities, accomplishments, employment climate, and alternative employment opportunities.

Although some researchers do indicate that salary (an extrinsic reward) is significantly correlated with teacher attrition (Murnane & Olsen, 1989; Murnane, R., Singer, J., & Willett, J., 1989; Murnane et al., 1991; Rickman & Parker, 1990; Theobald, 1990; Kirby & Grissmer, 1993; Frantz, 1994), others contend that intrinsic rewards are essential for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968; Lortie, 1975; Johnson, 1986) and hence retention.

According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, certain factors contribute more to satisfaction while others contribute more to dissatisfaction. The actual work one does, achievement, responsibility, and advancement are the factors that promote satisfaction. Lortie (1975) found intrinsic incentives to be the major source of teachers' satisfaction, stating that reaching a student and knowing that he or she has learned is the reward that brings satisfaction.

If teacher satisfaction is linked to teacher intention to leave teaching, then the factors that contribute to satisfaction must be considered for this study. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) provides a measure of someone achieving intrinsic rewards. Bandura stated that a person's efficacy is dependent on his or her belief in the action-outcome relationship and the belief in one's own ability to produce the sought outcome through actions. The claim is made that self-efficacy plays a role in goal determination, effort, and persistence when problems arise. He asserts that people
with high self-efficacy will persist when problems are encountered while people who rate themselves low on self-efficacy will give up.

Gibson and Dembo (1984) applied this theory of self-efficacy to teaching. Their theory of personal teacher self-efficacy is composed of a combination of teaching efficacy (an individual's belief about the ability of teachers in general to produce outcomes) and personal self-efficacy (an individual's belief about his or her own ability to produce outcomes). For a teacher to have high personal teaching self-efficacy the teacher must subscribe to the idea that teachers in general can make a difference in student learning and believe in his or her own ability to impact student learning. A teacher who believes that teachers can affect student learning but who does not believe he or she has the ability to do so will have low personal teaching self-efficacy. A teacher could also have low personal teaching self-efficacy if he or she possesses skills and abilities typically associated with good teachers, but does not believe that this expertise truly has an impact on students' education. Gibson and Dembo asserted that an individual will not persist if he or she does not believe that he or she is capable of achieving the goal, even though the goal may be reachable by other teachers. On the other hand, an individual with high personal teaching self-efficacy may persist in striving for a goal even when teachers generally do not achieve the goal in question.

With this study I suggested that beginning teachers who have a high sense of personal teaching efficacy would persist in achieving goals, which will provide them with intrinsic rewards necessary for satisfaction. These teachers, I predict, will remain
in teaching beyond the initial years. On the other hand, I predict that teachers who have a low sense of personal teaching efficacy will perceive themselves as either not having the ability to meet the students' needs or that their expertise has no affect on student learning. Teachers with low sense of efficacy will not persevere when confronted with difficulties when helping students achieve goals. These teachers will lack intrinsic rewards that are usually gained from helping students learn. Without the presence of intrinsic rewards these teachers will perceive their work as having low satisfaction. I predict those teachers with low personal teaching self-efficacy will retreat from teaching because of low satisfaction with their work due to the lack of intrinsic rewards. Figure 2.1 highlights the relationship between the variables for this conceptual model.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model
In this study, an actual attrition rate was not calculated. Instead, the relationship between personal teaching self-efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching was investigated.
CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This section describes the research design and methods of this study. The research design section includes the layout of both the quantitative and the qualitative portions of this research. The second section explains the quantitative and qualitative methods that were employed, and discusses the sampling techniques, instrumentation, and data collection and data analysis. The relationship between many teacher characteristics has been studied in conjunction with teacher attrition/retention research, but never has the relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher attrition been explored. While much is known about the type of teacher who is likely to leave and when the departure will probably occur, less is known about how to keep satisfactory teachers from leaving. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching. Although I did not measure teacher attrition directly, the findings of this research should inform existing research on teacher attrition.

Study Design

For this investigation I employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the intention of Louisiana school teachers to leave teaching early in their careers. Quantitative research, according to Patton (1990), allows a researcher to use a larger sample than does qualitative research. This larger sample allows the findings to have broader generalizability. In contrast, qualitative research allows the investigator
the opportunity to gather much more detailed data and to gain a deeper understanding than does quantitative research. I had hypothesized that such teachers' intention to leave teaching might be significantly related to their sense of self-efficacy and that this phenomenon would be demonstrated through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. At the conclusion of the study, however, it was evident that the quantitative analysis and the qualitative analysis did not support each other, but stood alone as independent studies. Nevertheless, both the quantitative and qualitative analyses provided interesting and useful information about Louisiana elementary teachers' intention to leave teaching early in their careers. Both have provocative implications, as will be explained in the concluding chapter.

The purpose of the quantitative portion of the study was to find if there is a relationship between teachers' intention to leave teaching and their sense of efficacy in the classroom. Teacher efficacy is a control variable while teacher intention to leave is the dependent variable. Teacher age is a control variable measured at the teacher level. School discipline climate, student SES, and community type are school level control variables also addressed in this investigation.

**Quantitative Research Design**

Both descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted for the quantitative portion of the study. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were computed to provide a description of the variables in the study while inferential
statistics were run to quantify the relationships that exist between the variables. Both bivariate and multivariate relationships were explored to address the research questions.

**Research Questions**

1. Is there a significant relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching?

2. Is there a significant relationship between teacher age and teacher intention to leave teaching?

3. Is there a significant relationship between community type and teacher intention to leave teaching?

4. Is there a significant relationship between student SES and teacher intention to leave teaching?

5. Is there a significant relationship between student discipline and teacher intention to leave teaching?

6. Does teacher self-efficacy provide additional influence on intention to leave teaching beyond what is currently known about the influence of teacher age, community type, student discipline, and student SES on teachers leaving?

The *Teacher Efficacy Scale* instrument (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) was used to obtain data on teacher efficacy (See Appendix A). Information regarding the teacher’s age, gender, race, educational preparation, grade level taught, and classroom type was collected using a general information survey. Data on school size were gathered from the general information survey as well. Information about each school district’s
community type and the socioeconomic background of the students in the schools studied was obtained from the Louisiana State Department of Education for the 1998-99 school year. The discipline portion of the School Effectiveness and Assistance Program Teacher Questionnaire (Teddlie, 1999) was used to determine the data for the discipline variable (See Appendix B). The Teacher Intention to Leave Questionnaire was included with the mail outs to obtain information regarding the teacher’s intention to leave teaching.

**Qualitative Research Design**

The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to address the limitations of the quantitative portion of the study. The quantitative analysis addressed the existence of the relationship between variables, but provided no explanations as to why the relationship occurs. Data for the qualitative portion of the study was collected via interviews. The teachers served as the unit of analysis for the qualitative portion of this study. They were asked open-ended questions regarding their perception of the relationship between a teacher’s intention to leave and the socioeconomic background and discipline of their students, their salaries, and their perceptions of their efficacy as teachers. Additionally, information was gathered about each teacher’s career history including their perception of their preparedness for their initial teaching experience. The focus of the interviews conducted in this study was to explore factors that impact a teacher’s intent to leave.
The interview data were transcribed and then analyzed using the Constant Comparative Technique described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This method was developed by Glasser and Straus (1967) and refined by Spradley (1979). This process allows the researcher to identify and categorize units of meaning in data and then look at the relationships between the categories.

**Quantitative Methods**

**Variables**

**Teacher Self-efficacy**

To measure efficacy in this study, a modified version of the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) was used (See Appendix A). Sixteen items from the original 30 item instrument were chosen based on the magnitude of the item factor loadings reported in Gibson and Dembo's original paper (1984). The responses are on a Likert scale of 1 'strongly disagree' to 6 'strongly agree.' The items form two factors: Personal Teaching Efficacy and Teaching Efficacy. Personal Teaching Efficacy refers to a teacher's beliefs about his or her individual ability to make a difference in the education of a student. Teaching Efficacy refers to a teacher's beliefs about the abilities of teachers in general to produce an outcome in the education of a student. Items in the Personal Teaching Efficacy factor represent the idea that teachers are capable of making a difference in the education of a student while items in the Teaching Efficacy factor portray the notion that outside forces prevent teachers from making an impact in the education of a student.
The reliability of the Teacher Efficacy Scale as measured by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha is .78 for the Personal Teaching Efficacy Factor and .75 for the Teaching Efficacy Factor. The reliability for all 16 items used in this study is .79 (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Both convergent and discriminant validity of the scale were established by Gibson and Dembo using a multitrait-multimethod analysis (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

**Teacher Age**

Information regarding teacher age was collected from the demographic section of the survey used in this study (See Appendix D). The age of the respondent is self-reported data. The responses were coded 1) ‘20-24,’ 2) ‘25-29,’ 3) ‘30-34,’ 4) ‘35-39,’ 5) ‘40-44,’ 6) 45-50,’ and 7) ‘over 50.’

**Community Type**

The information for this variable was obtained from the Louisiana State Department of Education for the 1998-1999 school year. It identifies each school in the state with respect to the type of community in which it is located. The census designations: Large City, Urban Fringe of a Large City, Mid-sized City, Urban Fringe of a Mid-sized City, Large Town, Small Town and Rural are used to establish community types (see Appendix E). For this study, they are coded to represent the degree of urbanicity of a school.
Socioeconomic Background

This variable is a measure of the socioeconomic status of the student population served at a school. For this study, SES represents the percentage of the enrolled students who are eligible for free or reduced-priced school meals. The data for this variable was obtained from the Louisiana State Department of Education for the 1998-1999 school year.

Student Discipline

This variable is a measure of a teacher's perception of school discipline climate. It is based on six items from the discipline portion of the School Effectiveness and Assistance Program Teacher Questionnaire (Teddlie, 1999) (See Appendix B). The responses to each item range from 1) 'strongly agree', to 5) 'strongly disagree.' The responses from each respondent on the six items are summed to produce a value representing discipline climate. Low scores indicate a positive discipline climate while high scores represent a less positive discipline climate. These survey items require teachers to respond to questions regarding the safety of the school environment, the level at which discipline problems are handled in the school, the consistency with which discipline problems are handled, and administrative support for teachers when dealing with discipline problems.

The reliability for the School Effectiveness and Assistance Program Teacher Questionnaire was established using Chronbach’s alpha analysis. The developer reported the discipline subset of the instrument to have an alpha coefficient of .84.
Chronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of these instruments for this study. Chronbach's alpha was also used to determine the reliability of the items from the instrument used in this study. An alpha coefficient of .83 was determined for the discipline-related items in this study.

**Intention to Leave Teaching**

The variable, Intention to Leave Teaching, is the primary dependent variable in the study and is based on the following items from the survey: “I intend to be teaching five years from now” and “I intend to leave teaching for an alternative career after this school year,” (See Appendix F). The possible responses ranged from 1 ‘probable’ to 7 ‘improbable.’

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ryan (1970) suggested the best way to predict an individual’s behavior was to measure his intention to perform the behavior in question. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggested that single acts were fairly easy to predict if the behavior in question was under the person’s volitional control, if the intention to perform the behavior was stable over time, and if the behavior was defined specifically. The Teacher Intention to Leave survey meet this criteria for predicting single acts identified by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). A teacher’s intention to leave is a single act, which is under the control of the teacher. Because the survey specified the time frame (i.e. “five years from now” and the locale (intention to leave profession), I believe the instrument met the criteria set by Fishbein and Ajzen to accurately predict a teacher’s intention to leave.
Sample

A list of public elementary school teachers with two or less prior years experience teaching as of the 1996-97 school year was obtained from the Louisiana State Department of Education. The 1318 teachers identified as teaching in grades kindergarten through fifth served as the target population for this study. By narrowing my population to one school level, elementary grades K-5, the possibility diminishes that findings could be attributed to the differences in grade level taught. From the population of elementary teachers in grades K-5 a stratified random sample of 300 teachers was selected for this study. The sample was stratified by years of experience to note if intent to leave decreased with years of experience as described by the research (Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Murnane et al., 1988; Murnane et al., 1991).

Data Collection

Permission from the parish superintendents to survey teachers in each parish was requested by using letters with return addressed stamped post cards. Both phone contact and a second letter requesting permission to survey teachers were used to obtain permission from superintendents who initially failed to respond.

From the initial list of 300 teachers in the sample, several teachers were represented twice, i.e., duplicates. Also, several superintendents failed to give permission for the teachers in their parish to participate in the study. These subjects were removed from the sample and reduced the sample from 300 to 221. The breakdown of teachers by strata is noted in table 3.1.
Table 3.1. Teachers in the Sample by Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Teachers Surveyed</th>
<th>Teachers with 3 Years of Experience</th>
<th>Teachers with 4 Years of Experience</th>
<th>Teachers with 5 Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Intention to Leave (LEAVE) and Teacher Efficacy Scale (TCHEFF) surveys were mailed to teachers in the sample beginning November of 1998. All of the respondents who failed to return surveys were identified and it was determined if they were still teaching in Louisiana. Teachers who had changed schools and teachers who had changed names were accounted for. Follow-up letters were mailed to the current schools of all of the teachers who failed to respond to the original request in February of 1999 including teachers who changed schools. When the response rate was still low (46%), a third mail-out was sent in March of 1999. A total of 124 usable surveys were returned for a 56% response rate. The representativeness of the sample is discussed in the results section of the document. The breakdown of responses by strata is noted in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Useable Surveys by Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Useable Surveys</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 2 Years Experience</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 3 Years Experience</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 4 Years Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Methods

Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques used in qualitative research differ from quantitative research. Rather than using large random samples of the population to obtain a sample that is representative of the population, qualitative research uses purposeful sampling to select a small number of cases which are rich with information regarding the question at hand (Patton, 1990). For this study, I used intensity sampling to select teachers who indicated the highest intention to leave teaching according to the survey research.

Eleven teachers who scored 6 or 7 on LEAVE3 and LEAVE4 of the Intention to Leave survey, indicating high intention to leave the teaching profession, were selected for the qualitative portion of this study. Four of the eleven teachers selected were not interviewed. One teacher had changed school districts, and the remaining three were no longer teaching at the time of the interviews. Two of the three had left because of childbirth, and one had left the teaching profession. The sample for the qualitative portion of this study therefore included seven of the eleven teachers who indicated the highest intention to leave on the survey data.

Interview Method – Patton’s Standardized Open-ended Interview

In qualitative research the researcher is the instrument (Borg and Gall, 1989; Patton, 1990). For this study I functioned as an interviewer to gather data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. The standardized open-ended interview described by Patton (1990) was employed. This interview technique
requires that the interviewer ask pre-determined open-ended questions in the same sequence to all interviewees. Because the questions are identical for all interviewees, interviewer effect and interviewer bias are reduced (Patton, 1990). Identical questions also increase the researcher’s ability to compare answers. Interview data gathered by this method is easier to organize than data obtained through less formal questioning methods, yet the open-endedness of the questions allows the respondents room to elaborate and expand. The interview questions were based on the independent variables (teacher efficacy, student SES, and student discipline) and the dependent variable (teacher intention to leave teaching). The interview questions are provided in Appendix G.

Trustworthiness

According to Patton, validity in quantitative research is dependent upon the instrument and its accuracy in measurement (1990). In qualitative research the instrument is the researcher and therefore validity hinges upon the ability of the researcher to accurately record what is said. With permission of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded and then transcribed to ensure that exact statements served as data.

Obtaining informant feedback and decreasing the distance between the researcher and the informant are other ways to increase internal validity (Creswell, 1994). By interviewing some teachers in addition to obtaining survey information from
them, I reduced the distance between the informants and myself and therefore increased the validity of my study.

Additionally, trustworthiness was established for this study with the use of peer debriefers. After tape recording and transcribing each interview, the peer debriefers checked my interpretation of the comments of the participants as well as the categories defined from the data.

**Generalizability**

External validity deals with the extent to which findings of a study can be generalized to its parent population. In qualitative research, the number of cases is usually small and chosen by a method other than random sampling. This limits population validity, which is the degree to which a sample represents the larger population (Borg and Gall, 1989). The purpose of the qualitative portion of this study was not to generalize findings to the parent population. Rather, it was to understand and describe a particular situation in such a way that it can be applied to other situations (Fraenkel & Waller, 1990). In addition, I hoped the qualitative findings of this study would provide a richer understanding of the quantitative findings.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality was established for the participants in both the qualitative and the quantitative portions of this study. Surveys were coded only to identify which were not returned so follow-up surveys could be mailed and to identify interviewees. School
placements, parishes, and cities in which these people worked were kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used for participants who were interviewed.

**Data Collection**

Interviews were conducted with seven of the eleven teachers reporting the highest intent to leave according to the quantitative analyses. Due to the sensitive nature of this issue, face to face interviews rather than phone interviews were conducted and all of the interviews were conducted on school sites at times convenient to the teacher. Interviews were transcribed so the data would consist of exact words of the subjects. Additionally, notes about the school setting and the town in which the school was located were made during the school visits. Although qualitative data is comprised mainly of information from the recordings, observational data is noted as well.

**Data Analysis**

Using the data collected in standardized open-ended teacher interviews, the Constant Comparative Technique described by Lincoln and Guba was used to analyze the data (1985). Interview data was broken into the smallest units of meaningful information that could stand alone. Each unit was coded so the teacher from which the unit came and the question that prompted the information could be identified. Units of information for each question were sorted into categories using the constant comparative technique. With each new unit of information read it was determined if the unit fit into an established group or if it contained meaning not in any group. If the latter was the case, the unit of information became a new group. Each group was then
reviewed to make certain that all units belonged in the group and then a category title was given to each group.

As categories were created for each new question it was noted that many of the same category titles emerged regardless of the question asked. The next phase of the analysis involved matching categories from different questions. At this point in the analysis, categories were rechecked for internal consistency and to ensure that each was mutually exclusive. The final phase of the analysis involved formulating a taxonomy in which the relationships between the categories were identified.
CHAPTER 4

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

Information regarding the survey response rates as well as results from the descriptive and inferential quantitative analyses of the study are reported in this section. Frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations constitute the descriptive statistics run. Inferential statistics performed for this study include the investigation of bivariate and multivariate relationships between the variables.

The Intention to Leave (LEAVE), the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TCHEFF), and the School Effectiveness and Assistance Program Teacher Questionnaire for Discipline (DISC) surveys were mailed to teachers in the sample beginning November of 1998. All of the respondents who failed to return surveys were identified and it was determined if they were still teaching in Louisiana. Teachers who had changed schools and teachers who had changed names were accounted for. Follow-up letters were mailed to the current schools of all of the teachers who failed to respond to the original request in February of 1999. When the response rate was still low (46%), a third mail-out was sent in March of 1999. A total of 124 useable surveys were returned for a 56% response rate. The representativeness of the sample is discussed in the results section of the document. The breakdown of responses by strata is noted in Table 4.1.

A survey for the Effectiveness and Assistance Program Principal Questionnaire for Discipline was mailed to a principal if a completed teacher survey was received from his or her school. Information was requested from the 124 principals of the teachers in
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Useable Surveys</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 2 Years Experience</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 3 Years Experience</th>
<th>Surveys from Teachers with 4 Years Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the study. Less than 100 principals responded after two mailings, which left 22% of the items for the variable with missing information. Because the of the small sample of principals responding and due to the lack of variability in the data from principal responses, the decision was made to eliminate the principal responses and use only teacher responses for the discipline variable.

**Descriptive Statistics**

**Frequencies**

Frequencies were calculated for the variables age, gender, race, educational preparation, grade level taught and classroom type. Additionally, frequencies for school community type, percent of students receiving free school meals, school size, discipline, and intention to leave were specified.

Teachers ranging in age from 25-29 accounted for over 50% of the teachers in the study. The next largest category of teachers, those ranging in age from 30-34, constituted only 16.9% of those surveyed. Teachers in age groups 35-39 and 40-44 each accounted for 9.7% of the total teachers in the study. Less than 2% of the teachers were over fifty. The youngest group of teachers, those ranging in age from 20-24, was very small in number (3%) as was the age group 45-50 (3.2%).
Frequencies for gender indicated that over 98% of the teachers in the sample were female. This high percentage of female teachers is typical for lower elementary staffing. Frequencies representing the race of the teachers identified white teachers to be the overwhelming majority (82%) in the sample followed by 16% being black. All other categories (Hispanic, Native American, and other) made up less than 2% of the total teachers in the sample.

Over 90% of the teachers in the sample completed a traditional educational program of study. A small percentage (6.6%) of teachers was certified under an alternative certification process. Only one teacher had completed a master’s level certification program (Holmes Education Program).

There was considerable variation in the grade level taught by the teachers in the sample. More teachers taught first grade (27.3%) than any other grade in the sample. Eighteen percent of the teachers taught third grade. Teachers teaching second and fifth grade each accounted for 15.5% of the teachers in the sample. Kindergarten teachers and fourth grade teachers each constituted only 11.8% of the teachers in the study.

Nearly two thirds of the teachers in the sample taught in regular education classes. Slightly over one third of the teachers taught in regular education classes in which special education students attended for a portion of their school day. The frequencies and percents for teacher demographics such as teacher age, gender, race, educational preparation, grade level taught, and classroom type are noted in Appendix H.
Nearly half (44.3%) of the teachers in the study were in schools located in mid-sized cities. An additional 15% of the teachers taught in schools residing on the urban fringe of a mid-sized city. In the sample 21% of the teachers taught in schools located in small towns. Teachers teaching in schools in rural settings constituted only 13% of those in the study. The smallest percentages of teachers taught in schools in large cities (1.6%) and on the urban fringe of large cities (4.9%). No teachers in the sample represented schools in large towns. The frequencies for the community type in which the school is located can be found in Appendix I.

Almost half of the schools represented in the study had 51% - 75% of their students qualifying for free school meals. About one fourth of the schools in the study had 26% - 50% of their students receiving free school meals. Similarly, slightly more than one fourth of the schools in the sample had 76% - 100% of their students qualifying for free school meals. A small percentage (6.5%) of the schools had 25% or less of their students receiving school meals free.

The frequencies specifying descriptive statistics for the school in this study are noted in Appendix J. Ninety nine percent of the schools in the study were categorized as having 1,000 or fewer students. Schools recording student populations of 500 or less constituted 46.3% of those in the study. Schools with a student enrolment of 501-1,000 accounted for over half of the schools in the study (52.9%). Less than one percent of the schools housed more than 1,000 students.
Frequencies of both teacher and principal responses regarding school discipline climate can be found in Appendixes K and L. Because the data from the principals provided virtually no variation in responses and due to missing data from 22% of the principals' failure to respond, the decision was made to eliminate the principal portion of the data for the discipline variable and use only the teacher responses.

Responses 1 and 2 for each item indicated that the teacher agreed with the statements corresponding with a positive school discipline climate. Responses 3-5 for each item indicated that the teacher disagreed with the statements corresponding to positive school climate. Over 90% of the teachers in the survey reported that school is a safe place for students and staff as indicated by \(TCHDISC1\), \(TCHDISC3\), AND \(TCHDISC5\). Nearly all (98%) of the teachers claimed that most of the discipline problems are handled at the classroom level \(TCHDISP4\). A smaller percentage of teachers (80%) believed that the administration provided adequate support in handling discipline problems \(TCHDISP2\). Only 66% of the teachers found the school to be consistent in enforcing policies regarding discipline \(TCHDISP6\).

Teachers' responses to item 1 on Intention to Leave \(LEAVE1\) indicated that 7.2% of the teachers surveyed were likely to change schools for the next school year. The responses to item 2 on the Intention to Leave \(LEAVE2\) survey showed 27.4% of the teachers did not intend to be teaching at their current school in five years. Teacher responses to item 3 on the Intention to Leave \(LEAVE3\) survey indicated that more than one tenth of those in the survey (10.4%) intended to leave teaching after the current
school year. The frequency of responses of teachers to item LEAVE4 on the survey indicating teachers not planning to be teaching in five years was even higher (13.7%). Intention to Leave survey item LEAVE2 provided the most variation in responses from teachers surveyed. Appendix M lists the frequencies of each respondent’s score on all four questions regarding teacher intention to leave.

Means and Standard Deviations

The means, standard deviations, and ranges for teacher intention to leave, discipline, teacher age, personal teaching efficacy and teaching efficacy are reported in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics: Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE1</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE2</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE3</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE4</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCHDISC</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCHAGE</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTEFF</td>
<td>37.99</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEFF</td>
<td>21.98</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The range for each leave question was from 1 indicating ‘more likely to stay’ to 7 indicating ‘more likely to leave’. The mean for each leave variable was relatively low, indicating the average teacher was more likely to stay than to leave. A larger mean on LEAVE2 (3.40) than on LEAVE1 (1.86) indicated that the average teacher was more likely to change schools in five years than they are next school year. Likewise, the average teacher response to LEAVE4 (2.37) was greater than the average response to LEAVE3 (1.81) indicating the average teacher was more likely to intend to leave teaching in five years than they were the next school year.

The mean for the variable representing discipline (TCHDISC) was 10.57 with a standard deviation of ±3.68. The range for teacher discipline was from 6, indicating a school with good discipline climate, to 25 indicating a school climate with discipline problems.

The variable teacher age was coded from one to seven depending on the age of the teacher. The range for teacher age was from 1, corresponding to 20-24 years of age, to 7 representing the over 50 years of age category. The mean for this variable teacher age (TCHAGE) was 2.38 with a standard deviation of ±1.3 indicating that the average teacher age falls between category 2 (ages 25-29) and category 3 (ages 30-34).

The variable personal teaching efficacy (PTEFF) represented items composing Factor 1 of the Teacher Efficacy Scale which support the idea that teachers are capable of making a difference in the education of a student. Teacher responses associated with this efficacy variable ranged from 25 to 46 with a mean of 37.99 and a standard
deviation of \( \pm 4.82 \). The variable teaching efficacy (TEFF) represented items composing Factor 2 of the Teacher Efficacy Scale which support the idea that the teachers are prevented from making a difference in a child's education by forces beyond their control. Teacher responses for the variable teaching efficacy (TEFF) ranged from 7-42. The mean for this variable was 21.98 with a standard deviation of \( \pm 7.05 \).

The means and standard deviations for intent to leave by school size, teacher age, grade level, classroom type, percentage of students receiving free school meals, community type, school discipline climate, personal teaching efficacy, and teaching efficacy are reported in Appendix N.

The range of scores for each leave item was from 1 to 7. Scores closer to 1 represented a higher intention to stay in teaching while scores with values closer to 7 indicated a higher intention to leave teaching. The mean for teacher intent to leave for schools with a 501-1,000 student enrollment was 2.79 (\( N=64 \)) which was somewhat higher than the mean for intent to leave of schools with enrollments less than 500 students which was 1.96 (\( N=56 \)).

The means reported for intent to leave for each teacher age group indicated that teachers over 50 (\( N=2 \)) with the highest mean (4.50) were more likely to leave than any other age group. This group likely represented teachers nearing retirement. Teachers in the age group 20-24 (\( N=4 \)) had the second highest mean (2.38). Research indicates that a significant number of teachers leave teaching within the first 3-5 years of teaching. This group represented teachers who had taught five or fewer years. Teachers in the 45-
50 age-bracket (N=4) with a mean of 2.75 and teachers with ages ranging from 25-29 (N=69) with a mean of 2.38 had the next highest means. Teachers in age categories 35-39 (N=12) and 40-44 (N=12) both had a mean of 2.42 for intent to leave. Teachers ages 30-34 (N=21) had the lowest mean (1.81) and represented the age group most likely to remain in teaching. The means for intent to leave dropped as teacher age increased to teacher age 30-34 indicating intent to leave was decreasing.

There was very little variation in the mean of teacher intent to leave by grade level, classroom type, and percentage of students receiving free school meals. The means of teacher intention to leave by grade level ranged from a low of 2.24 for second grade teachers (N=17) to a high of 2.80 for third grade teachers (N=20). The mean for teacher intention to leave for regular education classes (N=76) was 2.49 and 2.20 for regular education classes with special education students included (N=45). The mean for teacher intention to leave as it related to the percentage of students receiving free meals, ranged from a low of 2.13 for a school population in which less than 25% of the students eat free (N=8) to a high of 2.41 for a school population in which 51%-75% of the students eat free (N=51).

The means of teacher intention to leave by community type ranged from a low of 1.77 to a high of 3.83. Teachers teaching in schools which reside on the urban fringe of a large city (N=2) had the highest mean followed by teachers who taught in school in mid-sized cities (N=54) and rural areas (N=16) both having a mean of 2.50. The mean for teacher intent to leave was slightly lower (2.27) in areas categorized as ‘urban fringe
of a mid-sized city' (N=18). Teachers teaching in small towns (N=26) had the lowest mean followed by teachers in large cities (N=2) with a mean of 2.00.

The mean for intention to leave by discipline was 2.37 with a standard deviation of ± 1.85. The mean for personal teacher efficacy (PTEFF) was 2.36 with a standard deviation of 1.84. The mean for teaching efficacy (TEFF) was 2.35 with a standard deviation of 1.87. There was very little variation in the means of teachers as a group for this variable.

Of all of the groups described above teacher age and community type seemed to have the highest means for intent to leave teaching. Teachers over the age of 50, between the ages 20-24, and teachers teaching in school settings classified as the urban fringe of a large city had the highest means for intent to leave.

**Inferential Statistics**

**Bivariate Relationships**

**Question 1**

Is there a relationship between teacher efficacy and teacher intention to leave teaching?

To address this research question Pearson correlations were computed between LEAVE4 and both PTEFF and TEFF efficacy measures. Additionally, for exploratory purposes, the efficacy measures were also correlated with LEAVE1, LEAVE2, and LEAVE3. These results are presented in table 4.3.

As is shown in table 4.3, correlations between efficacy measures and LEAVE4 were not statistically significant at the .05 probability level. However, the correlation
Table 4.3 Pearson Correlations: Intention to Leave and Efficacy (n=124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PTEFF</th>
<th>TEFF</th>
<th>TCHAGE</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>DISC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE1</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE2</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE3</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE4</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold values are statistically significant at the .05 probability level.

between teacher efficacy (TEFF) and LEAVE2 was statistically significant from zero thus, as the value for teacher efficacy decreased, corresponding to a perception of high influence from outside factors on student learning, teacher intent to leave the current school within five years increased. Teacher efficacy was the only efficacy variable that was significantly linked to any of the leave variables. Teacher efficacy was found to be significantly correlated to teacher intention to leave the current school within five years.

**Question 2**

Is there a relationship between teacher age and teacher intention to leave teaching?

Pearson correlation between teacher age (TCHAGE) and intentions to leave the teaching profession, (LEAVE4) was conducted to address this research question. As before, the teacher age variable (TCHAGE) was also correlated with the other leave variables (LEAVE1), (LEAVE2), and (LEAVE3). Results are reported in Table 4.3. The correlations were -.11 for LEAVE1, -.17 for LEAVE2, -.09 for LEAVE3, and .05 for
LEAVE4. Pearson correlational procedures indicated that none of the leave variables was statistically correlated with teacher age. Therefore, teacher age was not considered to be linked to teacher intention to change schools or teacher intention to leave the teaching profession.

School size was not originally a variable in this study targeted for investigation. When a Spearman’s Rho correlation between school size and LEAVE4 indicated the relationship to be statistically significant at the .05 probability level; the decision to include school size in further analysis was made. LEAVE4 represents a teacher’s intention to leave the teaching profession. Results of the correlation procedures can be found in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Spearman’s Rho Correlations: Intention to Leave and School Size (n=124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAVE</th>
<th>SCHSIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE1</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE2</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE3</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE4</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold values are statistically significant at the .05 probability level.

The results of the Spearman’s Rho correlational procedures indicated school size significantly correlated with teacher intention to leave the teaching profession within five years.
Question 3

Is there a relationship between community type and teacher intention to leave teaching?

To address this research question Eta crosstabulations were computed between the community type (COMTYPE) and the four leave variables. Measures of association (ETA^2) for all were calculated from the crosstabulation of LEAVE1 – LEAVE4 and community type. These values were 0.28 for LEAVE1, 0.35 for LEAVE2, 0.21 for LEAVE3, and 0.24 for LEAVE4. The ETA value for teacher intent to change schools (LEAVE2) and community type was slightly larger than the ETA values for the other leave variables. This analysis indicated the relationship between community type and intent to leave teaching or change schools to be weak.

Question 4

Is there a relationship between student SES and teacher intention to leave teaching?

Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated between SES and teacher intent to leave teaching after the current school year (LEAVE 4) and all of the other three LEAVE variables. The results indicated that SES, which is defined by the percent of students receiving free school meals, was not related to teachers’ intentions to leave the teaching profession, but was related to teacher intent to leave their current school. Results of this analysis are reported in Table 4.3. Student SES was significantly correlated with teacher intention to change schools after the current school year and with teacher intention to change schools within five years.
**Question 5**

Is there a relationship between student discipline and teacher intention to leave teaching?

Pearson correlation coefficients between school discipline climate (DISC) and the four leave variables were computed. The results indicated that school discipline was not related to teacher intent to leave teaching (LEAVE3 and LEAVE4), but that discipline was correlated \((r = 0.29)\) with a teacher’s intent to leave their current school within five years (LEAVE2). The results are shown in table 4.3. Pearson correlational analysis indicated that the only leave variable significantly related to discipline was teacher intention to change schools within five years.

**Multivariate Relationship**

**Question 6**

Does teacher efficacy provide additional influence on intention to leave teaching beyond what is currently known about the influence of teacher age, community type, student discipline climate and student SES?

Two separate multiple regression equations were computed to address this research question. In each regression equation the independent variables discipline, teacher age, community type, student SES, and school size were entered into the model first and teacher efficacy and personal teaching efficacy were entered second. The variable (LEAVE3), representing intention to leave teaching prior to the next school year, was the dependent variable for the first regression equation, while the variable
(LEAVE4), representing intention to leave teaching within the next five years, was the dependent variable used in the second equation. Results of the analyses indicated that personal teacher efficacy and teacher efficacy were not statistically significant in either regression equation (see tables 4.5 and 4.6). When the efficacy variables were added into the first equation, the percentage of variance in teacher intention to leave during the next school year changed from 3% to 4%. For the second regression equation the percentage of variance in teacher intention to leave during the next five years changed from 6% to 9%. These analyses indicate that neither personal teacher efficacy or teacher efficacy was significantly related to teacher intention to leave teaching after the current school year and teacher intention to leave teaching within five years.

Based on results from the previous analyses, it was determined that student SES was significantly related to a teacher’s intent to change schools after the current school year (LEAVE1). Teaching efficacy, student SES, and discipline were found to be significantly related to intention to leave the current school within five years (LEAVE2). Also school size was found to be significantly related to a teacher’s intention to leave the teaching profession in five or less years (LEAVE4). Several regression analyses were computed to explore these findings.

A regression analysis computed for SES and teacher intention to change schools after the current year (LEAVE1) indicated that SES was not a significant predictor of this leave variable. SES only accounted for 1% of the variance in LEAVE1 as indicated by table 4.7. Although results of Pearson’s correlation indicated SES to be weakly
Table 4.5 Hierarchical Regression Results for Dependent Variable LEAVE3. (N=124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-9.90</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-3.83</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-3.90</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>8.76</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>-1.79</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Teacher</td>
<td>-5.12</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = .18$ for Model 1; change $R^2 = .04$ for Model 2 (ps < .05). *p<.05

correlated with LEAVE1, regression analysis using the same variables indicated the predictive relationship to be non-existent. Student SES was not considered to be a predictor of teacher intention to change schools after the current school year.

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Table 4.6 Hierarchical Regression Results for Dependent Variable LEAVE4. (N=124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-6.57</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-1.58</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-6.98</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-9.21</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>-4.66</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R² = .58 for Model 1; change R² = .30 for Model 2 (p < .05). *p < .05

The results of the regression analysis for teacher efficacy, SES, discipline and the dependent variable teacher intention to leave their current school in five years or less (LEAVE2) indicated that these factors are significant to the regression equation.
Table 4.7 Regression Analysis for SES and LEAVE1 (N = 124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = 0.01$ for Model 1 ($p < .05$). *$p < 0.5$

Together these variables accounted for 12% of the variance in LEAVE2 as shown in table 4.8. The discipline variable was the only variable in the model that was a statistically significant predictor of LEAVE2 at the 0.05 probability level. The regression results indicated discipline as a significant predictor of teacher intention to change schools after the current school year.

A regression analysis was computed for school size and the dependent variable teacher intent to leave teaching within five years (LEAVE4). Although the results indicated that school size was a significant predictor of LEAVE4, school size only accounted for 4% of the variance in LEAVE4. The results for the regression analysis for school size and dependent variable teacher intent to leave teaching within five years (LEAVE4) indicated that school size was a significant predictor of LEAVE4. The results are shown in table 4.9. Regression results indicated school size as a significant predictor of teacher intention to leave teaching within the next five years.

Several variables in this study were found to be significantly related to teacher intention to change schools, but only one variable was significantly linked to teacher intention to leave teaching. In this study, correlational analysis indicated some variables
Table 4.8 Regression Analysis for teacher efficacy, SES, discipline, and LEAVE2
(N = 124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy</td>
<td>-4.54</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.28*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = 0.12$ for Model 1 (ps < .05). *p < 0.5

Table 4.9 Regression Analysis for School Size and LEAVE4 (N = 124)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $R^2 = 0.04$ for Model 1 (ps < .05). *p < 0.5

were significantly related to teacher intention to change schools and leave teaching, but overall the correlations were low. Pearson correlational results indicated teacher efficacy, student SES, and student discipline to be significantly related to teacher intention to change schools within the next five years. Student SES, as indicated by Pearson correlations, was also found to be significantly related to teacher intention to change schools after the current school year. The results of Spearman’s Rho correlational procedures identified school size as significantly related to teacher intent to leave teaching within the next five years. Eta crosstabulations indicated community...
type to have a weak relationship with all of the leave variables. Teacher age was not significantly linked with any of the leave variables.
CHAPTER 5
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

Profiles of Seven Teachers with High Intention to Leave Teaching

The results of the analysis of interview data collected for the qualitative portion of this study are detailed below. The eleven teachers who indicated the highest intention to leave teaching on the survey data were selected for the qualitative portion of this study. Three of these teachers were no longer teaching at the time of the interviews. Hanah and Jane were not available to be interviewed because they were out for maternity reasons. While Jane indicated that she would leave the classroom after the current year and did not plan to return, Hanah, on the other hand, noted on her survey that she planned to leave the classroom to become a school guidance counselor. The third teacher, Lisa, was no longer teaching by the time interviews took place and there was no indication that she planned to return. A fourth teacher, Kim, changed school districts between the time survey data was collected and interviews conducted. Of the eleven teachers selected for the qualitative portion of the study, seven classroom teachers who taught in lower elementary (K-5) public schools in Louisiana were interviewed. Prior teaching experience of the teachers in this sample ranged from three to five years.

These selected teachers taught in six different Louisiana cities, and their teaching experiences varied greatly. The schools in which these teachers taught were situated in community types identified as rural, small town, urban fringe of a mid-sized city, and a mid-sized city.

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Questions related to the variables addressed in the quantitative portion of the study were asked of each teacher participant. These questions focused on information about student discipline, student socioeconomic background, teacher efficacy, and teacher salary. Questions were also asked about the teacher’s career history and future plans for teaching. Additionally, teacher participants were requested to express their opinions about how they survived their early years of teaching, mentoring support they received early in their careers, how the reality of teaching was different from what they expected, and how they could have been better prepared for teaching. Each teacher is profiled individually to provide the insights of each teacher for the variables in the study.

Profile One: Ann

Career History and Future Plans

Ann is a young third grade teacher teaching in a small Louisiana town where she has remained since her teaching career began five years ago. The school in which she works houses over 500 students, the majority of whom are identified as low-income. When asked why she has remained in this school, Ann attributed the basis for that decision to be the people with whom she works. “Well that is why I’m still here. The people, the people. I just love where I’m at. And that makes a difference.”

Although the quantitative data indicated this teacher’s intention to leave teaching at the end of the current school year, her interview comments indicated otherwise. Ann seemed quite nervous during the interview, and was concerned about
providing the answers that she thought the interviewer was looking for. Contrary to her survey responses, comments during her interview revealed that she had no current plans to change schools or leave permanently. However, in the future, when she has children, Ann stated that she would consider changing to a school closer to her residence. Interview responses may have provided a less than accurate portrayal of Ann's beliefs and intentions.

Initial Experience

Ann believes perseverance and assistance from other teachers were primary factors for survival in her early years of teaching. In particular, she believes that the match between her own discipline style and that of her site-based student teaching supervisor provided positive benefits in her endeavor to develop her own classroom management plan. Unlike the assistance she received during pre-service teaching, Ann reported that during her first year of teaching, the state teaching mentor assigned to her did not offer helpful support.

When the question of what would have prepared Ann better for teaching was posed, she focused on the need to know how to handle day to day discipline and routine procedures. Her recommendations for improving teacher preparation would be to reduce the number of hours of observation-only classroom visits and to increase the number of hours of hands-on, practice teaching visits. Using her own educational autobiographical experience, Ann was quick to note the stark difference between the classrooms of her childhood and those she finds herself teaching in now. Because she
liked teachers, teaching, and the routines of the classroom, Ann recognized her desire to become a teacher. When she began teaching, she found that establishing her own classroom and contending with behavior problems, discipline requirements, and routine procedures were surprisingly more difficult than she expected.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy

Ann’s willingness to recognize ways teachers can make a difference in their classrooms, was overshadowed by her belief that teachers are prevented from doing this because of discipline matters. Additionally, she felt that discipline and responsibility for learning should be taught in the home and carried into the classroom. Ann attributed her powerlessness and inability to make any effective changes in her students’ learning to the lack of discipline in the home. When it came to making a difference, Ann’s belief that her hands were tied if her students did not behave was prominent in her interview.

Discipline

Conversation with Ann revealed that she handles most discipline problems in class and rarely refers students to the office. Students talking out of turn, not listening, disobeying, and disagreeing are typical problems Ann encounters in a teaching day. The school’s policy for disruptive behavior is enforced through the use of an in-school detention. Although she rarely uses it, her perception is that this system of enforcement works effectively. When asked what she believes would alleviate discipline problems in her school, Ann returned again to the notion of it being the parents’ responsibility to
provide discipline, guidance and training prior to and continuing through the school years.

A course in discipline and management was not part of Ann’s teacher preparation program, but she indicated her belief that it would have helped with discipline problems encountered in her early years of teaching. “I think it [a course in discipline and classroom management] would have helped me, given me options.” For Ann, learning to handle discipline problems was developed during student teaching and through trial and error during her early years of teaching her own class.

**Socioeconomic Background**

Ann did not indicate that students from certain socioeconomic backgrounds would be easier or more difficult to teach. Her neutrality on this issue led her to further conclude that students’ socioeconomic backgrounds have little or no influence on a teacher’s decision to remain in or leave the teaching profession.

**Salary**

Ann felt that teachers are generally underpaid for the myriad of responsibilities, requirements, and disciplinary actions required of teachers on a daily basis. When she was asked if salary would be a factor in her consideration to move, pay became a non-issue. Because she loves the people she works with and enjoys what she does, Ann wants to remain in this setting and would only entertain the idea of moving to work closer to her residence. Although she claims that salary may impact some teachers’
decision to leave the profession, this teacher purports that it would not cause her either to move to another nearby higher paying parish or to leave teaching all together.

**Ranking of Factors Contributing to Teacher Intent to Leave**

Discipline, according to Ann, is the most influential factor contributing to a teacher's intent to leave teaching. She ranked problems stemming from home life as the second most important factor contributing to attrition.

**Profile Two: Brenda**

**Career History and Future Plans**

Brenda, a young teacher in her mid to late twenties, has been teaching in elementary schools five and a half years. During this time, Brenda has taught four different grade levels (kindergarten, first grade, sixth grade, and computer lab) in three different schools. She began her teaching career in a first grade class after December graduation. Following that half-year teaching assignment, Brenda then returned to her hometown parish to teach sixth grade at the local Junior High School. Desiring to return to a lower elementary teaching assignment, Brenda accepted a teaching position at the school she had attended as a child. Over the course of three and a half years, Brenda has taught kindergarten and first grade. Currently Brenda is assigned to teach in the elementary school computer lab.

The survey data provided by Brenda indicated that she intended to leave teaching for an alternative career after the current school year and would likely not return to teaching in the future. Between the time survey data was collected and the
interview conducted, Brenda's job changed from first grade teacher to computer lab teacher. During the interview, when asked if she would remain in teaching, Brenda planned to remain in her school as a computer lab teacher in the immediate future, but noted that in the more distant future she hoped to secure a job as a curriculum supervisor.

Initial Experience

Brenda reported that she survived her early years in teaching with the help of more experienced fellow teachers. Entering mid-year in her first teaching position, Brenda was not afforded the opportunity to be assisted by a New Teacher Assessment Program mentor. In the following year, she was officially assigned a school mentor by virtue of going through the state teacher assessment process. Nevertheless, Brenda was quick to acknowledge that she never met with or was assisted by her designated mentor teacher.

Two job-related components surprised Brenda when she began teaching: the amount of paperwork regularly demanding attention and the number of after-school training sessions she was expected to attend. Brenda stated unequivocally that she felt prepared for teaching and cites her passing National Teachers Examination scores as evidence of this preparedness.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy

When consulted on what is needed for teachers to make a difference in their students' learning, Brenda believes that a smaller pupil-teacher ratio is the answer. She
also identified teacher attitude as interfering with the ability of some teachers to make a
difference in their children’s learning. Time and resources, according to Brenda, are her
personal barriers to making a difference with her students. Next to the teacher’s
influence in a classroom, she believes that home environment has a marked impact on
student learning. By example, Brenda commented on the value of home resources to
students’ growth in learning. She noted how student learning is hindered when these
resources are unavailable. When questioned about the impact of student ability on
learning, Brenda indicated that she believes all students can learn, even those with
limited abilities, and that it is the teacher’s role to fill in the learning gaps. In addition to
home environment’s importance, Brenda ranks school environment as being important
to creating a welcoming space for student learning.

Discipline

When discussing discipline in her school, Brenda commented that it has
improved as a result of the policies and procedures formulated through the principal’s
newly established discipline committee. Brenda is a member of this group. This
committee meets periodically to review any necessary changes to improve the school
discipline plan.

Provisions are made for the most serious discipline problems. Students are
referred to the assistant principal who then assigns problematic students to recess
detention or all day detention. While students are in detention, they receive instruction
from a certified teacher on assignments issued by their classroom teacher. Brenda perceives this discipline alternative as effective for most students.

In her college course work, Brenda reported having had a course in classroom management but not in discipline. She indicated that her skills gained through this course did help her prevent discipline problems in her class. Brenda described discipline problems in her class as minor. "It's just back-talking, sassiness, disrespect, and the disrespect is for the other students more so than the teachers."

Socioeconomic Background

It is Brenda's contention that most teachers prefer teaching students from high SES backgrounds because parents of these children are usually supportive in assisting their children with learning. Nevertheless, Brenda also points out that she has had positive experiences with parents of children from low and middle class economic situations who provide academic support for their children.

Salary

When asked how salary impacts a teacher's intention to leave teaching, Brenda replied, "Oh, a lot, a lot." She thinks the salary issue is more influential than discipline concerns. She claimed that if she were choosing a career today with the knowledge of low salary, her career choice would be different. She suggested that male teachers and single or divorced people tend to leave teaching due to low salaries. When Brenda first started teaching she did drive to a school in a neighboring parish that paid more, but soon became tired of the long commute to and from work. Due to this prior experience
Brenda stated that a higher paying teaching job in another parish would not coax her to change schools.

**Ranking**

Not surprisingly, Brenda ranked salary as the most influential factor in teachers’ intent to leave teaching. She ranked discipline and classroom management second. Her comments indicate that she believes new teachers lack the skill to organize a classroom. Parents and home life were third on her list of factors that influence teachers’ decisions to leave teaching. Brenda indicated that new teachers do not know how to deal with parents or their home life circumstances. Finally, she ranked administrative supervision as important. Without the support of a principal who addresses discipline problems, Brenda asserts that new teachers are likely to leave teaching.

**Profile Three: Casey**

**Career History and Future Plans**

Casey is in her mid 40s and older than the typical beginning teacher is. She is currently in her fifth year of teaching in an average size Louisiana city. The 500 students who populate the school in which she teaches are from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Before coming to this school, Casey taught at another school with students from similar SES backgrounds. Casey’s entire teaching career has been spent teaching kindergarten level children.

The survey data provided by Casey was somewhat contradictory. She indicated that she would be teaching in the same school for the next school year, but also noted
that she plans to pursue an alternative career after the current school year. Additionally, her responses to the survey data showed that she might still be teaching during the next five years. Information provided by Casey during the interview helped to clear up the misleading responses on the survey data. In the next year, Casey plans to begin course work on a master’s degree that which will allow her to move to an alternative career such as curriculum supervisor or school counselor. For her final years of teaching prior to retirement, she plans to teach at the university level.

Initial Experience

Casey believes her survival in the early years of teaching was due to her tough discipline methods. It is her claim that the loveable characteristics of her students drove and inspired her to keep teaching. The biggest surprise Casey encountered when she began teaching was a lack of professionalism among her colleagues.

Being prepared for her initial years of teaching, Casey surmised, can be attributed to adequate classroom resources to use for teaching. Casey described how, during her university teacher training years, she collected items that would be needed when her professional teaching career began.

Teacher Sense of Efficacy

Casey asserted that every teacher could make a difference. It is her belief that teachers leave teaching because of discipline as opposed to the fact that they are not making a difference. Laziness, lack of creativity, and lack of fondness for children prevent some teachers from making a difference in their students’ learning. Casey
suggested. Further, Casey noted that the lack of an aide to help meet the individual needs of her students hindered her ability to make a difference in her students' learning.

Although this teacher believes her students' home environments have a strong influence on their learning, Casey thinks teachers have the greatest impact. Moreover, Casey affirmed the idea that a teacher can overcome some of the shortcomings from students' home environments.

**Discipline**

Casey indicated that discipline is probably 80% of the reason that teachers leave teaching. “Of anybody I've ever known to leave the teaching field, it's usually because they couldn't handle the behavior.”

In Casey's school, to a great extent, discipline in the lower grades is handled by individual teachers within their classrooms; while the administration plays a more prominent disciplinary role at the upper level. Administrative consequences for misbehavior include in-school suspensions, paddling, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions. Casey reported in-school suspension to be effective for students with discipline problems. This teacher uses her personal cellular phone at times to call parents when she is having trouble with a student. Other consequences used by this teacher include withholding snacks and having students take a time-out in another teacher's class. Minority teachers, Casey stated, sometimes paddle minority students with no complaints from the parents. Because she trusts that these teachers are shielded from parental objections, Casey occasionally sends one of her students to another class.
for time out where the threat of corporal punishment may serve as a catalyst to improve behavior. Casey claimed that prayer in schools made a difference in her students’ behavior. “You’d be surprised on a day like this when they’re all antsy and we stop and have a moment of silence and one child says ‘Oh, I want to lead the prayer.’ That makes a difference. That is so important.” In her class Casey reported that most of her discipline problems involve student verbal disputes.

In her university teacher preparation program, Casey had a course that dealt with discipline and management, but she believes it was not enough. Casey described her fieldwork as taking place in contrived situations where there were no behavior problems to observe. Therefore, Casey stated, she felt deprived of watching teachers deal with real management and behavior issues. Much of her fieldwork prior to student teaching involved only observing. Casey suggested that a more beneficial plan to use as a model would be a teacher preparation program designed and used in New Zealand that requires preservice teachers to spend an entire year in classrooms before graduation.

When asked about what might alleviate the discipline problems in the school, Casey focused on the parents. “I think parental backup, because the ones I can have parental backup are the ones that are easier to get back into place. Those that you never get a hold of parents or they don’t work with you, it’s a little harder.”

No mentor was assigned to this teacher when she began teaching, nor did anyone at the school fulfill this role. Casey explained that trial and error was the method she used in learning to deal with disciplining students.
Socioeconomic Background

When considering students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, Casey believes that students from a high economic background would be easiest to teach. She described students from high-income homes as having parents whom assisted their children with learning, therefore, making her job of teaching them easier. She also acknowledged that high SES children have problems, too. However, she did not equate this to an impossible teaching challenge. On the other hand, Casey described the job of a teacher who teaches children from low-income backgrounds as difficult.

To come to a Title I school to start with you’ve got to have a love for children. I knew what I was getting into by coming to a Title I school so for a teacher to come to a Title I they are pretty much prepared to give extra because there are needs that aren’t met at home that we have to meet on the campus. And it’s serious. We’re teachers. We’re doctors. We’re psychiatrists. We’re everybody.

Salary

Casey commented that people going into teaching know in advance that salaries are low, but she believes that if the pay was not so bad it might be easier to accept the difficulties. “Sometimes it would be easier to accept the struggles and the tough disciplinaries [discipline problems] that we have to work in if that pay check was a little bigger.” She also mentioned that being in a Title I school provides teachers with available money to purchase needed supplies. This can be considered a benefit, Casey suggested, because less money comes out of her pocket for classroom activities.
As a proactive response to address low salary status in Louisiana, Casey actually did apply for teaching positions in other states and was offered a job in Washington State. Unfortunately, Casey discovered a drawback in moving from state to state; teachers did not get credit for their years of service on salary schedules. All teachers coming in received no credit for prior years of service. Even though the move would have meant a $2000 increase in annual salary, Casey considered the expenses for relocating to be too costly, thus making the move not feasible.

Ranking

In spite of the fact that Casey attempted to secure a job in another state, she did not rank salary first when asked to rank the things that impact a teacher’s decision to leave teaching. Behavior was ranked first and included the behavior of teachers as well as that of students. Salary, however, was ranked as the second factor noted by Casey in the list of influences on teachers’ decisions to leave teaching.

Profile Four: Debra

Career History and Future Plans

Debra is an African American teacher in her mid- to late twenties and teaches in a mid-size city in Louisiana. Over 500 students, ninety percent of whom are classified as members of low-income families, attend her school. Before becoming a certified teacher, Debra taught as a day-by-day substitute. Although she is in her fifth year as a certified teacher, Debra considers herself as having seven years experience in education. Within this time, she has taught three different grade levels, all of which were self-
contained situations: fourth grade for one year, third grade for three years, and, at present, fifth grade.

Survey data indicated that Debra intends to leave teaching for an alternative career after the current school year and does not plan to be teaching in the future. During the interview, Debra explained that she plans to leave the classroom to become an administrator. She is currently working on her administrative certification and has two courses left to take in her program of study as well as the principal portion of the National Teacher's Exam to pass before she would be eligible for an administrative position. During the interview, Debra indicated that upon completion of the requirements for administrative certification, she plans to be teaching until she can secure an administrative position. Her remarks were, “I just think I can do a good job there and I think I could motivate other teachers to do what I see that could help our students. I have a vision. I think I could carry it out with other teachers. I think I could do better [than the current administrator] you know.”

Initial Experience

Debra had a mentor during her first year as a teacher. She found this person to be somewhat helpful, especially during her first year. During the interview, Debra explained how a number of teachers volunteer to assist new teachers by helping or answering questions. It is Debra’s belief that her work as a day-by-day substitute also helped to prepare her for taking over a class permanently.
When asked about how her initial teaching experience was different from what she expected, Debra talked about the amount of work that was involved in teaching, and the roles she fulfills.

Well, I knew it was going to be a lot of work, but I didn’t know it was this much work involved. Like you are more than a teacher. You are a counselor. You’re a doctor. You’re everything. You’re a parent. And you have to take your job home with you. I didn’t think it would just be a constant job all the time cause I take it home. You are calling parents at home. You are grading papers.

**Teacher Sense of Efficacy**

Debra did indicate that she believes teachers would stay in teaching if they could see that they are making a difference.

They would stay in teaching if they really see that they are making a difference. But a lot of times it seems like they get frustrated because it seems like a lot of the kids really don’t want to learn. And I know that kind of upsets the teacher when they are doing all they can. At least they think they’re doing all they can and it seems that they just can’t reach all of them.

According to Debra, both the teacher and the home environment have great impact on student learning. A pertinent negative impact for Debra’s students is the lack of parent involvement. When asked about the
impact of the home environment on her students’ learning, Debra
responds:

I think that has a lot to do [with student learning]. A lot of them
don’t have fathers in the house and a lot of them come from broken
homes. All that plays a part in it because we never know what’s
going on at home and a lot of that they bring it to school with them.
We don’t know what’s on their mind.

Discipline

Debra considers discipline to be the most powerful factor impacting teachers’
decisions to leave teaching. She spoke of the class in her school that has lost three
teachers during the year due to poor student behavior. Debra pointed out that teachers,
parents, and administration often have different views on what is needed to improve
student discipline.

You know we can only do so much. We can only ask them to sit down.
We can’t discipline. A lot of our parents want to tell me to discipline
them but I don’t think that’s my job. I don’t believe that they should do
all the disciplining at home. So that is a big factor...We think they [the
administration] should handle it certain ways and you know we already
talked to the student and all that we’ve already conferenced with them
and then when they get sent to the office they get another talking to. Just
talking, talking and it’s the same thing over and over and over, just keep
talking to them. We think that they should have more after school detention, in school suspension, and things like that. 'Cause if not we’re just not making the progress. We just keep talking to them in that same little tone. I don’t believe in screaming and yelling or nothing like that but if it seems not to be working I have talked to them ten times we need to take another measure.

Debra said that teachers attempt to handle most discipline problems in class before referring students to the office; however, she readily acknowledged that not enough is done when students are sent to the administration. When asked about consequences, she commented that the in-school suspension was somewhat effective. Debra claimed that a number of students, especially those who typically do not like to go to school, do not mind going to in-school suspension. In her opinion, after school detention would serve more as a deterrent to misbehavior than the procedures currently in use. This teacher actually has her own after-school detention for the students in her class. She holds detention every Wednesday and Friday.

For some kids [in-school suspension is effective]. A lot of them like to go there. The ones who don’t like to be at school any way or to do any of the assignments, they like to be in in-school suspension. That’s why I rather have after school detention, especially on Friday. So this is what I do.

The interview was conducted during her after school detention. Students did not appear to want to be there. Nevertheless, most students were very cooperative and
worked busily on their assignments. On this particular day a student from another class was in Debra’s after school detention. This child attempted to cut up and not do his work. Debra assured him that his classroom teacher and his parent would have to meet with her the following day. Quickly realizing the grave consequences of his actions, the student began to work quietly. When asked about what would alleviate discipline problems in her school, Debra responded with, “A stronger administration, a stronger administration back up. Working together as a team.”

When discussing teacher efficacy, Debra expressed that teachers’ frustration of not being able to meet the needs of students is compounded by discipline problems. She described talking back and playing around by students that gets out of hand as typical discipline problems she encounters in her class. Debra added that she also has problems with students who fail to take prescribed medication properly to ease their participation in class.

A course in classroom management was part of Debra’s college curriculum, but she does not believe that it really helped her manage discipline problems when she first started teaching. She claimed that student teaching gave her the experiences to know how to handle discipline and management problems.

Debra discussed differences in managing student behavior with different types of classes (self-contained or departmentalized). It is her belief that it is easier to stay on top of behavior problems with self-contained classes because it is easier to keep in close contact with these parents.
Socioeconomic Background

Debra does not believe that students' SES has an impact on teacher intention to leave. She suggested that it is students' upbringing and not their economic situation that influences teachers' decisions to stay or leave.

Salary

Debra identified salary as the second most important factor in new teachers' decisions to leave teaching. She recollected that a few of her friends left teaching to work at the local casino because of higher pay. Debra reported that her decision to try and secure an administrative position was not prompted by the higher salary administrators receive. When asked about moving to a neighboring parish for higher pay, Debra stated she would not leave her current parish.

Ranking

Debra ranked student behavior as the most influential factor in a teacher's decision to leave teaching, while ranking salary second. She commented that the salary seemed really low considering the number of discipline problems teachers encounter. Debra remarked that some teachers feel the salary is not worth dealing with the behavior problems. Lack of motivation was identified as the third factor in her ranking of factors influencing teachers' decisions about leaving.

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Profile Five: Ellie

Career History and Future Plans

Ellie is in her mid-to-late thirties, a bit older than the typical beginning teacher. Currently, Ellie is in her sixth year of teaching. For the first five years of her career, she taught fifth grade at a school located on the outskirts of an urban area and populated with a large number of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. At the beginning of this current school year, she relocated to a small school in a rural area in south Louisiana. More than half (59%) of the school population is considered to come from low-income families.

Survey data from Ellie showed mixed responses regarding her intention to leave. She indicated that it was probable that she would leave teaching for an alternative career after the current school year, but also said it was likely that she would be teaching in the next five years. Interview data suggested that Ellie might change schools in the near future, but is not likely to leave teaching soon. During the interview, when asked about her future career in teaching, Ellie reluctantly offered that she would probably be in the same school next year. Her sister had encouraged her to request a transfer to her current school where student population is smaller and parental support was supposed to be strong. The move to the present school placed Ellie in a fourth/fifth grade position where she was responsible for preparing students for the state LEAP test. During the interview, she brought up the inaccuracy of her sister’s perception of parental support and remarked that it indeed was not as strong as she was led to believe. Now Ellie is
faced with making a choice: either staying in this school or moving back to her former school. She talked of being in a dilemma in deciding whether to stay, which is what her sister would want her to do, or go. If she stayed she would remain in fourth grade and have to contend with the LEAP responsibilities. If she left and returned to her previous school, she could teach a grade other than fourth and would not have to deal with LEAP testing. When asked if she would be a life long teacher, Ellie responded that she would seize the opportunity to not work if she were able once her children were grown.

Initial Experience

Ellie attributed surviving the early years of teaching to working under, and then, with the teacher who supervised her during student teaching. When she began teaching, Ellie was never assigned a mentor from the state, but her former student teaching supervisor served as her mentor.

When asked how teaching was different from what she expected, Ellie referred to the huge amount of paper work and the expectations of her role as a teacher.

Expectations are not any higher but different. For example, all the standards we have to meet and all the little silly things we have to do to meet the standards, the LEAP, and you worry about this and you worry about that. I guess I never really realized it would be that much involved.
Ellie claimed she would have been better prepared for teaching if she had spent more time in classrooms earlier in her teacher preparation program. It was only in her reading class that she did she spend time doing fieldwork prior to student teaching.

**Teacher Sense of Efficacy**

Ellie noted the practice of labeling students as a factor preventing teachers from making a difference in student learning. She described how classifying a student with a label such as special education—resource gives students the idea that they have the right to give up and no longer try to succeed in school. According to Ellie, labeling allows students to use their disabilities as excuses for not learning.

Ellie perceived the home environment as the most critical factor impacting students’ education, while she viewed the teacher as the second most important element in a child’s learning. From Ellie’s perspective, student ability was viewed as the least important factor in student learning. “I hate to almost leave that [student ability] last, but you can work with a child who has a low ability.”

**Discipline**

Ellie believes that discipline is an important factor in a teacher’s decision to leave teaching. She reported that in her school, most discipline problems are handled at the classroom level, but that if a student gives a teacher a lot of trouble he or she is referred to the school administrator. The administrator has the option of issuing an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Ellie finds this system is effective because she says children don’t like to go there.
The discipline problems this teacher encounters in this school were reported to be less severe than in her previous school. Typical discipline problems experienced by Ellie include students answering at inappropriate times, students arguing, and a few instances of disrespect.

In her college program of study, Ellie did not have a course in management and discipline, but she believes that type of course would have helped. When asked about what might alleviate discipline problems in her school, Ellie responded, “In this particular school probably consistency amongst all the teachers probably would eliminate a lot of that.”

Socioeconomic Background

Ellie claimed that students’ socioeconomic backgrounds do not make a difference for her personally. She was considering leaving her current school to return to her former school in which students come from lower SES backgrounds. It is her contention that some teachers’ personalities would not be suited to handle students from certain backgrounds. Ellie claimed that students from stable home backgrounds, not just higher income backgrounds, would be easier to teach.

Salary

Responding to the question of whether or not salary impacts a teacher’s intention to leave teaching, Ellie noted that salary does have an impact on decision making. However, she personally would not consider moving to another parish for higher pay.
When asked to rank factors that influence teachers’ intention to leave teaching, Ellie said the ranking would depend on the area in which one lived. For teachers in one parish, salary would be the most important factor, whereas teachers in a neighboring parish would rank discipline first. The third issue, according to Ellie, would be accountability factors, such as content standards and high-stakes testing.

Profile Six: Fran

Career History and Future Plans

Fran is a young teacher in her mid to late twenties, and she is of Native American descent. Her teaching assignment is in the same small, rural school in northern Louisiana that she attended as a child. Since she began teaching over five years ago, Fran has taught in this same school where nearly 75% of the school population is classified as low income. For her first three years of teaching, Fran taught third grade, followed by two years as coordinator of student services. In this role, she functioned much like an assistant principal, spending her time handling discipline problems that came into the office. After two years of service to the school in this administrative capacity, Fran requested to return to teaching third grade again.

Discipline, she stated, played a role in her decision to move back to the classroom. It was Fran’s desire to return to the classroom, where she thought she could make a difference. Describing her experiences serving as student services coordinator she comments:
I don’t think I’m making a difference here. Day in and day out it just seemed to be all discipline, all discipline, all discipline. Let me go work and make a difference. Put me back in the classroom to where at least I could still see some smiles.

Fran commented that she likes teaching, but feels that the desire to keep giving is diminishing. “I want to be here because my heart is in it and I know that that’s what’s keeping me here because it’s certainly not the money. But I want to be here wholeheartedly, not just part. But every day that washes away. A little more, a little more.” Because she’s not happy in her job, Fran believes it makes her want to stay at home even more. “Because I feel like I’m giving it all up here...when I could just give it at home.” Fran reported that the discipline problems in the school are discouraging enough that she plans to search for a secretarial job and leave teaching permanently.

Fran’s comments seemed to address problems she deemed most crucial, no matter what question was asked. When asked about her teaching career she commented about student behavior, parental support, failing to make a difference in student learning, salary, and the unrewarding experiences she endured while serving as student services coordinator.

Survey and interview data indicated that Fran intended to leave teaching immediately following the current school year. She claimed she would probably work in a secretarial position as she has in the past if she left teaching, but also expressed a desire to take a leave from work and stay home with her children.
Initial Experience

Although Fran went through the New Teacher Assessment Program her first year of teaching, she was not assigned someone who served as a mentor by the State Department of Education. The people associated with the assessment program with whom Fran came into contact served only as evaluators, not mentors. Her principal assigned a mentor who assisted her in learning about the reading program in her school and procedures relative to teaching third grade. However, this mentor did not assist Fran in learning how to manage and discipline her students.

When asked how teaching was different from what she expected, Fran commented on how different her current students and parents were from her student teaching experience and her school experience as a child. She did her fieldwork in a university laboratory school and in an American Indian school. In both of these experiences, parents were very supportive and discipline problems were virtually non-existent. Fran mentioned that all students in the lab school experience were on or above level academically. She contrasted these former students with her current student population, which consisted of mostly African American children and some Native American and white children. Fran was shocked at the inability of most of the African American students to maintain control of themselves in a school setting. It was her perception that her students' lack of control was a direct result of their parents' failure to train them at home. Fran believes the observations she did in classrooms were of
contrived situations in which teachers controlled what classes pre-service teachers observed.

When asked what would have better prepared her for teaching, this teacher mentioned working in classes similar to those beginning teachers will likely encounter. Fran described how fieldwork might be more beneficial if the experience for university students could involve a cycle of teaching a lesson, receiving constructive feedback, and then teaching another lesson to address the information provided from the feedback. Because she never experienced behavior problems in her field experiences, the feedback Fran received during her pre-service years consisted only of positive comments.

Additionally, Fran mentioned that a class on discipline would have been beneficial to her program of study. She recalled reading some scenarios and discussing what a teacher should do in each case, but felt like this was not enough.

Teacher Efficacy

Fran claimed that discipline, parental support, and student attitude were the factors that keep teachers from making a difference in student learning. It is her belief that teachers can have a great impact only if students will allow it. Although she did not mention student ability as one of the main factors impacting student learning, Fran identified ways in which lack of student reading ability affects learning in a number of academic subjects.

When Fran mentioned the lack of rewards associated with her role as student services coordinator, she remarked:
Put me back in the classroom to where at least I could still see some smiles and when they associate me they say ‘Well that’s Ms. Remedies that’s the one. She taught me such and such back in third grade. She was a little bit funny at times and she made me laugh but not oh oh that Ms. ____ [Fran]. That’s the lady I went to and I remember her giving me three licks.’

Fran cited incidents that caused her to ponder whether she was able to make a difference in student learning. When lecturing students about why they should pay attention and complete assignments in class, Fran was amazed when a child expressed his beliefs about not needing to learn because he was going to drop out of school and draw a check like his mother. She seemed disillusioned by the attitude of a parent who expected not to be awakened before 12:00 by a teacher who was calling regarding her child’s behavior. The teacher perceived this parent as a non-working, unconcerned parent. Being a mother of a young child and pregnant for her second, Fran saw herself as wanting to be a non-working parent so she could have the time to do all the extras for her family.

And I think about these people. The Mamma that sleeps until 12:00. The Mamma that draws a check each month. The Mamma that probably, more than likely makes the kid get up and go to school so that he or she is not there to bother them, but instead is here to bother the teacher. But the
Fran recounted an incident with a parent when she served as student services coordinator in which she called the parent of a child who was sick with high fever. The parent came in irate and said, "Let me tell you something. From eight to three she's your problem and from three to the next morning she's mine." The parent then took the child home, gave her medicine to reduce the fever, spanked the child, and then returned her to school. Perceiving home environment as having the greatest impact on student learning, Fran believes students show no interest in school and learning because their parents show no interest.

**Discipline**

When serving as student services coordinator, Fran encountered a number of problems with discipline. In speaking of discipline she used the phrase "too far gone." During Fran's early years of teaching, most discipline problems were referred to the office; however, now the principal deems this practice problematic and revised the procedure. At the beginning of the previous school year the teachers at each grade level were required to set up a discipline plan that had to be approved by the principal. The principal's approval hinged on teachers' recognition that the final consequence prior to sending a student to the office was paddling by the classroom teacher. Further, the principal, wanting to limit the number of chances students would receive before being
disciplined, cautioned teachers to list few steps before reaching in-class corporal punishment.

According to Fran, this principal's mandated discipline procedure was frustrating to teachers because they were reluctant to use corporal punishment. These stringent guidelines caused them to have to issue corporal punishment after only a few minor infractions or ignore some behavior and seem inconsistent to the children. At each issuance of corporal punishment, two teachers had to give up teaching time: the one doing the paddling and the one that was required to serve as a witness. One other problem associated with corporal punishment was, if parents neglected to give the school permission to administer corporal punishment to their child, the only other alternative was suspension. Fran described how some parents would say they did not have time to leave work to pick up their child from school when they were being suspended, so they would end up giving verbal permission over the phone for corporal punishment to be used.

While most of the disciplining took place in the classroom, Fran said that there was a lack of support from the administration when a student was sent to the office. She claimed the consequences issued in the office were dependent on the mood of the principal. Fran described an incident in which one student, upon being sent to the office for misbehavior, was issued idle threats, and in one instance was actually given a reward. Fran described a conversation with a fellow teacher regarding the above mentioned student:
But she said, “Every time I get the referral back in my box it says the next time he will be suspended, the next time he will be suspended.” I said how many of those referrals have you gotten back? She said, “Today I got my fifth one that said the next time you will be suspended.” So see.

That’s what she said. She had to paddle him today. I said Ms. Blue I would just send him to the office. You are just at your wits end. I see how he acted at lunch. And she said, “Why Fran, why?” But you know what, when he comes back sometimes he has pencils, cute little pencils. And he will dance into the room doing his pencils like this. [Fran gestured dancing and waving the pencils].

Off task behavior in the classroom, students playing too rough, and throwing things at recess are some of the typical behavior problems Fran endures from her students. She said she encountered only a few cases of disrespect in her class.

Other concerns Fran related to disciplining students dealt with sending students to the office. She talked about the paper work required in order to refer someone to the office being cumbersome, and then having to convince the principal that she was justified in referring the student to the office.

This school currently has no sort of in-school time out, but there are plans to implement one for the next school year. Fran viewed the policy developed for this in-school time out as problematic. She claimed that the times during the day in which a student could be removed from the class were limited to the hours between 10:00 and
2:00. This school does have an after school detention from 3:00 to 5:00 daily, and a teacher is paid to run the detention center. Fran stated that this after school detention also had problems because parents pick their children up as much as an hour late.

In her college course work, Fran did not take a course that dealt with classroom management and discipline, but believes it would have helped. When asked what she thought would alleviate the discipline problems in her school, Fran spoke of a paid facilitator who could be the parent liaison. This person's role could be to let the parents know when their child has failed to bring homework assignments back to school and to inform parents when their child was misbehaving. She also stated that consistency would help eliminate discipline problems. Fran also thinks having a male in the role of the administrator may help with the type of students in her school.

Socioeconomic Background

Fran indicated that student SES has a sizable impact on a teacher's intent to leave teaching. She identified teachers who teach students from lower SES backgrounds as more likely to leave teaching. Fran believes that families from higher SES backgrounds realize the connection between education and one's financial situation, and, therefore, they place greater emphasis on education. Parents from low SES backgrounds who receive welfare funds perceive their financial security not to be through education and therefore do not impress the value of it to their children.

Prior to the interview, Fran was not aware that the students' SES might be a factor in her decision to leave, but now believes that it played a role. She said that her
decision to leave might have been altered if her student clientele were of a different kind of SES background.

**Salary**

Fran claimed that low salary is not what was driving her away from teaching, but admitted that it is an important factor for other teachers. This teacher did mention the perceived relationship between pay and what teachers must tolerate in the area of student behavior.

I stated earlier that it doesn’t really have that big of an impact on me, but I can honestly say that probably if I got more pay... I could take a little more. I could probably handle a little more. I would say that’s O.K. I’m getting paid for this. But as of right now I feel like I’m taking this and I’m not even hardly getting paid for it.

When asked if she would move to a higher paying parish, Fran said she had considered doing that, but the drive was too long.

**Ranking**

Fran ranked these factors in order from most to least influential in her decision to leave teaching: discipline, parental support, principal support, and salary. She did state that these would not likely be the order for most teachers. It was Fran’s belief that discipline and salary would rank at the top for most new teachers.

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Profile Seven: Gay

Career History and Future Plans

Gay is a young teacher in her mid to late twenties who has been teaching in the same school for more than five years. She teaches in a mid-sized city in Louisiana. The school’s student population is over 500 and of that number 50% come from low socioeconomic backgrounds. This school runs two separate programs, regular education and gifted education, on the school campus. Students in the gifted program account for the large portion of students from middle to upper class socioeconomic backgrounds. During her teaching career, Gay has taught only the students in the regular education program.

Information gathered during the interview with Gay support the survey responses she provided earlier. On the survey, Gay indicated that she would leave teaching after the current school year and would likely not be teaching during the next five years. During the interview, she claimed that discipline problems are the main source of her frustration and plans to leave teaching after the current school year. Teacher salary was also a factor influencing her decision to leave. Her plans were to work as a computer troubleshooter for Microsoft earning ten thousand dollars more than her current pay. When asked if she would leave permanently or temporarily, she mentioned possibly coming back to teaching when she has children.
Initial Experience

The teachers in the school were very supportive and helpful to Gay when she began teaching. She reported that she wanted to quit in the middle of her first year of teaching, but the faculty provided her with the encouragement and support she needed to stay. However, according to Gay, her first principal was not instrumental in her decision to stay.

When she began teaching, Gay was not assigned a mentor in conjunction with the new teacher assessment program, but, as mentioned previously, she did receive the needed support of faculty members. It is Gay’s belief that the faculty mentoring was effective for her.

Gay stated that teaching was totally different from what she expected. Initially, she believed that students would follow instructions and do what they were told. Unfortunately, discipline problems and lack of parental and administrative support were also problematic to Gay when she first entered teaching.

I definitely didn’t expect kids hollering and yelling at me. I didn’t expect that when I called their parents for them to say, “He is your responsibility until 3:30.” You know I didn’t expect comments like that. I expected the parents to be up here and say “Johnny why aren’t you behaving?” and things like that. I expected my first couple of years with my other principal, I expected my principal to be there a lot more and she wasn’t. She wasn’t very supportive of me. She didn’t try to help me out.
Gay indicated that a discipline class in her teacher preparation program would have better prepared her to handle the problems she encountered when she started teaching. Also, she remarked that in order to be prepared, teachers in training should spend more time in inner-city schools.

**Teacher Efficacy**

When asked if she believed more teachers would stay if they thought they were making a difference, she responded, “Definitely, Definitely.” Gay went on to tell how both parents and students do not value education because they do not see the importance of it. Instantly, Gay identified discipline as a factor that prevents teachers from making a difference in their students’ education. She also mentioned lack of parental support and student desire to learn as other factors.

Later in the interview, a comment by Gay indicated that teacher efficacy was important in teachers’ decisions to leave teaching. “I’ve seen a lot of teachers come and go and I think it’s just really hard because you work so hard and you really don’t see the difference you make.”

Gay identified student behavior and policy mandated by the school board as factors that particularly prevent her from making a difference with the students in her class. Gay expressed her concern about the lack of freedom to make curricular decisions about what she teaches. She referred to indicator checklists and timelines imposed from the central office. It is Gay’s belief that some of the skills she is required to teach are not attainable by her students.
Teacher, home environment, student ability, and school environment are all important regarding student learning, according to Gay. She talked about the teacher's role in getting students to push themselves beyond where they think they can go. Gay believes that the home environment of her students is a hindrance to their learning, and she perceives the school environment as an extension of the home environment. Within her description of student learning, Gay described how some students refuse to perform in school because it would destroy the image that they have come to fulfill in the neighborhood.

I think a lot of kids bring what goes on in the neighborhood into the school and it keeps them from learning. A lot of them are a lot smarter than what they put out because they don't want people to think that they are that smart. They don't want people to know that they can actually do the stuff they can do and that is a big problem around here. Within the neighborhood they are known as a bully and bullies aren't supposed to be smart and read and do their homework. They are supposed to be on the edge, and you know and not do what everybody says. And that's a big problem around here. They have this little image to project in their neighborhood and they bring it to the school.

**Discipline**

Gay claimed that student discipline is responsible for 90% of the teachers' decisions to leave teaching. When asked how much it influenced her decision to leave, she responded, "I think it was all of it. That was the only reason. Like I said, the
faculty’s great, my principal’s great, but it was just the fact that I discipline and I’m a referee all day. That’s really the reason that I want to leave.”

Gay served on a discipline committee that created a school-wide discipline plan. The plan included guidelines and procedures for time-out within a classroom, time-out in another teacher’s classroom, the school time-out room, and recess clinic. This teacher perceived the school time out room to be effective.

Behavior problems Gay reported range from mild, such as name calling, to more severe like hitting, throwing desks, and overt disrespect for the teacher. She indicated that discipline problems sometimes arise when students do not receive their medication.

Gay did not take a course in discipline and management, but believes such a course would have helped her when she first started teaching. When asked what would alleviate the discipline problems in her school, Gay responded, “Taking them out of this environment, which we can’t do. Parent support again. A lot of the parents aren’t around. A lot of the parents don’t care. They [the students] are not given the medication that they need. Just a total lack of a parent.”

Socioeconomic Background

Gay’s comments indicated that students’ socioeconomic backgrounds have a lot to do with a teacher’s intent to leave teaching. When asked if the socioeconomic background of her students influenced her decision to leave Gay responded, “A lot. Everything. I don’t feel like I can teach. And it is very frustrating.” She said she is not certain if she would be planning to leave if her students were from different economic
backgrounds. This teacher described the home situations of her students as less than desirable. Teachers and students, Gay suggested, must contend with the lack of family support and supervision due to parents who are absent because they are incarcerated, working, or ill. When asked about judging which SES type backgrounds would be the easiest to teach, Gay admitted that students from middle and upper class socioeconomic backgrounds would likely present less discipline problems, but often they have other problems that must be addressed by the teacher.

**Salary**

Gay’s comments indicated that salary, along with discipline, influenced her decision to leave. “Not only discipline, but when I found out I could make about 10,000 dollars more than what I’m making, that had a big impact on me. I think a lot of teachers just from talking around with my friends here they feel like they are worth more than that.”

If she were first starting out, Gay felt that she would have considered moving to a higher paying parish. Right now, however, she would not consider moving to a different parish for higher pay. The comments Gay made suggested that pay alone would not entice teachers to transfer across parish lines. She pointed out that a school would have to have a supportive administrator to attract teachers.

**Ranking**

Gay ranked discipline first, salary second, and administrative support third in listing factors that are most influential in a teacher’s decision to leave teaching.
Taxonomy of Factors Related to Teacher Intention to Leave and Remain in Teaching

Using the Constant Comparative Method described by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the interview data was unitized and categorized. The dialogue from which these categories emerged was from data provided by the seven teachers who were interviewed in conjunction with this study. The categories or domains were merged to form more encompassing groups or taxonomies. When teachers were asked to rank factors they believed contributed to a teacher’s decision to leave teaching, they ranked discipline as the first and salary as the second most important issues related to teacher intent to leave.

Teacher Responses are listed in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Teacher’s Ranked Interview Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Number One Reason</th>
<th>Number Two Reason</th>
<th>Number Three Reason</th>
<th>Number Four Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ann</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Problems from Home Life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Discipline and Classroom Management</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debra</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Lack of Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellie</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Accountability (state standards and the LEAP test)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fran</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Parental Support</td>
<td>Principal Support</td>
<td>Salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Bringing Home the Problems of the Job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Teacher E identified the ranking as dependent on the geographic area in which one teaches.
Five of the seven teachers ranked discipline or student behavior as the number one reason teachers leave the profession. One teacher identified discipline as the number one reason for teachers in one parish and salary for teachers in another parish. Salary was ranked the number one reason by only one other teacher in the study and the number two reason for three other teachers in the study. Other factors ranking second were parental support, home life, and discipline. Reasons ranked third by the teachers include parents, administration/principal support, accountability, and lack of motivation. Reasons that were ranked fourth included administration, salary, and bringing home the problems of the job.

For the purposes of this study these two categories will be the focus of this qualitative analysis. The taxonomies for discipline and salary are noted in figures 5.1 and 5.2 respectively.

**Discipline Related Factors that Affect Teacher Intention to Leave Teaching**

Conversations with teachers regarding discipline as it related to teacher intent to leave teaching revealed this issue as multifaceted. Comments about discipline that emerged from the data were associated with discipline in classroom, discipline within the larger school setting, or discipline within the community. Student behavior, the teacher’s role in disciplining, and the teacher mentoring program’s impact on discipline are domains within the category of issues related to discipline that occurs in class setting. Discipline related policies, administrative impact on discipline, and school discipline committees involve discipline as it relates to school beyond the classroom.
Figure 5.1 Discipline Factors

Figure 5.2 Salary Factors
Factors related to discipline that are found in the community include home and parental affect on discipline, discipline in the teacher education program, and agencies outside of school that assist with discipline.

In-Class Discipline Related Issues

Student Behavior

Discipline problems that are associated with the classroom involve student behavior, the teacher’s role in disciplining, and the role of teacher mentors in providing support for the teacher in handling discipline problems that occur in class. According to teachers’ comments student behavior ranged from mild to severe with most reporting relatively mild incidents of student misbehavior. Discipline behaviors identified from teacher comments were classified as minor offenses involving other students, physical encounters between students, minor offenses involving teacher authority, disrespect to teacher, and severe student behavior. Students arguing among themselves and playing that gets out of hand as described by Casey, Debra, and Ellie are examples of minor behavior problems between students. Hitting and fighting that occurs in Brenda’s and Gay’s classroom are classified as physical behavior problems and are considered more severe than the minor offenses described above. Ann, Fran, and Ellie provided examples of behaviors involving teacher authority such as disobeying, talking out of turn, and off task behavior during group work. Five of the seven teachers (Brenda, Debra, Ellie, Fran, Gay) interviewed reported some form of disrespect to the teacher such as sassiness or talking back. The most severe student behavior described involved
students who failed to receive their medication and "totally flipped out," (Gay). Student behavior in these cases involved throwing chairs and overtly showing disrespect to the teacher with comments like "Shut up. I don’t care. I don’t care what you do to me."

Several teachers commented that student behavior influences other things. Fran described losing teaching time as a result of student misbehavior and disciplining; “Do I go into the hall and paddle them and lose teaching time? And then on top of that two teachers lose teaching time because I need her [another teacher] as a witness.”

Casey believed that silent prayer being allowed in schools contributed to positive student behavior. She claimed that when students really got out of hand pausing for a silent prayer had a calming affect on them.

The Teacher’s Role

Teachers identified a number of discipline issues related to their role as teacher. Comments from teachers centered on these topics: teacher actions related to discipline, classroom discipline plans, teacher consistency with discipline, and lack of teacher authority in the area of discipline. From the descriptions of their classes, teachers’ indicated that classroom management and discipline techniques used were ineffective. The comments of Gay highlights an example of classroom management and discipline that is not functioning well:

Plus the fact that I don’t feel like I teach. I discipline all day and I referee. Because you are dealing with the same things all day long every day. It’s the same problems. It’s the same things that you are talking about. And you think
that finally it’s going to get in their heads, right and you are going to say it over
and over again and it’s going to get in their heads but it doesn’t. It just doesn’t.
And it’s just very frustrating.

The teachers in the study did express that they believed they were responsible for
the majority of the disciplining in the school. Six out of the seven teachers interviewed
stated that they handled most of their discipline problems in class (Ann, Brenda, Casey,
Debra, & Ellie). Consequences issued by teachers for inappropriate student behavior
included in classroom time out, removal of students from class by sending them to
another teacher’s class, withholding snack, phoning a parent on a cellular phone from
the class, and paddling students (one’s own or a neighboring teacher’s) (Casey, Brenda,
and Gay). In some cases a form of in-school detention was available to remove students
from the classroom.

Fran identified the paper work involved in referring a student to the office, the
principal questioning the teacher about the referral, and being required to paddle
students before sending them to the office as deterrents to student referrals to the office.
“I’d live in the office trying to explain myself or write a sheet…I’m sure you
know…referrals…that we have to fill out,” she said. Fran described why she was
hesitant to mark a student’s conduct, “If you do you will either live in the hall paddling
or you will live in the office trying to explain yourself to the principal and you just
won’t.”
Teacher consistency was another discipline-related problem noted by teachers. Inconsistencies within a teacher’s class and between different teachers in a school were mentioned. Fran, responding to the question about alleviating discipline problems in the school, said, “I think if you have firm, I mean firm consistency in the classroom, not pick and choose like I feel like I have to do.” Ellie remarked about the inconsistencies between different teachers within the school when disciplining students:

In this particular school probably consistency amongst all the teachers probably would eliminate a lot of that. Some teachers let’um [the students] when they’re in the gym in the morning some are allowed to just walk back and forth to where ever they’re going and some of us don’t. So consistency between the different grade levels or what ever.

Fran explained why she believes the principal requiring her to paddle students before sending them to the office contributed to her inconsistency with discipline.

I think the only thing that would help me is firm consistency, I mean FIRM. I can admit that about myself because I feel that I’m consistent. I feel that I’m more consistent than others. But no I’m still not as consistent as I should be. But for the fear of as I said earlier, I’d live in the hall. I’d paddle a hundred times a day. And I’d have to bother another teacher to become a witness because we have to have a witness.
Lack of control over the classroom constitutes another area of discipline that teachers identified as affecting their ability to discipline. Ann described her perception of the teacher’s lack of control over matters in the classroom:

I feel that sometimes our hands are tied when it comes to discipline matters. Um we can just take it. We are not given total control in the classroom. That stems from the home life too and I know we can’t control that. I don’t know. I think our hands are tied at times. We have to watch what we say. We have to watch what we do. We are not given full control. That’s how I feel.

Comments from Debra also indicated her perception of her own powerlessness over disciplining students, “That discipline…and you know we can only do so much. We can only ask them to sit down. We can’t discipline.”

One example of teacher inaction affecting discipline was teacher unwillingness to follow policy that required teachers to paddle students before sending them to the office. Fran talked about the hesitancy of teachers to issue consequences in the class because when those channels were exhausted, sending the child to the office was the next step.

Brenda complained about the paper work that had to be done in order to send a student to recess or all day detention. “If they have recess detention, they take their work with them. But say I have a child, and I send him over there for three day detention, I have to send his classroom work for three days, and that teacher [the detention teacher] instructs him to do his work.”
Effective teacher related discipline factors were cited by some teachers as relating to a teacher’s intent to remain in teaching. Casey believes she survived the early years of teaching because she was tough on discipline. Debra created her own after school detention because she felt it was one of the few consequences that was effective with students.

**Disciplining Affected by Teacher Mentoring**

Four of the seven teachers interviewed had no mentor assigned to them as required by the New Teacher State Assessment Program (Gay, Casey, Brenda, and Ellie). In the absence of a state mentor, two teachers described being mentored by an assigned school mentor or by colleagues who volunteered to help. Gay describes this kind of support from fellow teachers:

> Everybody was real supportive and helped me out. And you know when I was in tears and crying in the hall way cause kids were throwing desks at me and calling me names they were there telling me it's O.K. Everything’s going to be all right. They would come in my classroom whenever they had free time. The faculty here is absolutely wonderful. That’s why... that’s one of the reasons I have stayed here for so long, because I would have never made it through that first year. I wanted to quit in December because I was so upset. The kids were crazy and I didn’t know what to do with them. It’s really the faculty that helped me
stay here. That's really the only reason I stayed. It wasn't my principal.

It was the faculty.

Brenda was assigned a mentor by the school, but she did not find the mentor to provide sufficient support and guidance.

Three of the teachers surveyed did have a mentor assigned to them in relation to the New Teacher Assessment Program. Only Debra claimed to have received helpful assistance from her state assigned mentor. Fran found her mentor to be helpful with questions about the school reading program, but no assistance regarding the handling of student discipline problems. Ann claimed that her mentor was not very helpful.

In-School Discipline Related Issues

Policy Issues

Policy issues, the role of the administrator, and the role of school-wide-committees related to discipline made up the categories of discipline-related issues that involved the portion of the school outside of the classroom. A number of teachers in the study noted problems with school discipline policies and procedures. All interview participants asserted that most of the disciplining of students is handled in the classroom. Three of the seven teachers used a form of time out in another teacher’s classroom as an alternative to classroom time out. In all but one school, the school policy included some method (in-school suspension, in-school detention, recess clinic) for the removal of students. Corporal punishment was mentioned by two of the seven teachers as a means of disciplining students.
Fran mentioned that the policy and procedures for discipline were revised when the administration viewed them as flawed because teachers were not being required to handle discipline problems.

And the principal (pause) I would say she saw it as a problem because we had a faculty meeting at the end of the year. And it was determined that we all had to set up, according to grade level, a classroom discipline procedure that we would use that would be familiar among grade levels. And she needed to approve it. And that everyone in the school needed to paddle before they [the students] went to the office. That was like the final option.

The absence of alternative consequences and the severity of consequences were two types of problems associated with ineffective discipline policies noted by teachers. One policy issue cited by teachers was the lack of alternative consequences (i.e. after school detention) for students who fail to respond to the traditional methods of disciplining students. Debra commented, “We think that they should have more after-school detention, in-school suspension and things like that.” Other teacher comments focused on the difference in the severity of disciplinary consequences issued by teachers and the administration. Fran claimed that consequences teachers were required to issue were equally as severe or more severe than those issued by the administration.

Some teachers described practices established to deal with students outside of the classroom to be problematic. Two teachers explained that the in-school detention or suspension was not effective with some students. When asked if it was effective, Debra
remarked, “For some kids. A lot of them like to go there. The ones who don’t like to be at school any way or to do any of their assignments, they like to be in in-school-suspension.” When asked about the effectiveness of the in-school detention in Brenda’s school she responded, “For some, but you have some that enjoy getting out of the classroom. It doesn’t matter what they have to do, but those are the same ones that would love to get suspended.”

Another problem noted in the procedures for after school detention was the failure of parents to pick up their children on time. Fran provided an example of this problem at her school, “And it’s (referring to after school detention) supposed to be 3:00 to 5:00 but that turns into a problem a lot of times. Because some parents will not pick their children up and no one is here to pick up the child. So that gets pretty aggravating.”

**Administrative Impact**

Ineffective factors relating to administration involved consequences issued by the administration and lack of support for teachers from the administration regarding discipline. Problems dealing with consequences fell into six categories: (1) inconsistent consequences, (2) consequences administered by the principal were less severe than those issued in the classroom, (3) lack of consequences [inaction or failure to follow through with threats], (4) inappropriate consequences issued by the administration [rewards], (5) consequences issued are dependent on the number of referrals in the office, and (6) consequences are dependent on the mood of the principal.
Fran provided an example of the failure of the administration to provide consequences, "They [the teachers] don’t send them quite as much because nothing usually gets done." This same message is portrayed by Debra, “And then when they reach the office...um really we don’t feel that enough is being done in the administrative area.” This same teacher suggested that administrator-issued consequences were no more severe than those issued by the teachers. She commented, “And a lot of times, the administration, we think they should handle it certain ways and you know we already talked to the student and all that. We’ve already conferenced with them and then when they get sent to the office they get another talking to, just talking, talking and it’s the same thing over and over and over, just keep talking to them.” Later in the interview Debra responded to the question about what would alleviate discipline problems in her school with “A stronger administration. A stronger administration back up. Working together as a team.”

One teacher’s comments provided an example of the administrator not only failing to issue consequences, but actually rewarding a student for inappropriate behavior. Fran, describing a conversation with a fellow teacher, said “Every time I get a referral back in my box it says the next time he will be suspended. I got my fifth one that said the next time you will be suspended.” This teacher went on to describe how the administrator in the office had recently rewarded this student with decorative pencils the last time he was sent for disciplinary action, so she was forced to administer consequences (paddling) in class.
Casey's remarks provided an example of consequences issued by the administration being dependent on the number of referrals in the office. "If we refer someone for a whipping or to go into in school suspension and it's a day when there's a lot of referrals, they'll use the upper grades first and so a lot of times there's no room for the lower grades," she commented.

The second administrative factor related to teacher intention to leave teaching was the lack of administrative support for teachers in the area of discipline. A number of teachers commented on the importance of principal support for teachers when discipline problems arise. Gay said, "My first couple of years with my other principal, I expected my principal to be there a lot more and she wasn't. She wasn't very supportive of me. She didn't try to help me out."

In a few instances teachers described their administrators as being a contributing factor to discipline procedures working effectively for them. Brenda stated, "And if the teacher is just at her wits' end, and says I can't handle this child anymore, she sends her to the assistant principal and she takes care of it."

School Discipline Committees

Two teachers described a school level discipline committee as a contributing factor in creating effective discipline procedures and reducing the number of discipline problems in the school. Brenda described the committee's actions in developing school wide rules for the cafeteria, the bathroom, and the playground. According to Brenda, the committee met periodically to address changes in the policy that needed to be made.
Gay's discipline committee designed specific procedures for disciplining students within the classroom and in school and recess detentions.

**Discipline-Related Issues in the Community**

**Home and Parent Factors**

A number of teachers indicated that they believe the problems they experienced with student discipline stemmed from outside of the school. Five of the seven participants interviewed identified home situations and parental support as factors that could alleviate discipline problems in their schools. Fran described both positive and negative parental influences on student behavior. She addressed the lack of communication between home and school when asked what she thought would eliminate discipline problems at school. This teacher envisioned a school facilitator between home and school whose role it would be to inform parents if students had behavior problems. She remarked positively about parents who instilled appropriate ways of behaving into their children prior to sending them to school. Fran, describing her student teaching situation, implied that students came to school knowing how to behave because their parents trained them, "Um you never really had conflicts with parents because you never really had kids in trouble."

**Discipline Issues Addressed in the Teacher Education Program**

The comments of teachers in the area of their teacher education program centered around two topics, course work and field work. When asked about topics of classroom management and discipline in their college course work, most teachers
described their course work in these areas as inadequate or non-existent. Three teachers did take a separate course that dealt with discipline and management, but only two of them perceived the course as helpful. The four teachers who did not take such a course believed it would have been beneficial to their development as teachers and would have assisted them in handling discipline problems during their first year of teaching. One teacher commented that her college course work lacked instruction in procedures and dealt only with pedagogy.

Comments of the teachers on fieldwork during the teacher preparation period focused on the duration of the fieldwork, the placement during the fieldwork, and the feedback from the supervising teacher during fieldwork. Some teachers described their methods course as lacking a fieldwork component, while others expressed that they believed the duration of their field component was too short. Gay described her reading block course in this way, “I did one of my reading block classes at Green Elementary but you are not in a classroom. You are pulling a kid out and you are working with one kid...You are not sitting in the classroom seeing what’s going on day to day.” Ann said, “I know that you spend some time in the classroom, but I think there should be more hours required in... hands on, first hands experience...A few times I think you had to present lessons, uh, but mostly I observed.” Casey’s comments indicate her belief in strengthened field components being linked to teacher retention, “I would like to see more in the field experience. That would strengthen more teachers and we would lose
This particular teacher explained that she experienced no real teaching until she did her student teaching.

One teacher described her experiences with the methods courses as having extensive opportunities for teaching during her field experiences. This teacher also served as a long-term substitute for two years prior to officially entering the teaching force. Both of these experiences helped her to be prepared for handling discipline within her own class once she started teaching.

The second area of concern for teachers involving field experiences was the school placement for fieldwork components of the teacher preparation program. During their pre-service experiences these teachers did fieldwork in schools that were unrealistic and were very unlike schools where beginning teachers are typically placed. The last group of comments related to fieldwork focused on the lack of adequate feedback received from the supervising classroom teacher. Fran described feedback from her supervising teacher in this way, “It was all just based on ...Oh you did a good job of teaching. I liked your introduction. I liked your closure. It was no...the kids...There was nothing to talk about as far as behavior went.”

Agencies Outside of School That Assist with Discipline

In one instance school officials used sources outside of school to address severe discipline problems. Fran discussed an occasion when people outside of the school were called on to assist with a particular student who was having severe discipline problems. “He’s been referred to FINS (Family In Need of Services) and the whole
what not... the whole nine yards to try and get help. Parole officers have been called up here,” Fran comments.

**Salary Related Factors That Affect a Teacher’s Intent to Remain in or Leave Teaching**

Teacher comments related to salary focused on the impact of salary on a teacher’s intention to leave teaching, the impact of salary on a teacher’s intention to change to other teaching jobs, and the relationship between salary and the job of teaching.

Although all of the teachers interviewed indicated that salary was important to teacher retention, Fran and Ann stated that salary was not important to them personally. Only one of the two teachers who was planning to leave teaching after the current school year asserted that salary was an important factor in her decision to leave. Fran purported that salary made no impact on her decision to leave, but would for other teachers. Her comment was, “I also think in Louisiana of course if the pay was even a little bit [better] and I know they are working on that and it has gotten better, but people would stay even more. But that seems to be a big gripe with some people, the money. But that doesn’t really bother me.”

Some teachers suggested salary could attract teachers to teaching while others implied it could assist in retaining them. Brenda suggested that salary would have an impact on attracting new teachers, “But until they get to that point [referring to a smaller pupil teacher ratio] it’s going to take raising pay to even get teachers to go into a certain
position. I know if I had to start college over again at eighteen, had I looked at the pay salary for a teacher I probably never would have looked into it.” Debra suggested that salary could assist in retaining teachers, “I know I have a couple of friends because of salary you know that just couldn’t make ends meet with it and they found higher paying jobs at the boat [referring to the casino boats in the state].” Gay’s description of having to work every summer for the extra money also highlighted the problems of teacher salary. Casey actually applied for other teaching positions out of state because salaries were much higher.

When questioned about changing parishes for higher paying teaching jobs, most said they would not. Casey said she would consider changing to a teaching position in another parish if the drive was not too lengthy, “Probably, I mean if it were still convenient to me driving to that area. Yes, [I] definitely would look at the higher [paying job].” Gay said if she were first starting to teach she would consider moving to a higher paying parish if the principal were supportive.

I would have to look at the principal… like I said I have had a wonderful principal these past four years or three years and that has a lot to do… You might go to a school that pays a lot, but you are going to have a principal who might be mean or breathing down your back. Not supportive or letting whoever do whatever to you or what ever.

A final category of responses related to salary impacting a teacher’s decision to leave teaching centered on the relationship between the value of the
salary paid and the value of the work done. Some of the participants interviewed indicate their belief that teachers are not paid a fair amount for the work required of them. Ann responded, “For what we have to deal with, I think we are underpaid. I really do. We’re having to correct things that from since they were born, up until they hit school. And it’s impossible. I think we’re underpaid for what we’re asked to do. I really do.” Two teachers suggested that they could tolerate the difficulties of teaching if they perceived their salary as adequate compensation for doing so. Casey commented, “Sometimes it would be easier to accept the struggles and the tough disciplinaries that we have to work in, if that pay check was a little bigger.” Gay made a similar remark, “But I can honestly say that probably if I got more pay...I could take a little more. I could probably handle a little more. I would say that O.K. I’m getting paid for this. But as of right now I feel like I’m taking this and I’m hardly even getting paid for it.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous research identified the relationships between teacher attrition and teacher age, community type, student SES, and discipline. In the quantitative portion of this study I sought to find out if a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy provided additional influence on intention to leave beyond what is currently known. Using open-ended questions, data was gathered from teachers to gain insights into reasons teachers choose to leave teaching. Specifics regarding the findings of and the implications for future research and practice from both the quantitative and qualitative portions of this study are noted below.

In the quantitative portions of the study, none of the original variables for this study were found to be significant to teacher intent to leave teaching, although student SES, teacher efficacy and discipline were identified as significantly correlated with teacher intent to change schools. Only school size, which was not a variable originally targeted for investigation, was found to be a significant predictor of teacher intent to leave. In the qualitative portion of the study, discipline and teacher salary were the two most significant factors related to teacher intention to leave teaching.

Frequency distributions from the survey data, indicated that teachers in this study who plan to move to different schools within the next five years constituted 27.4% of the teachers in this study. Of those planning to change schools, only 7.2% planned to do so prior to the start of the next school year. Only 13.7% of the teachers in the study
intended to leave teaching in the next five years and of those planning to leave 10.4% planned to leave prior to the next school year. The percentage of new teachers planning to leave teaching in this study is lower than the new teacher attrition figures cited by Grissmer and Kirby (1987), Wise, Darling-Hammond, and Berry (1987), and Frantz (1994). The percentage of new teachers in this study who planned to leave teaching is only slightly higher than the overall annual 13% attrition rate for all Louisiana teachers, both new and experienced, but considerably lower than the 65% attrition rate for new teachers in Louisiana as noted by Frantz (1994). The percentage of new teachers indicating their intention to leave teaching is double that of the overall national attrition rate, which includes both new and experienced teachers identified by Whitener (1997). The years of experience for teachers in this study ranged from three to five prior years experience. Although this group represents teachers early in their careers, it is likely that a number of teachers who began teaching at the same time as those in this group had already left, therefore making the percentages of teachers intending to leave teaching to be smaller than the numbers presented in the Frantz study of new Louisiana teachers.

**Research Questions**

**Teacher Efficacy**

Correlational analysis indicated that teacher efficacy was not found to be statistically significant to teacher intent to leave teaching as indicated by Pearson correlation procedures. Regression analyses were also computed to determine what
additional influence teacher efficacy had on teacher intent to leave beyond discipline, teacher age, school size, community type, and student SES. Results of this analysis also indicated that personal teacher efficacy and teacher efficacy were not significant to the regression equation.

All of the subjects in this study were fairly new teachers (five or less years prior experience). These fairly new teachers may not yet be focused on their abilities to impact student learning because they are still trying to master the skills to survive professionally. Prior to current Louisiana reform, teachers were not held accountable for student learning. The focus for teachers had not been on student progress toward reaching long-term goals; rather it was on day to day activities and any problems that might arise from day to day. Teachers asked themselves questions related to a short-term agenda rather than addressing how students were advancing toward broader, long-term goals. Perhaps as the accountability movement increasingly evaluates schools and teachers, they will become more concerned with their personal teaching efficacy (their abilities to positively impact student learning).

Also, this group may have represented those teachers who did not flee teaching in the first three years, but remained and are burned out and entrapped. LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) found that a significant number of new teachers become burned out. They identified a number of factors that pertain to teachers who are burned out. These factors which include low salaries, inexperience, contrast between teacher and student race or ethnicity, and working for a laissez faire principal, match those of teachers in
this study. These authors point out that many teachers who would like to leave fail to
do so because of the lack of alternatives and the accumulation of human capital. In a
1982 study, Dworkin found that only 29% of teachers who indicated that they wanted to
leave teaching actually did so. In a separate study, he found that 37% of the teachers
attempted to leave teaching but failed to find alternatives, leaving them entrapped and
less than enthusiastic about teaching.

LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) also identified the relationship between
commitment, burnout, and teacher attrition as they related the findings of the
Rosenholtz and Simpson (1990) study. Burnout is defined as the loss of commitment or
the loss of the “enthusiasm, idealism and the desire to continue in an activity,”
(LeCompte and Dworkin, 1991, p.122). These researchers found that different
workplace conditions are important to teacher commitment depending on a teacher’s
level of experience. Specifically they found that principal buffering is the most
important workplace condition for beginning teachers who have five or less years of
experience. Task discretion and autonomy are important for teachers with moderate
levels of experience (six to ten years). Not until teachers have eleven or more years of
experience, do they become concerned with performance efficacy. Task discretion, and
autonomy were also found to be important factors related to commitment for very
experienced teachers. This research on workplace conditions and commitment may
explain why teachers in this study failed to focus on their self-efficacy as an important
factor in teacher intention to leave teaching.
Qualitative findings also indicated that teacher self-efficacy was of much less concern to teachers than were other factors such as discipline and salary. Although teachers did not rank teacher efficacy as one of the top reasons for exiting teaching, four of the seven teachers interviewed mentioned dissatisfaction and the inability to make a difference in student learning during the interviews. This may indicate that self-efficacy is a problem, but not a factor that would impact a teacher’s decision to leave teaching. Results from correlational procedures indicated the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher intent to change schools within five years to be statistically significant. As the teacher efficacy value decreased, indicating the teachers’ perceptions of increased influence of outside factors on student learning, the teacher intent to leave increased. This finding showed teacher intent to change schools to vary with their perception of outside influence on student learning. The reason this relationship was not found to be significantly related to intent to leave the current school after the school year may be explained by teachers not seeing that a transfer to a desired school was possible due to the lack of vacancies.

**Teacher Age**

The findings of the investigations of the relationship between teacher age and the leave variables provided results that indicate teacher age is not significant in this study, although, some of the findings were similar to former research. Prior research regarding teacher age showed a U-shaped pattern of attrition, which indicates large numbers of teachers leave very early and similarly very late in their careers (Grissmer &
Kirby, 1987; Murnane et al., 1988; and Murnane et al., 1991). In his study of new Louisiana teachers, Frantz (1994) found that younger new teachers were more likely to leave than older new teachers with the exception of teachers who are 55 or older. In this study, the mean for intent to leave was highest for teachers over 50 (N=2) while the youngest teachers, ages 20-24 (N=4), had the next highest mean for intent to leave. A higher value for intent to leave corresponded to higher intent to leave in this study. Although certain age groups had higher means for intent to leave, Pearson correlational procedures indicated that the relationship between teacher age and teacher intent to leave teaching or change schools was not significant.

The limited sample of this study may be part of the reason why age was not found to be significantly related to intent to leave. The sample included only teachers with five or fewer years of experience, which automatically increased the likelihood of more young teachers in the sample. Over 75% of the teachers in the sample were under the age of 35. Teachers 30-34 (N=21) had the lowest mean for intent to leave. The mean for intent to leave increased for teachers in age groups older than the 30-34 group.

The two teachers in the qualitative sample who represented an age group older than 25-29 did not intend to leave teaching immediately. One teacher discussed quitting after her children were grown and she no longer needed the income. The other teacher intended to exit the classroom for other education-related jobs, but not teaching.
Community Type

Some of the findings of this study regarding the relationship between community type and the leave variables supported prior research while others did not. Eta crosstabulations computed for this study indicated a weak relationship between community type and the four leave variables. Eta values for intention to change schools within five years were slightly larger than the Eta values for the other leave variables. The Eta value for the other variables were 0.28 for intention to change schools after the current school year, 0.21 for intention to leave teaching after the current year, and 0.24 for intention to leave teaching within the next five years.

In the literature, both Heyns (1988) and Frantz (1994) found teachers in suburban schools to have the highest attrition rates. Similarly, this study found that teachers teaching in schools classified as being on the urban fringe of a large city (N= 6) had the highest mean for intent to leave (3.83). Heyns (1988) reported that teachers in rural schools had the lowest attrition rate while Frantz (1994) found teacher attrition to be the lowest in urban schools. In this study, teachers in large city or urban schools (N=2) had a small mean for intent to leave (2.00), but it was not the smallest. In this study, teachers in small town schools (N= 26) had the lowest mean for intent to leave (1.77). The mean for intent to leave for teachers in rural schools (N=16) in this study was 2.50, which is higher than the means for teachers in small towns, large cities, and those on the urban fringe of mid-size cities.
The small sample and the limited number of schools represented in certain community types in this study could be a factor in the weak link found between community type and teacher intent to leave teaching. It could also account for the differences in the findings of this study and prior research. In this study, no teachers were classified as teaching in large towns. Two percent of the teachers in the sample taught in schools in large cities, five percent taught in schools classified as urban fringe of a large city, and thirteen percent taught in rural schools. Teachers teaching in mid-size cities constituted forty-four percent of the teachers in the study.

The statistics for community type in this sample varied from the percentages of K-5 schools found throughout the state of Louisiana. In this sample, 44.3% of teachers taught in schools in mid-size cities whereas only 21.5% of K-5 schools in the state were in mid-size cities. Teachers in this sample who taught in schools in small towns constituted 21.3% of the sample while only 15.5% of K-5 schools in the state were in small towns.

In all other community type categories, the sample for this study had smaller percentages of schools represented than the state. Only 1.6% of the teachers in this sample taught in schools in large cities while 8.4% of K-5 schools in the state were in large cities. Teachers in this sample who taught in schools considered to be on the urban fringe of a large city made up only 4.9% of the sample while 10.8% of the K-5 schools in the state were found in the same kind of communities. In this sample, there were no teachers teaching in large towns while 1.6% of the K-5 schools in the state were...
in large towns. The percentage of schools in rural areas in the state was double that of rural schools in the sample. Rural schools accounted for 26.5% of the K-5 schools in the state while only 13.1% of the schools in the sample were in rural areas. The percentage of schools classified as being on the urban fringe of a mid-size city was only slightly higher for the state than the sample. Schools in this type of community constituted 15.7% of the state's schools and 14.8% of the schools in the sample.

Student SES

Investigations from this study indicated the relationship between student SES and the leave variables not to be significant, which is different from previous research. Heyns (1988) found that teachers who left teaching reported that their former students were from upper or upper middle class SES backgrounds more often than current teachers. Heyns' sample is likely composed of both public and private school teachers because it is from the National Longitudinal of 1972-86 data. Unlike the Heyns sample, the teachers surveyed for this study came only from public schools. Prior research indicates that private schools tend to have much higher rates of attrition than public schools. In this study, Pearson correlational procedures did not show SES to be significantly related to teacher intent to leave teaching, but the analysis did indicate SES to be significantly related to teacher intent to change schools both during the next school year and within five years. Perhaps factors present in schools with large numbers of students from low SES backgrounds would make it more likely for teachers in these schools to want to change to other schools, but not necessarily leave teaching.
In this study, 69.3% of the teachers in the study taught in schools in which more than half of the students enrolled received free lunch. Similarly, 62.1% of the K-5 schools in the state had more than 50% of the student population classified as receiving free lunch.

Discussions from the qualitative portion of this study about the impact of student SES on teacher intent to leave teaching indicated that teachers had mixed beliefs about the impact of student SES on a teacher’s decision to leave teaching. Some teachers interviewed believe that a student’s socioeconomic background had no impact on a teacher’s intent to leave, whereas others suggested that it did. The two teachers who planned to leave the profession after the current school year said that student SES did play a role in their decisions to leave teaching.

**Discipline**

With respect to discipline, the results of the qualitative findings of this study support prior research more than the quantitative findings do. In a study of teachers in Louisiana schools, Frantz (1994) found that discipline ranked first among the teacher attrition factors in schools with the highest teacher attrition, but ranked second in schools with low teacher attrition. Adams (1982), Veenman, (1984), and Wolfgang and Glickman (1986) suggested that student discipline was a factor among numerous teachers who considered leaving teaching. Results of the 25th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll indicated that school discipline was identified as one of the top three problems in schools (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1993).
In the quantitative portion of this study, over 90% of the teachers in the survey reported that their schools were safe for students and staff. In reporting about discipline as it related to the administration, 80% of the teachers stated that the administration provided them with adequate support in handling discipline problems and 66% of the teachers found school to be consistent in enforcing policies regarding discipline. Despite the praise for administration regarding discipline, 98% of the teachers in this study indicated that discipline problems were handled at the classroom level. The teachers in this study were elementary school teachers and they likely felt safer and more comfortable handling most discipline problems in their classes than would middle and high school teachers.

The quantitative results of this study indicated that discipline was not significantly related to teacher intent to leave the teaching profession as evidenced by correlational procedures. Discipline however was found to be significantly related to teacher intent to change schools within the next five years as indicated by both correlational and regression analyses.

New teachers are often placed in schools saddled with large numbers of discipline problems, which might explain the significant numbers of teachers who plan to transfer. The teachers represented in this study also likely included teachers who would like to leave teaching but could not and therefore chose the next best alternative, a transfer to a school where they perceived the discipline problems to be fewer.
The statistics reported for discipline from the quantitative results were very different from the data gathered during the qualitative interviews. Survey data indicated the discipline climate of schools to be more positive than the responses from the interview data. In the surveys, teachers were asked to respond to six questions about school discipline climate. Three of the questions referred to safety issues, one inquired if most of the discipline problems were handled at the classroom level, one asked about administrative support for teachers regarding discipline, and the final question asked if the school discipline policy was enforced consistently. The teachers who were surveyed likely responded positively to the six questions about discipline because most elementary teachers feel comfortable handling most of the classroom discipline problems themselves. Had they been provided a more extensive survey regarding discipline, these teachers may have provided more varied responses.

The subjects for the qualitative sample were those teachers who by their survey responses indicated high intent to leave teaching. The nature of the interview process awarded them the opportunity to provide more information about the discipline variable than did the survey respondents. It is not surprising that their responses described discipline problems as more severe than the broader group of subjects in the quantitative sample since the interviewees were selected based on their high intention to leave teaching. Six of the seven teachers interviewed mentioned discipline as the number one reason for teachers leaving the profession. The seventh teacher identified it as the second most important reason for teachers leaving. Teachers were extremely vocal
about the problems they encountered regarding discipline. They identified problems with policies, administrative responsibility, as well as their own actions or in actions as they related to the discipline problems they encountered. In the interviews, some teachers indicated that course work during their teacher preparation program addressing discipline and management did help prevent discipline problems when they began teaching. Others said they did not have such a course in discipline and management, but believed it would have been beneficial.

**School Size**

Although school size was not a variable intended for investigation in this study, regression analysis conducted on data collected found school size to be the only significant variable in teacher intention to leave teaching. School size was found to be significantly correlated with teacher intent to leave teaching within five years, but was not found to be significantly correlated with teacher intent to leave teaching after the current school year. The results of the correlational and regression analyses of this study are inconsistent with the findings of prior research. Heyns (1988) reported that small and medium sized schools had a higher rate of teacher attrition than did large schools in her investigation of school size and its relationship to teacher attrition. In this study, school size was a categorical variable consisting of three categories of school populations (less than 500 students, 500-1,000 students, and over 1000 students). The mean (2.79) for teacher intent to leave in schools with student populations between 500 and 1,000 (N=64) was higher than the mean (1.96) for teacher intent to leave in schools.
with less than 500 students (N=56). Teachers in schools with populations over 1,000 (N=1) had the lowest means for intent to leave (1.00) of the three categories. This finding differing from previous research may be the result of the fact that only one school represented the category for populations over 1,000.

The teachers in this study taught only in elementary schools, whereas the Heyns (1988) sample included schools from all levels of elementary and secondary education. The difference in the school levels may account for some of the differences in the findings. It is more common for a secondary school to have a larger student population than an elementary school. A possible reason Heyns (1988) found smaller and medium size schools to have higher rates of attrition than larger schools may be more directly related to the varying amounts of stress associated with teacher burnout at different grade levels than the actual size of the student body. LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) found that elementary and middle school teachers experienced more stress than high school teachers. Being with the same students all day and often serving as a surrogate parent make elementary teaching stressful. Also, due to the small size of their schools, elementary teachers are more visible to the principal. Additionally, teachers reported that they are also under the watchful eyes of involved parents at the elementary level. The stress associated with middle school teaching is brought on by working with students as they struggle with their sexuality, their changing hormones, and their first introduction to drugs. High school teachers experience less stress than teachers at earlier levels because their students are more mature and often those who would cause
problems have dropped out by the time they reach high school. Since high schools and middle schools tend to be larger than elementary schools, it is possible that Heyns found large schools to have lower attrition rates than smaller schools because the larger schools may have been high schools. School level was controlled for in this study by surveying only elementary teachers. This difference in school levels analyzed could be a factor in the difference of the findings for school size between the Heyns (1988) study and this one.

Although school size was found to be significantly correlated with teacher intent to leave in five years, it was not noted to be significantly related to teacher intent to leave teaching after the current school year. This discrepancy may possibly be explained by the fact that teachers may currently lack an alternative job.

There were some similarities between school size for the population of K-5 schools in the state and the schools in the sample for this study. Schools with student populations over 1,000 made up the smallest percentage of schools for both the state and the sample. Schools with populations over 1,000 represented 2.1% of the K-5 schools in the state and only .8% of the schools in this study. A large percentage of teachers in this study were in schools with student populations between 501 – 1,000 than schools in the state. In this study 52.9% of the schools had enrollments greater than 500 but not exceeding 1,000 while only 35% of the K-5 schools in the state had similar student populations. The state had a greater percentage of schools with student enrollments less than 500 students than did this study. Only 46.3% of the teachers in
this study taught in schools with such small enrollments while 62.9% of the K-5 schools in the state had student enrollments smaller than 500.

**Limitations of the Study**

Several limitations have been identified in conjunction with this study. First, the sample size for teachers was small (N = 124), even after three requests for survey completion. The size of the sample of principals was even smaller. Because many principals failed to provide data for the discipline variable, when the teacher and the principal responses were combined, the variable showed much missing data. Also, the principal data that was provided showed little variation in principal responses. Because of the small sample size and the missing data, the decision was made to eliminate responses from principals for the discipline variable.

The second limitation of the study was the lack of reliability of one of the items on the discipline instrument for the data used in the pilot study. This issue was addressed by analyzing the data for this sample using Chronbach’s Alpha. The correlation coefficients for the discipline variable were determined to be reliable for the sample data in this study. When the discipline item in question was eliminated, the increase in the correlation coefficient was negligible.

Finally, it is important to note that although the intention of this study was to contribute to teacher attrition research, this study investigated a teacher’s intention to leave teaching and not actual attrition. Even though evidence has been presented indicating that this study meets the criteria established by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) for
predicting behavior, LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) provided research findings which indicated that teacher intention to leave teaching does not necessarily result in attrition. Comparisons of variables in this study with variables in teacher attrition research should be made with an awareness of the difference between teacher intention to leave and teacher attrition.

**Strengths of the Study**

Through the use of mixed methods, this study contributed to literature on Louisiana teachers. The qualitative portion of this study provided a more in depth view and understanding of a segment of the teachers from the quantitative sample. The quantitative data provided information about variables correlated with teachers' intentions to change schools or leave teaching, while the qualitative data provided participants' perspectives of why teachers choose to leave. Even though interview questions focused on the variables in the quantitative portion of the study, the participants' comments included additional information beyond what was requested. Salary was not a variable targeted for investigation in this study, but was considered extremely important among the factors that the interviewed teachers perceived as reasons teachers leave teaching. Discipline was not significantly related to teacher intention to leave teaching in the quantitative portion of the study, but was noted as an important factor by teachers during the interviews.

This study supported and extended the work on teacher attrition in Louisiana reported by Frantz (1994). By including a larger amount of data than was collected in
the Frantz study and by utilizing the teacher rather than the district as the unit of analysis, this study expanded the research on Louisiana teachers.

The percentage of new teachers who indicated intention to leave teaching in this study was considerably smaller than the percentage of new teachers who actually left in the Frantz study. This finding is attributed to the difference in years of experience for teachers in the two samples. The teachers in the Frantz study had only two years prior experience, whereas the teachers in this study had between three and five years prior experience. Teachers who began teaching at the same time as some of the teachers in this study may have already left teaching by the time surveys and interviews were conducted in this study. Since the highest attrition comes in the first few years of teaching, it is suspected that the teachers in this study may have been part of the group of teachers, who would like to leave, but have no vocational alternatives and therefore remain. The implication here is that more time spent in the teaching profession reduces the likelihood that a teacher will leave teaching.

Existing research indicates that elementary teachers have a lower attrition rate than secondary teachers. This sample, being limited to only elementary teachers, was expected to and did have a lower intention to leave rate than the Frantz study of teacher attrition, which included teachers from all levels. Although the intention to leave rate for the new teachers in this sample was lower than the attrition rate in the Frantz study of new teachers, this finding should be viewed with caution because of the two different variables being measured.
Implications for Future Research

Traditionally, the focus of research in the area of teacher attrition has been on attracting good teachers and reducing the number of teachers who leave within the first few years of teaching. With the findings of this study in mind, I would recommend that in addition to the issue of attracting and retaining qualified teachers, school leaders should be concerned with the quality of teachers who remain.

A number of variables in this study warrant further research in conjunction with the issues of teacher attraction and retention. To address the issue of teacher supply and demand, the broader career options of America's traditional teacher pool must be considered. As women who have historically had limited career choices seek higher paying, less stressful jobs outside of teaching, more research will be crucial in identifying ways to attract and retain satisfactory teachers. The findings from the qualitative portion of this study indicated that salary is perceived by some teachers as a factor in their decisions to remain in teaching.

School size is another focus area that should be considered for further investigation in relation to teacher intention to leave teaching. The quantitative findings of this study indicated school size as significantly correlated with teacher intention to leave teaching. The relationship between school size and teacher intention to leave teaching should not be generalized to other states if the characteristics of population are not the same as those of the Louisiana population for this study. Because school size associated with intention to leave teaching in this study was different from prior
research and because of the limited sample of this study, I believe further investigation in this area is warranted.

Another area worthy of study in relation to teacher intention to leave teaching and teacher attrition is discipline. Clearly, from the responses of the interview subjects in the qualitative portion of this study, discipline as it relates to areas such as the teacher preparation program, mentoring, and school and district evaluations of their own discipline policies and procedures warrant further study.

Although not significantly related to teacher intention to leave teaching, teacher efficacy, student SES, and discipline were all identified as being significantly related to teacher intent to change schools. The findings of this study indicated that teachers who perceive outside factors as having a greater impact on student learning than they believe themselves to have are more likely to plan to change schools. The findings also reveal that teachers in schools with poor discipline climate and high numbers of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are associated with greater teacher intent to move from those kinds of schools. These characteristics of schools and teachers seem problematic enough for teachers to want to leave the schools, but not severe enough to drive them to leave teaching altogether. Additional investigation of these variables may provide information about organizational factors associated with teacher satisfaction, commitment and retention.

While attracting and retaining teachers are vital concerns for researchers and practitioners, I believe that research investigating who is retained in schools is of equal
concern. This research study pinpointed a new concern for teacher supply and demand. Supporting the work of LeCompte and Dworkin (1991) the findings of this study highlighted a group of teachers identified as entrapped. Teachers considered to be entrapped are those who would like to leave teaching but have no alternative career opportunities. Entrapped teachers tend to have a reduced sense of commitment to the organization and tend to be burned out. Teacher burnout is characterized by “exhaustion, depersonalization, depression, and low morale and withdrawal” according to LeCompte and Dworkin (1991 p. 91). Many new teachers experience the loss of commitment and become burned out when faced with the disparity between idealistic views they held when they started teaching and the reality of their jobs. In turn they blame external forces for their failures. As teachers perceive their efforts to be futile, their in actions may somehow be considered more acceptable to them. Burnout serves as a coping mechanism to protect them from disillusionment. This study, as it supports the research related to commitment, teacher burnout, and teacher entrapment, seems essential to the future research on teacher supply and demand. Combining the percentage of entrapped teachers who are unenthusiastic and often unwilling to implement new programs with the large numbers of new inexperienced teacher hires, could render districts inadequately staffed to meet the educational needs in this new age of accountability.
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APPENDIX A

TEACHER EFFICACY SCALE
1983 Sherri Gibson, Ph. D.

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement below by circling the appropriate numeral to the right of each statement.

1. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.

   ___ Strongly disagree
   ___ Moderately disagree
   ___ Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___ Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___ Moderately agree
   ___ Strongly agree

2. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.

   ___ Strongly disagree
   ___ Moderately disagree
   ___ Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___ Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___ Moderately agree
   ___ Strongly agree

3. The amount that a student can learn is primarily related to family background.

   ___ Strongly disagree
   ___ Moderately disagree
   ___ Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___ Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___ Moderately agree
   ___ Strongly agree

4. If students aren’t disciplined at home, they aren’t likely to accept any discipline.

   ___ Strongly disagree
   ___ Moderately disagree
   ___ Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___ Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___ Moderately agree
   ___ Strongly agree
5. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree slightly more than agree</th>
<th>Agree slightly more than disagree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

6. When a student gets a better grade than he usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree slightly more than agree</th>
<th>Agree slightly more than disagree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7. When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree slightly more than agree</th>
<th>Agree slightly more than disagree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student’s home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Moderately disagree</th>
<th>Disagree slightly more than agree</th>
<th>Agree slightly more than disagree</th>
<th>Moderately agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
9. When the grades of my students improve it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.

____ Strongly disagree
____ Moderately disagree
____ Disagree slightly more than agree
____ Agree slightly more than disagree
____ Moderately agree
____ Strongly agree

10. If a student masters a new math concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept.

____ Strongly disagree
____ Moderately disagree
____ Disagree slightly more than agree
____ Agree slightly more than disagree
____ Moderately agree
____ Strongly agree

11. If parents would do more with their children, I could do more.

____ Strongly disagree
____ Moderately disagree
____ Disagree slightly more than agree
____ Agree slightly more than disagree
____ Moderately agree
____ Strongly agree

12. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.

____ Strongly disagree
____ Moderately disagree
____ Disagree slightly more than agree
____ Agree slightly more than disagree
____ Moderately agree
____ Strongly agree

13. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him quickly.

____ Strongly disagree
____ Moderately disagree
____ Disagree slightly more than agree
____ Agree slightly more than disagree
____ Moderately agree
____ Strongly agree

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14. The influences of a student’s home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.

   ___Strongly disagree
   ___Moderately disagree
   ___Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___Moderately agree
   ___Strongly agree

15. If one of my students couldn’t do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.

   ___Strongly disagree
   ___Moderately disagree
   ___Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___Moderately agree
   ___Strongly agree

16. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students.

   ___Strongly disagree
   ___Moderately disagree
   ___Disagree slightly more than agree
   ___Agree slightly more than disagree
   ___Moderately agree
   ___Strongly agree
APPENDIX B

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your school provides staff with a safe environment.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree

2. If you have a discipline problem, your school’s administration provides you with the support and help that you need.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree

3. Your school provides students with a safe environment.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree

4. Most discipline problems are handled at the classroom level.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree

5. This school is a safe place to work and learn.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree
6. The discipline policy at your school is consistently enforced.
   ___Strongly agree
   ___Agree
   ___Don't agree
   ___Disagree
   ___Strongly Disagree
APPENDIX C

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your school provides staff with a safe environment.
   
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Don't agree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly Disagree

2. If faculty members have discipline problems, you and your school’s administrative staff provide them with the support and help that they need.
   
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Don’t agree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly Disagree

3. Your school provides students with a safe environment.
   
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Don’t agree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly Disagree

4. Most discipline problems are handled at the classroom level.
   
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Don’t agree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly Disagree

5. This school is a safe place to work and learn.
   
   ____ Strongly agree
   ____ Agree
   ____ Don’t agree
   ____ Disagree
   ____ Strongly Disagree

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6. The discipline policy at this school is consistently enforced.
   ___ Strongly agree
   ___ Agree
   ___ Don’t agree
   ___ Disagree
   ___ Strongly Disagree
APPENDIX D

GENERAL INFORMATION SURVEY

Please indicate by placing an X before the most appropriate item for each section.

School Information:

School Size

- Less than 500 students
- 501-1,000 students
- More than 1,000 students

Teacher Information:

Teacher Age

- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-50
- Over 50

Teacher Gender

- Male
- Female

Teacher Race

- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Native American
- Other

Educational Preparation

- Holmes Education Program
- Traditional Education
- Alternative Certification
Grade Level
___K  ___1  ___2
___3  ___4  ___5

Classroom Type
___Regular
___Special Education
___Regular Education with Mainstreamed Special Education Students
APPENDIX E

COMMUNITY TYPES

Category 1 – Large city
Category 2 – Mid-size city
Category 3 – Urban fringe of a large city
Category 4 – Urban fringe of a mid-size city
Category 5 – Large town
Category 6 – Small Town
Category 7 – Rural
APPENDIX F

TEACHER INTENTION TO LEAVE TEACHING SURVEY

Please check the space that best describes your answer.
Example: probable 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 improbable

1. I intend to be working in this same school during the next school year.
   Probable 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 improbable

2. I intend to be working in this same school five years from now.
   Probable 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 improbable

3. I intend to leave teaching for an alternative career after this school year.
   Probable 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 improbable

4. I intend to be teaching five years from now.
   Probable 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 improbable
APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED OPEN-ENDED TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Intention to Leave

Tell me about your teaching career.

Number of years

Schools

Grade Level(s)

Experiences

Do you perceive yourself as teaching in the future?

Yes

Immediate future (next year)

Distant future (five years down the road)

Do you think you will be a life-long teacher?

Why do you think you are one of those who survived the early years?

No

Will you leave temporarily or permanently?

What will you do in the future if you are not teaching?
**Efficacy**

Please respond to the following statement:

Fewer teachers would leave teaching of they were able to truly make a difference in their students’ education.

Identify and describe some factors that prevent teachers from making a difference in the education of their students.

What factors prevent you from making a difference in your students’ learning?

Discuss the following as they impact a student’s education:

The teacher

Student ability

The home environment

The school environment

Which has the greatest impact on a student’s education?

Which has the least impact on a student’s education?

**SES**

According to my data your school SES is ___________________________

Indicated by _____________________________.

How accurate is this portrayal of your school?

How much of an impact do you think student SES has on a teacher’s intention to leave teaching?

How much influence did student SES have on your decision to leave teaching?
Would your intention to leave be altered if your clientele were of a different kind of SES background?

Students from what types of background would be your greatest desire to teach?

**Discipline**

The quantitative portion of my study so far indicates that discipline is the strongest link to teacher intention to leave. In your opinion how much impact does discipline have on a teacher’s intention to leave teaching?

How much influence did discipline have on your decision to leave teaching?

How are the discipline problems handled at your school?

Are discipline problems handled mostly within the class or is the administration mainly responsible for dealing with discipline problems?

Is there a time out room (TOR) in your school to remove disruptive students from your classroom?

If so is it effective?

Tell me about the discipline problems you encounter in your class.

In your college course work, did you take a course that dealt specifically with discipline and classroom management?

If so, did it arm you with what you needed to handle the discipline problems in your class when you first started teaching?

If not, do you think a course dedicated to discipline and management would have helped?
How?
What do you think would help alleviate the discipline problems in your school?
When you began teaching were you assigned a mentor who could assist you in learning what to do to handle the discipline for the types of students you encountered in your school?
If so was that helpful or not?
Was there someone other than the assigned mentor who assisted you through the first-year problems typically encountered by beginning teachers?

Salary
What impact do you think salary has on a teacher’s intention to leave teaching?
How much influence did salary play on your intention to leave teaching?
If a neighboring parish paid considerably higher salaries would you remain in teaching and transfer to that parish?

Initial Experience
How is teaching different from what you expected?
How could you have been better prepared for your initial year as a teacher?
Are there any comments you would like to make?

Teacher Intention to Leave
Could you recap for me and rank in order the things that you believe have had the most influence on your intention to leave teaching?
We have talked about a number of issues which impact teaching. Please list and rank for me the things that you believe have the greatest influence on teachers leaving the teaching profession?
## APPENDIX H

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE TEACHER

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APPENDIX I

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY

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### APPENDIX J

**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL**

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## Appendix K

### Descriptive Statistics: Teacher Discipline

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## APPENDIX L

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: PRINCIPAL DISCIPLINE

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### APPENDIX M

#### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: LEAVE

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<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
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### APPENDIX N

**MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF TEACHER INTENTIONS TO LEAVE BY VARIABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Obs.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 500</td>
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<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>501-1,000</td>
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<td>2.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.82</td>
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<td>1.88</td>
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<td>40-44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.42</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
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<td>0% - 25%</td>
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<td>1.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>26% - 50%</td>
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<td>2.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>51% - 75%</td>
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<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76% - 100%</td>
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<td>Mid-size City</td>
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<td>1.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Fringe of Large City</td>
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<td>3.83</td>
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<td>Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City</td>
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<td><strong>Discipline</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Personal Teaching Efficacy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Efficacy</strong></td>
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<td>1.87</td>
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</table>

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# APPENDIX O

## APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD: OVERSIGHT FOR STUDIES CONDUCTED IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Application for Exemption from IRB (Institutional Review Board) 
Oversight for Studies Conducted in Educational Settings 
LSU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**Title of Study:** Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Intention to Leave

**Principal Investigator:** Karen Collender

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Richard Fossey

**Dates of proposed project period:** From __________ To __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This study will be conducted in an established or commonly accepted educational setting (schools, universities, summer programs, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This study will involve children under the age of 18.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This study will involve educational practices such as instructional strategies or comparison among educational techniques, curricula, or classroom management strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This study will involve educational testing (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement).</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This study will use data, documents, or records that existed prior to the study.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This study will use surveys or interviews concerning content that is not related to instructional processes.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7. This study will involve procedures other than those described in numbers 3-5 or 6. If yes, describe: ]
If yes, describe: |
| 8. This study will deal with sensitive aspects of subjects' and/or subjects' families' lives, such as sexual behavior or use of alcohol or other drugs. | ✓ |    |
| 9. Data will be recorded so that the subjects cannot be identified by anyone other than the researcher. | ✓ |    |
| 10. Informed consent of subject 13 and older, and/or of the parents/guardian of minor children, will be obtained. | ✓ |    |
| 11. Assent of minors (under age 13) will be obtained. (Answer if #2 above is YES): |    |    |
| 12. Approval for this study will be obtained from the appropriate authority in the educational setting. | ✓ |    |

Attach an abstract of the study and a copy of the consent form(s) to be used. If your answers to numbers 6 and/or 7 is(are) YES, attach a copy of any surveys, interview protocols, or other procedures to be used.

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ASSURANCES

As the principal investigator for the proposed research study, I assure that the following conditions will be met:

1. The human subjects are volunteers.
2. Subjects know that they have the freedom to withdraw at any time.
3. The data collected will not be used for any purpose not approved by the subjects.
4. The subjects are guaranteed confidentiality.
5. The subjects will be informed beforehand as to the nature of their activity.
6. The nature of the activity will not cause any physical or psychological harm to the subjects.
7. Individual performances will not be disclosed to persons other than those involved in the research and authorized by the subject.
8. If minors are to participate in this research, valid consent will be obtained beforehand from parents or guardians.
9. All questions will be answered to the satisfaction of the subjects.
10. Volunteers will consent by signature if over the age of 6.

Principal Investigator Statement:

I have read and agree to abide by the standards of the Belmont Report and the Louisiana State University policy on the use of human subjects. I will advise the Office of the Dean and the University's Human Subject Committee in writing of any significant changes in the procedures detailed above.

Signature __________________________ Date __/__/__

Faculty Supervisor Statement (for student research projects):

I have read and agree to abide by the standards of the Belmont Report and the Louisiana State University policy on the use of human subjects. I will supervise the conduct of the proposed project in accordance with federal guidelines for Human Protection. I will advise the Office of the Dean and the University's Human Subject Committee in writing of any significant changes in the procedures detailed above.

Signature __________________________ Date __/__/__

Reviewer recommendation:

[ ] exemption from IRB oversight. (File this signed application in the Dean's Office.)

[ ] expedited review for minimal risk protocol. (Follow IRB regulations and submit 3 copies to the Dean's Office.)

[ ] full review. (Follow IRB regulations and submit 13 copies to the Dean's Office.)

Name of Authorized Reviewer (Print) __________________________ Signature __________________________ Date __/__/__

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APPENDIX P

LETTERS OF PERMISSION

Interviewer: Karen Callender
Interviewee: _____________________________
Date: ________________
Location: _____________________________

The information obtained in these interviews will be used solely for the purpose of Karen Callender's teacher research project. None of the persons interviewed or their schools shall be identified by name.

I, _____________________________ give my permission to have this interview recorded on audio.

I, _____________________________ do not give my permission to have this interview recorded on audio.

Signature _____________________________
Date ________________
Dear Superintendent ______________________:

I am a graduate student at Louisiana State University working on my dissertation research. I plan to investigate the relationship between teacher intention to leave teaching and the following variables: teacher efficacy, teacher age, community type, student SES, and student discipline. From all public elementary teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth grade with three or less years of experience at the beginning of the 1996-97 school year, I will be selecting a random sample of 200 teachers. I plan to mail out surveys to the 200 teachers and to their respective principals. In addition, I will select eight teachers to interview. I would like to obtain your permission to mail surveys to teachers and principals and to interview teachers in the schools in your parish if they are selected. You have my assurance that names of persons, schools, and parishes will remain anonymous in this study.

It is my hope that this research will provide findings that will help educational professionals learn more about the enormous attrition rate of beginning teachers.

Please mail the enclosed post card back to me indicating whether or not permission will be granted to survey and interview teachers and principals in your parish.

Sincerely,

Karen Calendar
Dear Principal _____________________:

I am a graduate student at Louisiana State University working on my dissertation research. I am investigating the relationship between teacher efficacy (a general perception of whether or not a teacher believes he/she is capable of making an impact in a student’s education) and teacher intention to leave teaching. In addition, I will be looking at the relationship between teacher intention to leave teaching and the following variables: teacher age, community type, student SES and student discipline. Since teachers with few years of experience tend to leave teaching at higher rates than teachers with many years of experience, I am focusing on teachers early in their teaching careers for my investigation.

I am asking principals of teachers surveyed to provide some feedback on discipline also. I would greatly appreciate your time in assisting me in this research. Neither your identity nor your school’s identity will be revealed in this research.

I have obtained permission from your superintendent to survey principals and teachers in your parish. Please complete the following survey information and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by ________________ (date).

Sincerely,

Karen Callender
Dear ________________:

I am a graduate student at Louisiana State University working on my dissertation research. I am investigating the relationship between teacher efficacy (a general perception of whether or not a teacher believes he/she is capable of making an impact in a student’s education) and teacher intention to leave teaching. In addition, I will be looking at the relationship between teacher intention to leave teaching and the following variables: teacher age, community type, student SES and student discipline. Since teachers with few years of experience tend to leave teaching at higher rates than teachers with many years of experience, I am focusing on teachers early in their teaching careers for my investigation.

Your name has been randomly selected from all Louisiana public school teachers in grades kindergarten through fifth with three or less years of experience. I would greatly appreciate your time in assisting me in my research by completing the enclosed survey information. Neither your identity nor your school will be revealed in this research. I have obtained permission from your superintendent for you to assist me in this study.

I have obtained permission from your superintendent to survey principals and teachers in your parish. Please complete the following survey information and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided by ________________ (date).

Sincerely,

Karen Callender
VITA

Karen Elizabeth Callender was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She received her bachelor of science degree in elementary education from Louisiana State University in August of 1983. Karen taught in Terrebonne Parish for one year and in West Baton Rouge Parish for seven years before returning to Louisiana State University where she received her master's of education degree in educational administration in August of 1992. Beginning in August of 1992 she served as teaching-assistant principal in West Baton Rouge parish. In January of 1995 she became principal of Chamberlin Elementary School where she served until June 1996. In January of 1997 she returned to the position of teaching assistant-principal at Brusly Elementary School. In August of 1997 she began working in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education at Louisiana State University. She completed the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in educational administration at Louisiana State University in December of 2000, which will be conferred at the December 2000 Commencement.
Candidate: Karen Callender

Major Field: Educational Administration

Title of Dissertation: Intention To Leave Teaching: A Study of Louisiana Elementary School Teachers Early In Their Careers

Approved:

[Signature]

Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

Date of Examination:

October 17, 2000