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Familial Influences on Second- and Third-Generation Teachers in an Eastern  
Tennessee School District

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A dissertation

Presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

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by

Henry Clay Blazer

August 2009

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Keywords: Teacher Motivations, Influences on Teachers

## ABSTRACT

### Familial Influences on Second- and Third-Generation Teachers in an Eastern Tennessee School District

by

Henry Clay Blazer

The purpose of this study was to determine if having a parent, a grandparent, or both a parent and grandparent who were educators was a contributing factor for teachers in not only choosing education but also remaining in the profession long term. I constructed a theoretical framework explaining the phenomenon. A review of the literature provided a basis for classifying motivations teachers have for entering the profession, possible reasons for leaving, satisfiers, and dissatisfiers. There were 18 participants in this grounded-theory research. The participants were identified using the snowball method. My study was conducted in a rural county in East Tennessee in 1 of 2 school systems present there.

The analysis of the data presented several themes and subsequent findings. The impact of the participants' families was definitely present. Although many participants reported that their parents did not overtly encourage them to become teachers, having witnessed their parents as teachers seemed to have made their transition to teaching easier. Each of the participants had extremely positive childhood experiences with education. The participants also noted that being children of teachers made them more aware of the various types of responsibilities and activities that were required of teachers. The participants also noted that having children of their own

made the schedules of teachers more appealing, as well as their intense desire to see children learn.

I found through the research conducted with the participants of my study that their parents did not push or force them to become teachers; however, the experiences they had as children of teachers seemed to better prepare them for all of the duties, experiences, and expectations teachers face on a regular basis.

## DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents and my grandmother. Seeing the respect, motivation, and overall impact they made on the numerous lives they touched as teachers has always pushed me to want to be the best teacher I could possibly be. In my completion of the process, this type of motivation is what kept me going and assured me that I would complete it someday. My only regret is that my dad and grandmother did not live to see me complete my dreams, but I know they are looking down from heaven with an immense amount of pride.

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...Debbie Hommel and Reba Faye Sane, I have made it and what a difference you have made for me. In more ways than each of you are aware you have molded me into the man, student, and writer I am today. Thank you for modeling what great teachers should be like both inside and outside of the classroom.

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...The many great teachers I interviewed. Teachers like those in my study ensure me that the educational institutions in this nation are not only getting better but will also endure whatever.

...The great teachers I have had throughout my education experience. From elementary school to college, I have truly had some of the greatest mentors one could want.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

From the time I was a child I had big dreams of becoming a national news correspondent. The plans I made were to travel the world reporting on various happenings and conflicts. Luckily for me, I had a great support system at home. Coming from a family of educators, my parents instilled in me a great love for learning. My parents bought maps, globes, almanacs, and other study aids to help me get to know more about the world. My grandmother would quiz me on world capitals, US history, and current events on a regular basis. Dinner table conversations involved political happenings, this date in history, and what encounters my parents had that day in school.

As I entered high school I became more and more interested in history, political science, literature, and mathematics. Furthermore, my grandmother, who was a retired educator of 38 years, would enthral me with stories of her teaching career. Sunday afternoons often involved my grandmother's "war stories" from her years as a seventh-grade social studies and language arts teacher. Despite sharing all of my aspirations with my grandmother, her stories made me realize that I too could enjoy a career in the teaching profession, but I was not sure it would provide me with the perceived glitz and glamour of a broadcasting career.

While I was very close to my grandmother, my parents also encouraged me to pursue my dreams. No matter what dream I selected to pursue, the achievement of that dream would involve obtaining a college degree and learning from whatever experiences life sent my way. Each day would often begin and end with my parents discussing the various happenings at school. Attending the same school where my parents taught piqued my interest in a career in

education. I also had a very clear idea about the responsibilities and duties of teachers. What struck me most about my parents and their jobs were the number of former students who remained in touch with them many years after those students had left the area.

As a college student, while still having the desire to work in another field, I began working as a substitute teacher. This was, by far, the hardest work I had ever done. While working in a seventh-grade social studies classroom, I had an epiphany of sorts. I realized that I could make a difference in students' lives as a teacher instead of a broadcast journalist. I found I enjoyed the looks on students' faces when they learned something new or heard a story about a famous historical character. These events made me realize that a career in the teaching field was for me, and I could instill in students the same love of learning I had possessed for many years. Through my family's connection to the education profession, I could easily see myself in that career 10, 20, or even 50 years down the road. I had finally found my calling. Without even realizing it, my parents led me down the path toward being an educator.

The backgrounds of students entering the teaching profession are varied. Whereas many who enter this profession do so with the intense desire to help others, some enter the profession because of that one teacher who changed their life. Still others may enter the profession with dreams of its easiness and visions of snow days and summers off. No matter what the reason, each year numerous people enter the teaching profession by declaring a major, doing substitute teaching, or taking a job because of their vocational training. An article posted by the National Education Association (Fischer, 2005) highlighted the perceptions of many in the business and other communities of why "Those who can, do... TEACH!" (Fischer). Teaching is a difficult job with many rewards; however, many of those rewards will never be realized in the classroom. Many teachers do not realize the impact they have on their students until those students have

moved into their chosen careers or until many years later. However, despite all the positive aspects, the fact still remains that teachers leave the profession at an alarming rate (Karge, 1993; Norton, 1999; Thornton, 2005; Woolcock, 2007). According to Lambert (2006), the National Education Association reported, “Half of new U. S. teachers are likely to quit within the first five years because of poor working conditions and low salaries” (p. A7). With so many choosing to leave the teaching profession, one has to wonder what keeps so many in the profession long-term.

There are a number of different motivating factors that lead people to the education profession. Some notable members from the political realm of society began a career in public service with their first jobs as teachers. These include former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Sam Rayburn, former president Lyndon Johnson, and first lady Laura Bush (Champagne, 1984; Leo, 2005; "Lyndon Johnson's School Days," 1965). Being lucky, having skills in other areas, or perhaps fate drew many of these people away from teaching. Many people have left the education profession for other reasons besides continuing their careers in public service (Parker, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Smith & Rowley, 2005).

The variety of motivators to enter the teaching profession includes salary, time off, intrinsic motivation, and job security. Previous researchers have sought to determine what specific motivations draw people to the educational field.

### *Purpose of the Study*

Although there have been a number of studies conducted that examined the variety of reasons people have chosen to enter the teaching profession, it is not the intent of this researcher to do that. I am not as interested in the motivations of all teachers; my key interest lies in the

motivating factors for second- and third-generation teachers. These are teachers who have mothers, fathers, or grandparents who are members of the education profession.

Education has changed dramatically throughout the history of the United States. From the increased difficulty of the curriculum to the number of people entering the education profession, the changes have been endless. The inability of many school districts, especially in urban areas, to hire and retain teachers has been a growing problem (Kane & Orsini, 2003; Swift, 1984). As the “baby boom” generation has aged, fewer people have chosen a profession in education; this fact needs to be addressed ("Teachers Leaving Profession," 2005). According to the U. S. Department of Education (2007), many states are experiencing teacher shortages. Those teaching fields experiencing the most extreme shortages include math, science, special education, and foreign languages ("California Faces Critical Shortage," 2007; Olszewski, 1998). The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1986) highlighted many of the challenges facing the education profession over 20 years ago, and many of its findings continue to challenge it today. Only time will tell, but one can imagine that as the standards and rigors being faced by education professionals continue to increase, there will be fewer and fewer persons entering the profession.

One question this raises is what are some of the motivating factors of teachers in the profession today? According to "Why Teachers Teach" (2003), 73% of participants entered the profession with a desire to help young people, 44% said they valued the significance of education in our society, 36% were especially interested in a specific subject matter, and 32% reported the influence of a former teacher. While this list is hardly exhaustive, it does include some of the leading motivational factors teachers stated upon entering the educational field. As the population of this country continues to age, it is logical to presume that current teachers are

likely to retire at a higher rate than incoming teachers are being trained ("Why Teachers Teach"). With this in mind, it becomes more important to understand what draws teachers to the profession. Furthermore, it is important to know what traits or characteristics current teachers possess in order to try to attract those people who are interested in teaching as a career and ensure that their needs are met.

In addition to motivators, further investigation involved those who were currently teaching who perhaps had a familial influence that led them into the profession. When considering a family's influence on the career a person chooses, teaching is no exception. Many children of doctors, lawyers, politicians, and teachers follow in their parents' footsteps. The influence of one's family is often understudied in research today. Quantitative studies have focused on motivating factors (Guthrie & Wigfield, 1999; Marshall & Weinstein, 1984). In this qualitative study consisting of interviews with second- and third-generation teachers, I tried to find patterns of motivation influencing these teachers in one county in the Tennessee Valley and to determine what familial influences they received and their possible impact in leading them to the teaching profession. The purpose of this study was to determine if having a parent, a grandparent, or both a parent and grandparent who were educators was a contributing factor for teachers in not only choosing education but also remaining in the profession long term.

### *Significance of the Study*

This study is unlike others that have been conducted for a variety of reasons. There has been little research directly related to why second- or third-generation teachers entered the profession. A search for research regarding familial influences on choosing the field yielded

little information. This was troubling to me because it seems many people in the educational field would be interested in this type of research.

There are several groups who might be interested in this particular type of research. Among those are principals or those in charge of hiring personnel for a school system. The results of this research might aid them in pinpointing those individuals who would be more likely to remain in the educational field. Other groups that could also benefit are anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists. Each of these groups could use the findings as a springboard for research as to the impact families have on career choice.

Up to this point, the completed research on this topic has been somewhat unrelated to the actual topic. There has been a significant amount of research and study conducted on motivations for teachers to teach and motivation for entering teacher education programs at college or university levels. There has also been an increased effort in recent years to study motivations that keep teachers in the profession and, more importantly, how those motivations have changed over the past few decades. This study is somewhat weakened by the fact that there is little or no research regarding the family's influence on teachers in any way. This study might open doors to this interesting aspect.

Although my study was limited to teachers in one county in the Tennessee Valley, it might have national implications, especially when one considers the upcoming shortage of teachers. I hope to offer an opportunity for researchers and other teachers in this area to find a link as to why some people become teachers and remain in the profession and others do not. The national implications could help many districts around the nation find, recruit, and keep their best teachers. This could help the education profession as a whole. If it becomes possible to discover there are one or two factors that help obtain and maintain teachers in the United States today,



then the shortage, especially in areas like math, science, special education, and foreign languages, could come to an end.

This particular study could have implications for other disciplines outside of education. It might help researchers in other areas look for connections in their own fields. For example, medical researchers could see if there is a link between prospective doctors and their relationship with their families. The same could be said of any number of vocations. My study might help researchers in these areas have a better understanding of what draws certain people to their professions.

### *Research Questions*

There were a number of questions answered with the qualitative research conducted in this study; however, the main question was:

As a second-or third-generation teacher, what impact did your family have on your decision to enter the education profession as a teacher?

Subsequent data were garnered based on the following questions:

1. What familial factors influenced second- and third-generation teachers' decisions to enter the teaching profession?
2. How did childhood experiences with parents or grandparents as educators influence their decision to enter the educational profession?
3. What experiences of these family members who were educators helped prepare second- and third-generation teachers for longevity in classroom teaching?
4. Were there any other factors from outside the familial setting that had a major impact on their decision to enter the education field?

### *Scope of Research*

In this particular grounded-theory research, I interviewed 18 second- or third-generation elementary school teachers about their motivations to enter the education profession and become teachers. The teachers interviewed were located in one county in East Tennessee. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was conducted using an interview guide. Each interview took place in the teacher's classroom or another place designated by that teacher. Teachers were selected using the snowball method in having teachers refer other teachers they knew who fit the criterion of being a second- or third-generation teacher.

### *Statement of Researcher's Perspective*

I am a third-generation classroom teacher in East Tennessee on the secondary level. Falling into this particular subgroup of educators, I am keenly aware of the impact family had on my personal decision to enter the education field. Because I had such positive role models to help me choose a career in education, I began to wonder if any other teachers who fit into my circumstances felt the same. During my short career as a teacher on the secondary level, I have witnessed many of my students graduate, attend college, or enter the workforce in the same field as their parents did. Although not all educators take this route, enough of them do that I feel certain the vocation of one's parents has a huge impact on the career decision-making process of students. Once I selected a qualitative methodology, I began interviewing teachers. The interview process enabled second- and third-generation teachers to share their story of choosing the education profession. With this information I can try to understand better the possible phenomenon of second- and third-generation teachers' motivation and familial influences. As a result, one bias that could have surfaced during the research process is my core belief that one's

family has a major impact on his or her decision to enter a particular profession. I worked hard to ensure that my personal feelings did not influence the participants' contribution in this research study.

### *Statement of Quality and Verification*

The grounded theory used in this research project has emerged with a purposeful sample of teachers from eight elementary schools within my home county. Because I had a personal contact with each of the interviewees, some of them might have felt intimidated to share their feelings, especially if they thought their feelings were not in alignment with what I might have known about them. In order to improve internal and external validity, each interviewee had the opportunity to review the transcription of his or her interview. This was done to help ensure the accuracy of each participant's viewpoint. In addition, I sought to triangulate the data by interviewing participants from a variety of schools within my county.

### *Delimitations*

This particular study is not likely applicable to all segments of the teaching population. Because the study was conducted in a smaller, more rural area, the findings might not be applicable to teachers in a suburban or urban setting. The findings in this particular study are delimited mostly to more rural areas across the United States. The study is also delimited to elementary school teachers.

### *Definitions of Terms*

This section provides definitions of terms that are used in this study in alphabetical order.

1. *Longevity:* This is in reference to the time a person has remained in the teaching profession. In order to be considered for longevity, the person must have been teaching a minimum of 5 years.
2. *Second-generation teacher:* For the purpose of this study, a second-generation teacher is one who has or had one or both parents who were educators.
3. *Third-generation teacher:* For the purpose of this study, a third-generation teacher is one who has or had a grandparent only or both a parent and grandparent who were educators.

### *Overview of the Study*

Chapter 1 included an introduction of the study, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, the scope of the research, a statement of the researcher's perspective, an explanation of quality and verification, delimitations, definitions of terms, and an overview. Chapter 2 contains a review of research dealing with teacher motivators, collegiate opinions of teaching, the role parents and other relatives have had on the selection and retention of teachers, religion, preservice programs, and reasons teachers given for leaving the profession. The research methodology is described in Chapter 3 with an explanation of sampling methods, recruiting protocols, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. Chapter 4 contains the data analysis, and Chapter 5 includes the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Introduction*

There are many different ways to examine the teaching profession. Many studies and research projects have been dedicated to all sorts of problems and theories regarding education. Recently, there have been reports by reliable news organizations stating there will be a teacher shortage in the US in the near future because many teachers are retiring or will have the number of years required to retire within the next 10 years. This projected teacher shortage has given cause for many researchers to study what motivated past and present teachers to enter the teaching profession. The motivations that prospective teachers give for choosing their careers could greatly affect their attitudes about the profession.

Before focusing on what motivates second- and third-generation teachers to enter the profession, I wanted to investigate not only what a teacher is but also what makes that person successful. According to the Associated Press (2005), a teacher is a person students look to as a role model and mentor. Furthermore, to be considered a “successful teacher,” this person must be a leader, mentor, friend, and expert. Whereas this aspect of the profession is fairly broad, there are other segments of the profession such as teacher leaders, mentor teachers, and administrators who have a particular role in not only ensuring the school is run in an efficient manner but also in helping to keep the best teachers in the profession and, more importantly, in their schools. Patterson and Patterson (2004) defined a teacher leader as a teacher who works with his or her fellow teachers in an effort to improve overall quality of teaching and learning whether it is done in an informal or formal manner. A mentor teacher is a teacher who provides

support, advice, and guidance and serves as a sounding board for beginning teachers. An administrator can be defined as the leader of a team of teachers in a school building. The administrator is often responsible for discipline, curriculum, fundraising, mediating, and solving a variety of problems the school or its personnel might encounter over the course of a day, month, or school year.

There are many kinds of teacher education programs in place across the United States. The motivations for entering such programs can differ depending on each teacher's age, race, religious affiliation, or whether or not one is a parent. All of the different factors that can influence motivations are also dependent on the geographic location and socioeconomic status of those entering the field. One problem that researchers have had addressing what motivates students to enter teacher education is whether those motivators could influence the future performance of the teachers.

Why do college students decide to go into the education field? The answer is not simple. The problems facing the education field are enormous. For example, rising school violence, lack of compensation for work, inclusion of special needs children, and expanding class sizes make teaching a less than inviting career choice for many. In addition, the changing role of women has greatly influenced the quality and number of teachers entering the field. In the past, because of their limited role, women had only a few career options--one of which was becoming a teacher. The women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s contributed to a major shift in women's roles. Around the same time, there was an apparent decline in the quality of those entering the education work force. When it appeared in the mid 1980s that there were some serious problems with education, many colleges and universities reworked their programs in order to give future teachers a more complete and realistic preparation for classroom teaching.

The need for teachers and the revamping of the teacher education programs still does not explain why people decide to enter the education field. An indepth review of literature regarding the area of why teachers teach might provide a realistic outlook into a person's motivation to enter the field.

### *Teacher Motivations*

There are a variety of motivating factors for teachers as they enter the profession. These motivators are both tangible and intangible and might have changed over the past 30 years. Farber (1991), writing for the National Center for Education, stated that most individuals entered the education profession in order to help young people and in order to use their own abilities. Teachers are looking for a variety of things to help motivate them. Farber suggested that for many teachers the greatest reward was either helping or motivating children to learn.

When addressing the status of education in this nation, most researchers look at teachers, their abilities, and their motivations for either entering or remaining in the profession. The teachers who remain motivated throughout their careers are, to many people, the most inspiring. According to Yeager (2003), "They choose to see the best in everyone... they choose to believe that each child has value and that every child can (and will) succeed" (p. 11). These teachers serve as an inspiration to others in the profession who do not achieve or maintain this level of enthusiasm. It is easy to see, for most in the profession, why these people remain so committed to educating their students. One potential reason for their enduring enthusiasm is their positive self-image and concepts.

The results from Wadsworth's (2001) research relating to teacher motivation and retention were somewhat surprising in terms of conventional thoughts toward teachers' attitudes.

Wadsworth found that most young teachers, by their own admission, were highly motivated and committed with high morale leading them to work on a regular basis. Many of these new teachers said they saw themselves as responding to a calling. In doing this, they reported being talented, hardworking, and dedicated to their professions. Although Wadsworth's findings are somewhat contrary to conventional beliefs about teaching, and more specifically beginning teachers, they provide an upbeat example of research to support the altruistic nature, absent of cynicism, that has been prevalent in many educational circles today.

Whitaker, Whitaker, and Lumpa (2000) supported this belief of positive self-concept. They contended that when teachers fully understood, accepted, and liked themselves they were more inclined to be able to do the same things with their students. In order to be successful in the teaching field, teachers need to be able to understand, accept, and like their students. Each of the characteristics mentioned above is a key to teachers being able to endure, succeed, and motivate themselves throughout their careers. Calabrese (1987) reported the incredible stress placed on teachers and explained the damage these stressors could have on their abilities to motivate students and themselves. In order to be successful, Calabrese pointed out that professionals should realize stress is a part of the job. Not all stress is bad. Management of one's stress might enable teachers to be successful or it might provide a negative impact on their career. Unmanaged stress could cause many teachers to leave the profession.

The difficulty in keeping teachers motivated depends on which level they are teaching: elementary, middle, or high school. Marston, Brunetti, and Courtney's (2005) study of high school and elementary school teachers offered further insights into how grade levels could affect motivations. One aspect of the study involved the importance of relationships with other teachers and administrators. Elementary school teachers were more likely to want good relations



with other teachers than were high school teachers. This is particularly interesting because the study also revealed that having “good teacher colleagues” was a motivator for remaining in the profession. Although this one study pointed to the difference in the levels of teaching, the authors wrote that it was more significant that teachers view good colleagues (e. g. interesting, supportive, and committed to teaching) as a strong motivator (Marston et al.) Therefore, one key to maintaining teachers could lie in an administrator’s ability to maintain a “good” staff possessing the above qualities.

Motivations for those entering the education field were very similar regardless of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. Researchers have found that people from all areas and walks of life were interested in teaching. According to the Association of Teacher Educators (1991), those teaching the children of this nation should represent all aspects of the American people and their ways of life. Without this major diversity, there could be a negative statement about our society sent to the nation’s young people. Bauman’s (2002) study dealing with African American students and Smulyan’s (2004) research on gender and the choice of teaching as a career found similarities about why many were entering and remaining in the teaching profession. Factors like love of children, the ability to be a role model, and desire to help others were leading factors for individuals in both groups to enter and remain in the profession (Smulyan).

One possible reason for the decline in motivations resulting in teachers leaving the profession rather than retirement from it was what Lortie (1975) referred to as staging. Lortie argued that in other professions such as law or medicine there were stages of a professional’s career. In these professions, people spend many years in school, obtain their first jobs (often low paying), and expect their income levels and opportunity for advancement to increase with time.

This discrepancy could make teachers much less future oriented than professionals are in other careers. Some teachers soon realize that simply putting more of themselves into their careers might not necessarily mean greater rewards. Because more tangible rewards are reached earlier in their careers and extra time spent for activities has little or few rewards, those teachers who do put in extra time might begin to feel under rewarded.

There have been a variety of studies on the motivators for teachers entering the profession and on why teachers remain in the profession long term. Pearson and Moomaw (2006) cited several intrinsic and extrinsic motivators for teachers. Intrinsic motivators, or motivators inside the teacher, included the desire to help students achieve, desire to make a difference in society, and having a sense of accomplishment when students learn. Extrinsic motivators, or motivators outside of the teacher's control, include pay, nonmonetary fringe benefits (summers off, no weekend or holidays), and recognition of performance. According to Pearson and Moomaw, the intrinsic motivators were much stronger for the teachers than were the extrinsic motivators. Sarafoglu's (1997) research pointed to such intrinsic motivators as love of learning, love of children, resilience, collegiality, and reflectivity. Most teachers would agree that if their administrators would simply help foster the above ideals they would have much higher job satisfaction.

Sinclair, Dowson, and McInerney (2006) had their own list of teacher motivations. Even though their study was conducted in Australia, it has certain implications for the United States as well. According to their research, there were several different motivations that led teachers into the education profession and helped sustain them throughout their careers. As mentioned in some of the above research, most of those were intrinsic motivators. First, there was the love of or desire to work with children or adolescents. Teachers also looked for the perceived value or

worth in teaching to others. Those entering the education profession also tended to have a desire to help others. Some of those people had dissatisfaction with previous careers. Persons entering the profession might look to the perceived benefits or convenience of teaching. These factors included work schedule, work hours, vacation time, and salary. Still some teachers said they entered the profession because it is often perceived that it is easy to enter the teaching profession, either the preservice programs or the job itself. Some teachers enjoyed the intellectual stimulation teaching provides, especially on the secondary level. Many teachers of those subject levels entered the profession because they loved a particular subject or wanted to impart further knowledge to a new generation of students. Many teachers had been influenced by family members, former teachers, or members in their communities. Other teachers cited motivations that included the status of teaching. They said they liked the opportunities for advancement, both career and socially. Others reported that teaching provided an opportunity to create and sustain satisfying interactions with others (Sinclair et al.). Wedel and Jennings (2006) wrote, “If the teacher is motivated and enthusiastic about what he or she is doing, then there is a greater probability students will be motivated as well” (p. 6). Ultimately, no matter what motivates teachers to either enter the profession or push themselves toward excellence in teaching, the main goal for most teachers has been for students to achieve to their utmost abilities.

The motivations for teachers to teach can be different among various other groups including women (Allard, Bransgrove, Cooper, Dunan, & MacMilan, 1995), minority groups, (Dilworth, 1991; Gordon, 1993), those with differing levels of academic achievement (Hart & Murphy, 1990; Weiner, Swearingen, Pagano, & Obi, 1993; Whately, 1998), those with different nationalities (Yong, 1995), and second career teachers (Crowe, Levine, & Nager, 1990; Serow, 1993).

### *Collegiate Opinions of Teaching*

The factors that lead teachers to teach can cover a wide range of topics, but one overlying factor almost all educators cited was the desire to help children learn. Weiner et al. (1993) compared motivations and performances of Harvard and Urban College students who were or had been enrolled in the field of education. The motivations for joining the programs at the two colleges were not nearly as different as the rank order for the motivations. According to Weiner et al., Harvard's program is designed to train high-achieving graduates or current participants of select liberal arts colleges to become secondary teachers. The program at Urban College is different because its student population is racially and socially diverse. Many of its participants are adult learners, so this could be a reason why the ranks of their motivations are different from the students at Harvard. The reasons Urban College students gave as a desire to become teachers were the opportunity to be creative, enjoyment from working with children, desire for jobs that were socially useful, a desire to aid in changing society, and having a job they could do well. Interestingly, both sets of students listed the same motivators, but the rank order that each gave was almost opposite. Harvard students cited the opportunity to be creative as the top choice, whereas Urban College students listed enjoyment in working with younger people as their most motivating choice. Snyder (1995) studied a group of students in the Mid-Atlantic part of the country. The group that was examined had many of the same motivations for teaching; however, a majority of the students said they did not believe they would be able to find a job. Participants in the study stated that the whole idea of a teacher shortage simply was not the case. Interestingly, as well, this group cited benefits and job security as motivations to become teachers. In Texas, Kelley (1997) studied what motivated teachers in that part of the country to enter the field. Like their counterparts in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic, they gave many of the

same answers, but Kelley found discontentment that the others seemingly did not find or at least acknowledge. The Texas students stated that their program of study did not emphasize classroom management; therefore, teaching in the beginning was more difficult for them (Kelly). Looking at a West Virginia example, Bontempo and Digman (1985) examined the reasons for students in that area of the country to choose teaching as a career. Most notably, the role of family came into play in this area more so than in the others. Many of the participants in this study desired to become teachers because a member of their family was a teacher thus making it “in the blood.” This had not been mentioned by any of the other previous researchers. The role that a family plays in one's desire to become a teacher is not limited to parents or siblings who are educators. As found with many other vocational groups, it could be motivating simply because of parental influences.

Darling-Hammond's (1987) review of the Holmes Group Report at Columbia's Teachers College raised even more serious questions about motivations to teach. This researcher cited that in many instances teachers were deemed not fully prepared to teach, but they were allowed to enter the workforce anyway. Darling-Hammond's essay in response to the report came at a time in the mid 1980s when many were questioning the role of teacher education programs. These questions led to a large-scale movement aimed at recruiting more qualified professionals into the teaching field. Porter's (1987) essay on enhancing teacher education programs also provided several suggestions or guidelines for helping strengthen those who entered the field. Among the recommendations were strengthening the evaluation process, ensuring students were aware of pedagogy of the education field, improving test administration, and implementing effective classroom management.

### *Role of Parents*

Parents might be the first influence on their child's choice of profession. Most people in the United States do not have ambitions to become educators but many do have intentions of becoming parents. When taking on the role of parenting, one is also forced into the role of an educator. Whether it pertains to walking, talking, riding a bicycle, or playing the piano, parents have opportunities to teach their children at many points in their lives. Such informal teaching reportedly has prompted many parents, especially women, to look toward education as a career. MacDonald (1999) studied why mothers were more likely to become teachers after having children of their own. She studied how mothering knowledge and skills influenced a parent's own development as a teacher. She further studied how teachers' experiences influenced their decisions as parents. One of the main findings in MacDonald's research was that teachers' mothers influenced how they taught and their perceptions about teaching. Teachers who were mothers, according to MacDonald, said they were more patient, flexible, empathetic, and sensitive to students because of their mothering experience. Each of the women in the study had the desire to become an elementary school teacher.

### *Role of Religion*

Religion has played a key role in education since the United States was founded. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was one of the underlying bases for public and private education across the United States. Ackley and Arwood (1999) researched the role of religion in the decision many people made to become educators. He studied the Alliance for Catholic Education and its role in finding and developing effective teachers. These students had many of the same motivations for becoming classroom teachers as in the others studies reported, but the main difference between

these students was that a majority of them said they felt as if they had a divine calling to enter the education field. This was especially true of those students who were Catholic, but interestingly the results were not much different for Protestant respondents. The reason for researching such a topic is that many laypersons have noted that teacher education is a highly moral and ethical profession, and it is imperative for only those persons who meet those criteria to become educators. This suggested the only way for teacher education programs to attract candidates with high moral and ethical standards was through preadmission screening. This whole debate supports the notion that not all people enter the education field in order to help children or have the opportunity to be creative. According to Ackley and Arwood, some entered the profession because they felt they were called by the divine.

### *Preservice Programs*

Another aspect regarding motivations for becoming a teacher was the role of the preservice programs at the college or university level that shaped many future teachers' perceptions and goals once they entered into the field. Marso and Pigge (1998) studied attitudes toward teaching for preservice teachers those who had taught for several years and those who had left the profession. The problem that Marso and Pigge encountered was that students said they were left with a feeling that they were not prepared to be teachers after leaving their college programs. This lack of preparation caused many of those in this survey to drop out of the teaching profession after a few years. The researchers also found that some teachers who did feel well prepared by their programs were the same teachers who were still teaching 5 years later. Kushner (1995) offered a differing view in her study. She suggested the relevance of the required coursework for those in teacher education was not the best preparation that could be

given for students who are prospective teachers. The motivations of the students who went through the student teaching period were severely challenged because of the lack of preparation that many preservice programs offered.

Preservice programs can be very different depending on the teaching level. Generally, the elementary school teacher's preparation focuses on the child's personal and social development to a greater extent than does the preparation for the secondary level. The emphasis in preservice programs in the secondary level tends to focus more on skills and mastery of content knowledge (Rich & Shiram, 2005). The difference in the two areas and how prepared teachers are to begin a career gives further insight into why teachers enter and leave the profession.

Many colleges and universities have preservice programs that give future teachers the necessary preparation required to keep them from quitting the teaching profession after a short length of time. Whitebeck (2000) researched attitudes toward teaching by interviewing preservice interns entering a college of education's holistic teaching and learning programs. He noted that most of his subjects said they felt they had a "special calling" or "gift" that made them more successful in their chosen careers. The gift these students said they had was what qualified them to excel at teaching. He also pointed out that many preservice teachers had a simplistic view of the teaching profession. Generally, these preservice teachers viewed the job of teaching as being relatively easy and expressed very few concerns about their abilities as future teachers. One explanation for this perception was also the view of the American public in general. These preservice teachers had spent many years observing teachers and that observation time made them experts. The three main categories that emerged in Whitebeck's research were the calling or gift, early identification with teachers as role models, and a self-view as being a teacher.



### *Reasons for Leaving*

What are the reasons so many teachers leave the profession after teaching for only a few years? Those students who were so highly motivated prior to the student teaching period often lost their motivation and drive during this period or shortly thereafter. Marlow (1997) studied why so many beginning teachers left their professions before the end of their 1<sup>st</sup> year of teaching. The results were somewhat surprising. Beginning teachers' reasons for leaving the education field had less to do with insufficient salaries than they did with a lack of professionalism, collegiality, and administrative support. These findings provided insight into why people who were so highly motivated prior to teaching soon lost their motivation. Marlow's research addressed so many reasons for leaving the teaching profession that it makes one wonder if there is any way that people could still remain in the teaching profession. Tatto (1998) found that fault with the preparation of teachers at the college or university level was secondary to the lack of professional norms across the teacher education programs. The idea is that there is not really one accepted way to teach the most proficiently as is present in so many other disciplines. Tatto also cited that the lack of disciplinary knowledge and teaching practices were major problems with preservice teacher education programs. If programs across the country would use relatively similar materials and instructional knowledge, then a uniform type of teaching might emerge.

Pearson and Moomaw (2006) cited several studies that dealt with teacher autonomy and motivation. Their study built on previous studies dealing with motivators for teachers to teach and why they were leaving the profession. Their research pointed to a study that stated there were three main intrinsic reasons why teachers left their profession. The first was a need for the teachers to experience personal growth and described how teachers felt at various stages in their teaching careers about an inability to grow personally as a teacher. They pointed to the increased

importance placed on state mandated testing. The next motivator was a desire to develop and grow their own philosophy of education. The third point was that many teachers said they felt there was a lack of respect and recognition for their efforts. In other words, many teachers noted that they were often overlooked in their continuing efforts to work and improve their students' lives and being dedicated to the schools at which they taught. In some cases, teachers even said they felt resentment for trying to go beyond what was required of them by their administrators.

Teacher autonomy is another important facet to a teacher's ability to remain in the profession. A study by Perie and Baker (1997) demonstrated that the degree of autonomy perceived by teachers was a strong indicator of their current job satisfaction. Furthermore, the study pointed to positive school climate, good student behavior, administrative support and leadership, and teacher autonomy as being the types of working conditions in which teachers were more satisfied with their jobs than if these conditions were not present.

Brunetti (2001) further illustrated this point when he found that retaining of autonomy in the classroom was a major factor in a teacher's decision to remain in the teaching profession. Dissatisfaction with their job as teachers can lead to stress and burnout. According to Kyriacou (1989), "Teacher stress refers to the experience by teachers of unpleasant emotions such as anger, tension, frustration, anxiety, depression and nervousness...resulting from their work" (p. 27). Whereas this lack of autonomy could lead some teachers to leave the profession, there are still aspects of their jobs that either will not allow them to leave or will make teachers think there are reasons to stay in the profession.

Fredricks (2001) and Walters (2004) pointed to the administration of the schools as being an often underlooked factor into why many teachers left the profession. Schools' administrators set the tone for a particular school's learning and working environment (Fredricks). When

administrators praise teachers for a job well done or for working hard, teachers responded overwhelmingly. For many teachers, a simple word of praise can erase all that has gone wrong over the course of a day. Walters stated teachers do not need negative pressures from administrators; instead, they respond much more favorably to positive, up-beat signals sent by school administrators.

According to Loui (2006), teachers cited a variety of reasons for remaining in the profession. Some teachers said they remained because of the love they shared with their students. In essence this is “the loyal, attentive nurturing of their intellectual and personal development” (p. 285). There is a changing face of those teachers who choose to leave the profession. In the past those people who were likely to leave the profession were either just getting started or ready for retirement. According to Tye and O’Brien (2002) those who are least likely to leave the profession, but growing at an alarming rate, are those in the middle.

### *Summary*

When first prompted with the question, “What motivates students to enter the teaching profession?” the answers seemed simple and few. The consequent review of literature has led the researcher down a completely different path. There are many underlying factors that can lead someone into the education profession. It is hard to imagine there are just one or two reasons that motivate people to become teachers. They may vary depending on where one lives, one's religious affiliations, and participation in preservice programs. Each of these factors gives new perspectives into motivations for becoming a teacher. The motivations for becoming a teacher are relatively clear. The research does suggest that geographic location, socioeconomic status, religion, and role as parents play a major part in determining whether or not one enters the

teaching profession. The research does show conflicting evidence on the rank order of these reasons. What is the main motivation driving people to become teachers? Research that should be conducted in the future must revolve more around the familial role in becoming a teacher. Are children of teachers more likely to become teachers themselves or to choose other vocations? What role do parents play in their children's choice of careers as educators? These questions are especially puzzling to those people in the United States who simply do not see the true value of teachers. If research can be done to find the main motivating factor for becoming a teacher, only then will the question, "What motivates people to enter the education profession?" be answered.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes an indepth explanation of the research design along with the rationale for selecting participants. Next, the ethical protocol is presented in detail, followed by an explanation of the data collection process. The final section explains how the data were analyzed.

#### *Introduction*

For this research project I studied motivators of second- and third-generation teachers. More specifically, I intended to discover if familial influences that led certain teachers into the profession were present and, if so, to what degree. The research questions included the factors influencing second- and third-generation teachers to enter the profession, the impact childhood experiences with parents as educators made on professional choices, how familial experiences enabled second- and third-generation teachers to remain in the profession long term, and other aspects that might have impacted second- and third-generation teachers to enter the profession. Overall, the purpose of this study was to determine if having a parent, a grandparent, or both a parent and grandparent who were educators was a contributing factor for teachers in not only choosing education but also remaining in the profession long term.

#### *Selection of Participants*

According to Merriam (1998), a purposeful sampling is one that is based on the assumption the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight involving whatever

particular group he or she has chosen to study. Because of this, the researcher must choose a population from which the most amount of knowledge can be learned. Creswell (2003) iterated this idea by noting that the qualitative researcher must purposefully select his or her participants to help the researcher better understand the problem or the research question. The purposeful sample for this project was limited to teachers who were second- or third-generation teachers in an elementary school and who were currently teaching in one county in East Tennessee. Second- or third-generation teachers are those people who have had parents, grandparents, or both who were actively involved in the teaching profession. According to Bernard (2002), snowball sampling is asking members of the specific subgroup being studied to name others who might be candidates for research. I used the snowball method of purposeful sampling.

Although I began by contacting the city director and the county director of schools for permission to conduct the study (see Appendices D & E), I arrived at an adequate sample size from one system. Principals at the schools in this system were contacted and asked if the researcher could contact and interview the qualified candidates. The initial contact was done through the principals, then a letter of explanation was sent to each willing participant (see Appendix A). The purpose of the letter was to let each participant know details of the study and his or her role in the study. When participants agreed to an interview, a time for the interview was set and a follow-up letter sent as a reminder of the date, time, and place of the interview. When I met the interviewee on the date specified, each person was asked to sign a letter of consent (see Appendix B). As contacts were made, the snowball method of finding other potential subjects was used and the above process repeated.

### *Recruiting Protocol*

I contacted several principals in the county to see how many of them had teachers in their buildings who would qualify for the study and would allow an interview. After the initial contact with the principal to obtain a list of names from that school, the researcher began contacting the teachers. After a brief overview of the research and obtaining verbal agreement to participate along with a meeting time, each contact was asked to submit the names of any other teachers who met the criteria needed to participate in the research.

### *Ethical Protocol*

Ethical issues related to the research were of utmost importance. There were several steps taken to ensure the research was done in an ethical manner. When I contacted each participant, the overall research objectives were shared. The nature of the research made it possible to ask participants if they were willing and able to participate in the research. If there was an oral consent, I sent each interviewee a written consent approved by the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B). Prior to each interview, the researcher collected the written permission from the participants to ensure there were no reservations about participating in the study.

### *Data Collection*

The primary method of data collection for the research consisted of interviews and field notes from those interviews. Data from the interviews were collected from November 2008 to January 2009 inclusive. Interview locations were confined to the interviewees' school classroom or office, their homes, or some other neutral location agreed upon by both parties. Each

interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes and was digitally recorded in an effort to ensure accuracy and thoroughness. Each participant in the study had the opportunity to read over the transcript of his or her interview to help ensure accuracy. The questions for the interview were built using those created by a field interview guide. Using the interview guide, I continued asking probing questions in an effort to gather information needed to answer the research questions. Field notes were taken during the interviews for two reasons. The first was to help me easily recall the specific details and unique features of the interview. This was done in addition to the transcriptions of the interview. The second reason was to enable me as the researcher to record specific details of the interview, thoughts that immediately followed, or other interesting details of the experience that I might not remember at a later date.

The interview guide had a variety of information included (see Appendix C). The guide was created to ensure certain questions were asked to obtain answers to the various research questions. The nature of the unstructured interview allowed for each interview to take a different course while still answering the same or similar questions. The guide was developed from my experience with the phenomenon and expanded as information presented itself during the interview process as well as using the limited amount of literature that was present.

### *Data Analysis*

All data collected during the interview process and my field notes were analyzed using the Strauss and Corbin (1998) constant comparison analysis method. This particular method was used because it enabled me to develop categories and concepts in an effort to analyze material continually. This constant comparison provided direction for the subsequent interviews.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) stated:



The constant comparative method of grounded theory means (a) comparing different people (such as their views, situations, actions, accounts, and experiences) (b) comparing data from the same individuals with themselves at different points in time, (c) comparing incident with incident, (d) comparing data with category, and (e) comparing a category with another category. (p. 260)

This particular method enabled me to place the responses into categories and concepts as related to the method.

After each interview was transcribed, I identified emerging concepts and categories related to the participants' motivators and familial impact on entering and remaining in the elementary education field. I started using a qualitative analysis first, but soon found it to be too cumbersome and began to code by hand to assist with this open coding of interview data. As codes were developed to label concepts that emerged, I examined other data for similar outcomes and ideas. After key concepts emerged, I began to create theoretical groupings of related concepts in order to categorize further the findings of the research.

Next, I analyzed the data using axial coding. During this process, I laid out properties and dimensions of the categories. Next, I related the nature of the subcategories to the major categories by developing statements to explain the relationships mentioned above. Additionally, I developed connections and relationships among the various categories.

The final analysis of the data involved using selective coding. This particular process involved choosing a central category with all other categories relating to this particular category. I made sure all categories were consistent and without force. The choices for the central categories named or phrased were selected to ensure that others who want to conduct research in the same areas may do so. This research might help to develop the theory further. This also allowed the theory to be constantly refined and made stronger as the study of it grew.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to determine if having a parent, a grandparent, or both a parent and grandparent who were educators was a contributing factor for teachers in not only choosing education but also remaining in the profession long term. My primary goal was to aid in answering the question, "As a second or third generation teacher, what impact did your family have on your decision to enter the education profession as a teacher?" With that in mind, I conducted interviews in a rural county in East Tennessee. The interviewees came from one school system. An interview guide was developed, as detailed in Chapter 3, and the interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. This chapter provides the findings of the data gathering process.

#### *Selection of Participants*

When permission had been granted to me from the director of schools (Appendix D), I began by contacting principals of each of the local elementary schools to see if they knew of potential interviewees: elementary school teachers who had a parent or parents, grandparent only, or both parents and grandparents who were or had been teachers. After receiving a list of potential participants, I also looked at the system's personnel listing to determine if there were any other potential interviewees who met the criterion. As I interviewed the participants, I also asked them if they knew of anyone who met the criterion of having a parent, grandparent, or both who were teachers. This snowball sampling helped me to obtain a better overall picture of the

phenomenon and achieve saturation of the topic. Interviewees were asked if they were willing to participate in the study and each one signed the informed consent form (see Appendix B).

Each participant was selected based on the primary criterion of having a parent, grandparent only, or both parent and grandparent who were or had been teachers. Furthermore, the participants had to be currently teaching, or if in an administrative capacity, had been in that role for fewer than 3 years. Of the teachers interviewed, half or nine, were classroom teachers, and the others were involved in teaching a specialized class (art, physical education, music, guidance, or library) or were in an administrative capacity. Of the nine specialized teachers, four had been classroom teachers at some point in their careers and the other five had always taught specialized courses. There were two administrators interviewed. One had taught in the classroom and the other taught a specialized course.

### *Conducting the Research*

After the potential participants were identified, contacted, and the interview terms were explained, the actual interviews took place at the time and location of the interviewees' choosing. Sites ranged from the athletic practice field of a participating teacher and coach to a favorite local restaurant. Many teachers wanted the interviews conducted at their schools in their classrooms or offices. A few teachers wanted the interviews to be conducted at a neutral location. Most interviews were conducted directly or shortly after the school day, but some teachers wanted the interviews to be conducted later in the evening. Some of the teachers were involved in after-school programs and desired for the interviews to take place during that time. There were no interviews that took place in the early morning; all were in the afternoon or evening hours. Before each interview took place, I reminded the interviewees that participation

in the study was voluntary. Each participant was further assured that that I would strive to keep his or her identity confidential by using pseudonyms and going to extra efforts to keep the teaching locations of each participant confidential as well. The interviews lasted until a point of saturation had been reached in questions or until I deemed the interviewee had sufficiently answered the overarching research question:

As a second- or third-generation teacher, what impact did your family have on your decision to enter the education profession as a teacher?

Subsequent research questions were:

1. What familial factors influenced second- and third-generation teachers' decisions to enter the teaching profession?
2. How did childhood experiences with parents or grandparents as educators influence their decision to enter the educational profession?
3. What experiences of these family members who were educators helped prepare second- and third-generation teachers for longevity in classroom teaching?
4. Were there any other factors from outside the familial setting that had a major impact on their decision to enter the education field?

In addition to each interview, I also took notes of body language and other notable factors that took place during the interviews. Immediately following each interview, I also wrote about my overall thoughts of the interview, how well it went, and the interviewee's overall demeanor. I also tried to record things that could not be measured in a transcription or revealed when I relistened to the interviews following transcription. It was at this point I also commented on any "off the record" kinds of comments. Off the record comments were those comments made in the closing moments of the entire process and could not be recorded; however, they could have a

slight relevance to the study. Some of those interviewed who seemed to be a little reserved during the interviews were more open during the last few minutes and after the recorder was turned off.

### *Interviewees*

Initially, along with the help of principals, personnel listing, and personal knowledge of teachers, I identified a list of 15 potential candidates. The snowball method, once the interview process began, provided me with an additional 9 people. When contact was made with each of those people, I found 18 who were willing to participate in the study. With this number, saturation had been met in the area in which I wanted to focus my attention. The 18 participants ranged in ages from their early 20s to nearing retirement age in their 60s. Experience levels were broken into categories of fewer than 10 years' experience, 10 to 25 years' experience, and 25 plus years' experience. There was a relatively equal distribution of participants in these areas with eight falling in the fewer than 10 years group, and five each falling into the other two categories. Virtually all the teachers who taught in a classroom setting taught in a grade lower than fourth with one lone upper grade teacher teaching in a grade level above fourth. Almost all the participants (16) were women. This seemed to be relatively representative of the ratio of men to women in the elementary grades in the school system where the interviews were conducted. There were 12 second-generation teachers and 6 third-generation teachers.

### *Analysis of Data and Emerging Themes*

When all the interviews were completed, transcribed, and coded, several themes emerged. Those themes were educational influences, motivating factors, family support, differences in experiences from students to teacher, encouragement to others, parental guidance from a job standpoint, satisfiers, and challenges. Each of the responses of those who participated in the study is outlined in this chapter.

#### *Educational Influences*

The teachers interviewed shared many of their educational experiences from preschool to postsecondary institutions. Generally, all the teachers interviewed had an overall positive experience with education. Each of the teachers had mostly fond childhood memories associated with his or her own education. While most memories were positive, it was interesting that many of them had one or two memories from their childhood that were not positive.

Nancy was a third-generation and second-career teacher who recalled her path to teaching was long in coming. She shared that in college, friends, professors, and others stated, “People who can’t do, teach, you know, and teachers don’t make any money. So I thought I am definitely not going that route.” Nancy also remembered being in trouble a lot in her early years at school but like many children, found that one teacher with whom she was able to connect.

Nancy recalled:

My P.E. teacher, you know you have them for all the years you are in elementary school...my friend and I would ride our bicycles and find her house in like the fifth or sixth grade. We found her house said hello, and she took us in.

Of the people I interviewed, this event from Nancy’s childhood was not unique.

Franklin was a second-generation teacher whose mother had been a teacher. All of Franklin’s brothers and sisters had taught school at some point in their careers. Franklin

recalled, “Everybody in my family taught and I was not going to teach, period!” His road to the classroom was not a direct route; instead, he majored in another area, got a job, and hated it. Upon the insistence of a brother, he tried some substitute teaching. “Once I tried the substitute teaching, I fell in love with it (teaching) and here I am!”

Education was a very important part of Franklin’s upbringing. Franklin recalled, “My mother was real concerned that I get an education.” He said there were also many teachers along the way who pushed him to be a good student and learn as much as possible:

I remember my seventh grade teacher. She did not really allow any foolishness, but truly seemed to have passion for what she was doing. Even though I was not an extremely serious student at that point, I responded well to that. I shaped up, because she did not put up with anything else. I began to truly love learning and I also did not want to disappoint her either.

Franklin’s mother was also an early influence on his education. He said his mother tried to develop in him what he called “walking around sense,” not just book sense. He credited that belief on her part to his success today.

Betty was a relatively new teacher, having taught for fewer than 10 years. Her father retired from the teaching profession and her mother was currently working in a school setting although not as a teacher. While some of the others interviewed knew at an early stage they might want to become a teacher, the idea did not really cross Betty’s mind until college. Betty stated:

I thought I might want to do something with music, but with a music degree by itself, I knew I wouldn’t have much to go with. So I thought maybe I could teach music and as soon as I met the choral director at the local community college, I knew I wanted to teach choral music. So from then on, I never changed my career path and I majored in music education. I did not know I was doing it until after my senior year of high school.

Betty said she always liked school. She recalled enjoying preschool because it was at the same place her father taught. She had extremely favorable opinions of school even from her earliest years. Betty particularly remembered liking kindergarten. She stated, “I remember with

kindergarten doing a play and I really enjoyed the music.” She also recalled doing well in school by making good grades and like many of today’s students, enjoyed things like field trips and extra curricular activities.

Betty said music had always been an important part of her life. She added, “My musical influences come from my mom and growing up in music at church. So I sing and play the piano because of her, because I was always encouraged to by her.” Music education enabled Betty to mold two things she enjoyed--music and school--into a career. She noted she was very happy to have made that adjustment.

Betty said her favorite teachers all had similar qualities and things she enjoyed about them. She recalled, “I always loved reading and I remember teachers reading to us and I also loved English class. So I especially remember those teachers who really had a passion for those subjects.” Even though Betty taught a specialty class, she recalled the passion those teachers had for the subject they taught and said she hoped to instill that same passion for her subject to her students.

In addition to helping her decide on a career in education, Betty said she was still impacted by her professors. Betty described her lesson preparation in the following way:

Absolutely, every day and my lesson plans are exactly like what my music education professor taught me to do. It’s been years, and he passed away, 2 years ago, but I can still hear him. It’s like I feel like I’m going to disappoint him if I don’t do my lesson plans like he taught me, and I try to teach music like he taught me to teach it because I really respected him and he did such a good job.

Despite not deciding to become a teacher until later, Betty said she still strives to be the kind of teacher her professors in college taught her to be.

William was a second-career teacher whose grandparent was a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. He admitted he did not have a lifelong desire to become a teacher but thought he could do it if he wanted. He said his true desire and love for teaching began to develop when his



son enrolled in school. William mentioned, “We started volunteering a lot at the school. The principal suggested I start substitute teaching. He said I might enjoy that since I was going to be here anyway, I might as well get paid for it.” He concluded that the more time he spent at school, the more he enjoyed it. After discussing some ideas with his grandmother and the principal, he decided to go back to school and try to obtain a degree in teaching.

William cited his grandmother as being a great influence in his life in general but especially so when he decided to enter the education profession. William stated:

She was probably one of the greatest influences on me. We moved away when I was in the fifth grade, but I came back and spent the summers with her and my grandpa. She taught me to see the good in people. She always talked about teaching school and shared stories from that part of her life. I would come in feeling bad, and she would share some of her stories and I would leave a little more positive. She helped me to see that I should not be so judgmental towards other people. I still remember her telling me not to give up on people, including my students, because if I gave up on them, then they might have no one to believe in what they could do.

William’s recollections of his grandmother made him realize the kind of classroom teacher he strived to be. He had his educational foundations and philosophy given to him through those annual summer visits.

Bess was a veteran teacher nearing the end of her career as an educator. Both her parents were teachers and she had a unique situation of having taught with her mother in the same school for part of her career. Her decision to enter the education profession was not a gradual one. It was one she said she “always” felt. She contributed the following reasons: “My mom and dad were always happy in their jobs. When I was growing up, girls were either nurses, secretaries, or teachers. So for me it was very natural to choose teaching.”

Bess’s early memories of school were very positive. She also remembered the importance placed on education in her household. Interestingly, Bess recalled more events in her education than the education itself. She stated:

I remember snack times and sharing that with my best friend. I also remember that is the year President Kennedy got shot, the next year we learned Bible verses, and after that all the firsts, first boyfriends and the like.

Favorite teachers provided inspiration for many of those interviewed. Bess recalled:

My seventh-grade teacher had a great impact on me. And I just thought, even though she was older, or older to me as a seventh grader, she made class fun. She was just a very, very good teacher in my seventh-grade mind and even today. Even though I do not teach in the upper grades I hope I can be that same type of teacher to my students.

Many of those interviewed, including Bess, said the qualities that they wanted to imitate from the teachers they most admired as students included being a caring teacher, providing guidance to the students, and being firm but fair.

Hillary was a younger teacher with fewer than 10 years experience. Her father was a teacher at the secondary level. When questioned about her educational experiences, she recalled always thinking about being a teacher. She mentioned the fact she always enjoyed school and that a career placement test helped her to finally decide on teaching as a career. She remembered several of her teachers who had an impact on her decision to teach. Hillary stated:

I was in fifth grade and my teacher in that grade comes to my mind as one of the best, most motivating, and was encouraging. And she is still. When you see her out in town, she's still curious and always providing me with encouragement. I think by far she was one of the most encouraging, and positive about teaching as profession than virtually anyone else. I could tell she really loved her job.

This love of teaching that Hillary thought should always be present was not shared by all the teachers to whom she mentioned her career goals. Many teachers were "quite negative" she recalled. This made her decision a little harder, but she continually focused on the positive influence.

Hillary also noted that while she always liked school, it was not the first profession of her father. He worked at a factory first, but when it closed, Hillary noted, "Teaching chose him, I guess." Furthering her education was always an important part of her life. The importance of education was instilled in her by both of her parents.

Mamie was a veteran teacher of 30 plus years. She said teaching is in her blood, so to speak, with a father, sister, and daughter in teaching. She says she always knew she wanted to become a teacher. Mamie explained:

I really think there was not a decision made. I think I just always probably knew I was going to be a teacher and I always admired many of my teachers. And, of course definitely my father was a huge factor. We were always so involved in the school atmosphere because my father was there as a coach and later a principal. I think it was just kind of a given. It was nothing that anyone insisted I do. It was just the natural thing to do, I suppose.

Mamie's statements were heartfelt. She appeared to feel as if teaching was what she was always supposed to do. She also remembered her school days with fondness. Even though she changed schools a few times, each change brought new excitement and educational opportunities. She also particularly remembered sports as being a big part of her life, especially because her father was a coach. She recalled, "I remember moving to a different school in eighth grade. We won the county basketball tournament that year and it was one of the highlights of my youth actually." The discussion of Mamie's early childhood educational experiences showed how much she truly liked school from a very young age.

Mary was one of two new teachers among the participants. In her 1<sup>st</sup> year, she brought the type of enthusiasm that is sometimes waning in the veteran teachers. She recalled always wanting to be a teacher. "From the time I was in kindergarten, I wanted to be a teacher and nothing else. I never had any other thought on my mind." She recalled really liking school from the time she entered it, and like many of those I interviewed, she played school when she was little.

Eleanor was a veteran teacher of over 40 years. Her mother was a teacher and she said both her parents and grandparents stressed the importance of education to her for most of her life. She recalled that all her brothers and sisters went to college as well as her mother's brothers

and sisters. She said that kind of importance being placed on education was ahead of its time, but it also made her realize how important a field it must be.

Eleanor recalled school with fondness as a child. She also had several teachers who stood out in her mind as being excellent. She remembered, “My favorite teacher was probably my sixth-grade teacher, because we got to grow tomato plants.” Eleanor remarked that teachers today really do not have the time to let their students grow tomato plants; although she admitted, “I wish we could.” She remembered certain characteristics about this teacher including, “her unfailing kindness and fairness--and she made us very interested in reading.” Eleanor said she hoped those particular traits were among those she possessed.

As far as deciding to become a teacher, Eleanor said she always considered it. She remembered writing a paper when she was in high school, “I wrote a paper my freshman year of high school saying what I was going to do, (be a teacher) and I did just that.” Once she entered college, it was on the quarter system and she would frequently return home and substitute at the school where her mother taught. She said, “I substituted for about 2 1/2 weeks for a teacher, and that was better training than anything I did in student teaching, anything.”

Rachel was a second-generation teacher in the early stages of her career. She had been teaching fewer than 10 years. Her father was a teacher at the secondary level. She recalled having fond memories of school. She shared, “I always loved to learn. We always read a story, we got to play; I always liked to read, look at books, and things like that in school.” There are always one or two teachers who had a special impact on their students. Rachel’s experiences were no different. She remembered a couple of different teachers who she really enjoyed. She remarked about currently working with one of them.

Although Rachel did not have plans to become a teacher, she recalled her mother saying she worked well with young children so that became a drawing card for her. When she entered the education program in college, she fell in love with it. When she entered the program, she admitted, “It was when I realized this was the place for me.”

Dolly was another second-generation teacher in the early stages of her career. Her father was a high school teacher and coach, but he died when she was quite young. However, her sister who is 10 years older than Dolly was also a teacher. She recalled, “I went to school with my sister when she was planning for school and I got a lot of my inspiration from her I guess.” Just like a few of the other teachers interviewed, Dolly began her career as a substitute teacher but soon concluded, “I might as well get paid better than this, so I went back to school.”

Dolly had fond memories of school when she was a child. She remembered all the things other people do about their childhood. She remembered her friends, snack-time, and even her favorite number from kindergarten. She recalled liking all of her teachers, but a high school math teacher particularly stood out in her mind. She added, “My high school math teacher provided one of my inspirations to teach. I loved every class I ever had her in. I had her once every year of high school.” Dolly said she hoped to inspire and instill the same love for learning that some of her teachers imparted to her.

Dolly alleged she also looked to her older sister as a source of inspiration. She explained:

. . . just how she is able to interact with them, it’s unlike really any other teacher I have ever seen. It’s more, I mean she is their teacher, but it’s like she is their friend too. It can often be a hard line to draw, but she handles it all so well. Usually you do not see that in elementary school. In high school, yeah, but it is much easier there. She teaches like third grade, so I especially admire how she is able to relate to them.

As a teacher, Dolly observed how she wanted to be just like her sister with her students but admitted she had not found a way to do so yet.

Pat was a third-generation teacher. While she has never been an actual classroom teacher, she had been in the educational setting for 17 years and recently was promoted to an administrative position. Both her mother and grandmother were teachers.

Pat's journey to becoming a teacher was not like many of the others interviewed for this study. She told her story:

I was just most familiar with the education system because of my mother and grandmother. I was a senior majoring in psychology and still had no clue what I wanted to do. I was not really thinking about becoming a classroom teacher. Not really wanting to go to school a lot more and obtain a license to practice counseling or be a psychologist or psychiatrist, my advisor asked me about what else I could see myself doing. I began to look at my roots in education and after talking with my advisor, she listened to my desire to maybe do something with kids and listening and helping with problems, so she asked me how I would feel about taking an interest in psychology and going toward a degree in school counseling. So I did, and here I am today.

This story is noteworthy, especially because Pat regularly mentioned looking back at her roots with a parent and grandparent who were educators. Her story continued that she had more of an interest in working with older students, but that is not where she received a job. She explained by saying, "So I was forced to adapt. At first I cried a lot, but I grew to love my job."

Pat said she liked school as a child. She recalled her favorite teachers and the qualities they possessed in this way, "They laughed, they were fun, they were not hard, and did not make me nervous. I never wanted to get in trouble. I liked their classrooms because I felt at ease."

Later in the interview, she remarked when she had classes and was developing her own classroom management styles, "I tried to imitate my favorite teachers, so students who were more like me would like me as much as I liked them."

Barbara was a third-generation teacher, but the teacher figure in her life was her grandmother. She also mentioned that her mother managed the cafeteria at a local school so she was always around school. She is also in a family of educators from the standpoint that all but one of her brothers were employed by a school system. Barbara recalled having happy memories

as a child in school. In particular, “When I was little I liked to play school. I played in the summer time. It was just something I wanted to do I guess.” Her love of school also made her remember her favorite teachers as a child. She recalled her fifth-grade teacher and also her grandmother as being her favorite teachers. She commented, “I loved my fifth grade year and that was one of the reasons I wanted to become a teacher. I learned a lot in fifth grade so naturally I wanted to become a fifth grade teacher.” While that may have been her plan, Barbara had spent most of her career teaching lower grades. Barbara also recalled having her grandmother as her teacher in the following way:

I remember I couldn’t call her Mamaw like I always did because she told me she did not want all of the children calling her that. I also remember I had to leave early one day because I was sick, and she came by that afternoon to bring me some work or something and she saw me outside in the yard and she thought I wasn’t sick and she got all over me, but my Mom came to my rescue on that one. I never wanted to miss a day of school after that one, especially if I wasn’t sick.

Those memories of schooling and her grandmother taught Barbara several valuable lessons that would serve her well in later years.

Martha was a third-generation teacher. In her situation, both of her parents were teachers as well as her grandmother. Martha said she always saw herself as a teacher, explaining:

I always wanted to become a teacher. When I went to college, that was my major and I did not change it; unlike a lot of my friends, I always liked kids so I thought school might be the place to be. I can remember going to school with my mother. School always seemed so important, so it was just a natural kind of thing for me I guess.

While becoming a teacher seemed like a very logical choice, like many of the others teachers interviewed, she said there were teachers along the way who made her educational experience more memorable. She recalled, “I remember not being allowed to go to the restroom unless you said ‘May I?’, and I remember being able to eat with the teachers. Mostly, I remember the fun stuff.” Martha also shared the qualities many of her teachers had that she also hoped to develop

as a teacher, “They were all kind, they wanted the best for you, and taught you what you needed to know. My third grade teacher was really funny, too.”

Barbara recalled that school always played a major role in her life. When I asked her to think back on her experiences and influences to become a teacher, she quickly pointed out her parents and grandmother. She stated, “My grandmother was a teacher in everything she did.” She said those memories of her grandmother helped drive her to obtain an education degree and eventually become a teacher. Her parents also provided these same qualities. She recalled, “School was always very important for them. They just wanted to make sure I was doing something I really wanted to do.” Shortly after this segment of the interview, Martha said with a smile, “It is.”

Jackie was a third-generation teacher in the middle part of her career. Her father was a teacher and administrator as well as her grandfather, and she had recently moved out of the classroom and into an administrative capacity. She recalled the story of her decision to become a teacher in the following way:

I guess because I grew up seeing my dad teach and I was at school a lot, it was always real special. I got to go to my dad’s classroom, and he would give me extra things like roll books or plan books, I’d take that roll book and go to town on the weekends or in the evenings, I played school at home all the time. I even graded papers, the whole bit. Now I don’t like to grade papers anymore.

Her desire to be a teacher started early in school and she stated that her desire never really waned.

Jackie’s educational experience was a positive one. She recalled loving school and most everything about school. She recalled her sixth-grade teacher really helping her. She changed schools after her 5th-grade year, and was therefore behind the other students; she remembered the kindness of her sixth-grade teacher. She also recalled, “It was a rough time, and she was really there for me; she really worked with me and built my confidence and self-esteem.”



Sarah was a second generation teacher with a different situation from the other teachers interviewed. Although her mother was a teacher, she actually only had only 1 year more experience than her daughter had. As Sarah put it, “We went through the process together, learning about it together.” Her mother had credits in art and German, and eventually added a special education endorsement. Sarah said with a chuckle, “She can teach about everything except kindergarten; I told her I had that covered.” Sarah said she moved around quite bit when she was younger because her father was in the armed forces. She recalled liking all of her teachers wherever she went to school. She especially recalled the kindness her teachers showed her. She added, “I think they were just kind, treated you with kindness, because when you’re going to learn, you want the teacher who is kind and doesn’t yell at you.”

Even though college did not heavily influence her decision to become a teacher, she recalled that when she was trying to decide what career choice to make, she remembered her mother was a stay-at-home mom. She knew if she had children, she wanted to spend the same amount of time with her own children as her mother had. Teaching then seemed like the logical choice.

Rosalyn was a second-generation teacher in the middle range in terms of the number of years she had taught. Both of her parents were classroom teachers at the high school level. She said she entered the school arena because she enjoyed helping students with their problems. Initially, she wanted to become a social worker, but working with her mom in a relationships class in high school made her “fall in love” with the counseling side of school so she decided to go back to school to either do school social work or counseling. Eventually she did both. She had never been a classroom teacher but was quick to point out she had classroom experience

because that is how counseling is done on the elementary school level. She had to teach the classes in a classroom setting.

Rosalyn admitted she did not particularly care for school in her early elementary years as a student. She recalled, “I more came into my own in high school; it was a good move for me because I liked more of my teachers and I felt like I could be myself.” Almost all of her favorite teachers came in high school. She recalled they made learning fun and seemed interested in individuals as people. Rosalyn said, “They worked hard to build relationships with students, they made me feel more like a part of the class than I had before.”

Abigail was a third-generation teacher in her 1<sup>st</sup> year of teaching. Her mother taught the same special class as she does so she has literally followed in her mother’s footsteps. Her grandfather was also a teacher. Despite entering the profession in a nontraditional way, she always had the intent to become a teacher. High school and even college drew her away from the education field, but when she finally decided on a major in college, her roots in education came out and she became a teacher. She remarked, “When I was really young, I remember one time telling my mom, she had all of her teacher’s editions and I said I wanted to be a teacher because they have all the answers.” Thus her journey to becoming a teacher began.

Abigail related fond memories of school during her childhood. She remembered going to school with her mom before she actually entered school. She recalled liking to do the fun stuff and then later in high school looking at other avenues but eventually returning to teaching. She recalled that many of her teachers made learning fun and exciting. Abigail remarked, “All of my favorite teachers had a certain amount of charisma and excitement about learning, and that makes you want to be there.” She mentioned that these teachers, along with her family, ultimately made her realize she wanted to become a teacher. She stated, “I can teach other

people. I thought it's in my blood, everybody in my family teaches, I have been around it forever so why not give it a try?"

### *Motivating Factors*

Many of the teachers interviewed mentioned a variety of factors that motivated them to enter the educational profession. These were all supported by the research provided by the review of literature in Chapter 2.

Nancy, a third-generation teacher in a specialty class, said she saw teaching as a low paying job at first. This lack of pay seemed to be a source of hesitation for Nancy, but she saw other potential benefits. With three children, the appeal of a teaching career became apparent. Nancy stated, "With my other job, I was always having to choose whether to close the big deal or pick my children up from school. It became very stressful, so I ultimately chose teaching for that reason." Nancy mentioned that her mother and her favorite former teacher were really the main personal influences that lead her to a career in teaching.

Nancy was like many children in a rural area with grandparents close by. She grew up very close to them and as a result spent lots of time with them. Even today, according to Nancy, people still come up to her to remind her of what punishment her grandmother administered or tell her how much they enjoyed having her as a teacher. Nancy cited the respect people had for both her mother and grandmother as reasons to enter the field.

Nancy recalled having plans to have no children, but once they were born, her priorities changed and teaching seemed to be a logical choice. She expounded, "If you are wanting to have a family, it's the perfect career...especially if you can think that far through it." Nancy

continued, “It’s perfect having the same hours as your kids and having the summers off to spend time with them. That is the most important thing for me right now, spending time with my kids.”

Franklin mentioned his wife, mother, and brother as being the driving forces in his decision to become and remain a teacher. Despite his mother dying at a young age, the fond memories of her career as a teacher made him realize that a career in teaching had many fulfilling qualities. He also stated that because his wife was also a teacher, there were many opportunities a career in education provided both of them that other married couples might not get. “We had the summers off together. We could travel, carry on, and have fun.”

Betty said she wished to inspire her students just as many of her teachers did to her. She added that she hoped to convey to her students the importance of practice and how much it could help improve whatever they were doing. She noted, “Even though I hated practice at the time, it made me better. Dedication is also important; if you agree to do something, give it 110%.” She said this philosophy helped motivate her to make her students want to improve themselves.

William, like so many of the other teachers, said he enjoyed school. He recalled, “Every student has a teacher they really remember and enjoyed.” While truly remembering and enjoying many of his teachers, there were some in particular who made more of an impact. He continued, “My fourth grade teacher was the best. She would bring things to her class from her vacations and tried to make it as interactive as possible. I still try to do the same things in my classroom.” William’s desire to imitate his favorite teachers in his own style of teaching was a continual motivating factor. He acknowledged that his desire to be a teacher like his favorite teacher had helped him to become a stronger more understanding teacher.

Other motivating factors for William included a desire to remain fresh and on top of his game; he said that unlike so many other educators in the field, he did not want to become

hardened or lose heart as a teacher. He emphasized his hope to push himself continually in all he did. A desire to learn new things was also another major motivating factor for William. He stated, "I like seeing students learning something new and helping me to grow as a learner as well."

Motivation for Bess came because education was held in such high esteem at her house when she was growing up. She explained, "Education was held in very high esteem around my home. That was probably one of the highest careers and best careers to have." This helped her make the decision to enter the teaching profession because teachers were regarded as such an important part of society. She also stated that she was motivated by the students she taught. She said she loved the innocence of young children. Bess said there was always a story to be told about something one of them said or did and their pure innocence had made her want to come back to school each and every day year after year. She acknowledged that another influence was her parents. Bess stated, "They showed that good educators are what we need. They enjoyed their job. They loved their job, and as a child you notice that."

The biggest support to enter the profession for Hilary came from some of those notable teachers who were nearing the ends of their careers. Hillary observed, "They had their years in, 30-plus, they were truly doing what they loved. I wanted that." She added that many of the teachers helped her see "it's a very self-rewarding and intrinsic kind of thing. You often do not get praised or encouraged, but if you push yourself you will become a good teacher." Hillary recalled many of her teachers as having a seemingly negative overall impression of their jobs, but she said she likes to be more upbeat. She explained, "I used to have an assistant who is now in the teacher education program. She is going to improve her life and that is great. I like to think I had a part in that choice."

Mamie admitted she was partly motivated by generational thoughts and ideas. She entered the profession because at the time she saw security in the profession and it was one of the few options women had, “especially in this area.” She did have a desire to have a family and that also played into her decision. She also said she believed teaching was her calling. She continued to think that being in a family of educators helped her to see this, and that is a primary reason why she was in the field today.

Mary said she was motivated by making learning fun for her students. She especially liked to see the students when they get excited about a particular lesson or even a difficult lesson or concept they "got." She added, “Their excitement is contagious.”

Eleanor cited the respect and excitement she saw students have toward her mother as being a motivating factor. She recalled:

My mother is a natural teacher, the other day she was in the emergency room at the local hospital. As she left, the orderly, who was this big guy, came out and said, ‘I still make biscuits like you taught me.’ A smile crossed my mother’s face and those are the kinds of things I like to experience as well.

She pointed out that her mother was not the only motivation she had for teaching. She also enjoyed building relationships with her students. These relationships often lasted a lifetime. She noted enjoyment from igniting a spark for learning in her students. She also said she liked being willing to love the unlovable students she encountered. “Oftentimes, you may be the only positive influence they see all day--the only smile or hug. I like providing that to these kids; it is very fulfilling.”

Rachel said she thought the ability to make a difference in a child’s life was one of the biggest motivating factors for her. She enjoyed knowing that the impact she made on those children would be with them for a long time in the future. She also found she enjoyed the

excitement children had on their faces when they "got" a new concept or something of that nature.

A major motivating factor for Dolly was seeing progress with students. She said she enjoyed teaching lower grades because it was much easier to see the progress the students have made. She noted, "With kindergarten it is so much easier to see if your students have learned or are learning what you are teaching. They can be wild and crazy sometimes, but I know what I have taught them." Most participants said they liked being able to see their students learning; this is easier in the lower grade levels. Dolly remarked that like her sister, who was also a teacher, "It's not bad to have the summer off!"

Pat talked about being called to teach, or in her case, to counsel students. She added:

I hope now that I am an administrator and that is part of my calling. Sometimes educators feel like I do, like they are called to be an educator, that they're there for a reason. I feel pretty confident that I'm meant to be in the education system in whatever capacity. I feel like I'm supposed to be here. I have learned a lot and I am still learning. For that matter, I also have a lot to learn.

This sense of "calling" was present in many teachers not only in this study, but also, as supported by the research, across the nation as well. Pat described that because she had felt this particular calling, she had found a lot of motivation in that fact.

Jackie noted that her father was probably the biggest motivating factor she had when deciding to become a teacher. She stated, "My dad influenced me because I saw that proud heritage he had along with my grandfather being a teacher. I guess that was my main motivator." This heritage was extremely strong in Jackie's case. She admitted that the sense of family and heritage pulled her towards a career in education, and as a result, she wanted to be a part of it. She also stated another motivating factor for her currently was the love she has for children. She remarked, "I love kids; I don't have any of my own and this partly helps to fill that void...I truly enjoy building that bond between my students and me." Jackie also noted that she

wanted to see her students succeed and accomplish something. She said it helped to fill a void in her life. The ability to make a difference and see this change in students over the course of time was a definite drawing card for her.

Sarah cited an intense love of children was a motivating factor that had pushed her to enter the teaching profession. She noted that babysitting, tending nursery at church, teaching Bible school, and other volunteer activities she had when she was younger made her realize how much she liked children. Sarah seemed to have found her niche and she said that was comforting to her. Loving children was only part of it as Sarah pointed out, “When you have a strong love for children, you also push yourself to want to see them succeed as well.”

Abigail mentioned several motivating factors including being able to watch children grow and mature, but she also noted the respect teachers receive, especially in her grandfather’s case. She recalled:

I have heard so many different kinds of stories from my mom and aunt, but from my grandfather they were all good positive stories. I think, or at least I hope, I think a lot of people had a lot of respect for him, and that was one thing that I just thought was so great. He was the world to me, but that other people thought it too is awesome.

Having a parent or grandparent who garnered this kind of respect seemed especially motivating for Abigail.

### *Family Support*

The teachers interviewed discussed the different ways their families supported them during their journey to become teachers. Support came in many different forms from verbal encouragement to financial stability. Each teacher gave the impression that his or her family was a major factor not only in a choice of career but also success in that career.



Nancy said in addition to her husband, her mother, grandmother, and sister who was also a teacher encouraged her to enter the education profession. When she entered the profession, her mom helped by picking up her children after school. Her husband helped by getting the kids ready for school and fixing breakfast. She conceded it had become a family effort so she could work. Even though Nancy did not want to dwell on monetary issues, she said with a smile, “Mom paid for it.” Nancy confided because that was another burden she did not have to bear, it provided a strong support.

Franklin revealed he had a good sounding board when some issues came up dealing with school. Franklin acknowledged having discussed school problems with his wife, brothers, and his sister. Franklin further cited the sounding board of his family as being positive for him as a teacher. His wife, brother, and sister were active teachers throughout most of his teaching career thus enabling him to bounce ideas around and look for advice, although he admitted to being rather strong willed and not always willing to accept their advice.

Like many of the other participants, Betty said furthering her education was extremely important to her. Whereas she acknowledged her dad had a favorable opinion of his job, neither parent encouraged or discouraged her from becoming a teacher. She said she felt her father's concerns pertained to the changing face of education. Betty speculated, “He saw kids getting worse every year because of home lives or lack of parental support.” She said her father seemed to think it was becoming more and more difficult to be a teacher because of the growing demands on the profession and he desired to protect her from these things. However, Betty did note that both her parents had been extremely supportive when she made the decision to become a teacher. Betty pointed out that her parents had always been supportive:

When I was in college, they were at every single concert and recital. As a music teacher, you are always doing something. We had to do solo recitals. They came to every thing

and even now that I am teaching, if I do anything with my students or even if I just play for an eighth-grade class night, usually at least my mom tries to come with me.

Her parents have continued to support her job as a teacher in addition to going to activities, as Betty explained, “There is not a day that goes by that my dad doesn’t say, ‘What did the kids do today’ or he asks about any of the kids that stand out, because he knows they are there. That is very comforting.”

William acknowledged having enormous support for his career from every member of his family. He cited financial, emotional, and even physical help being available whenever he needed it. He particularly noted specific support from his wife and grandmother by saying, “My wife has been amazing throughout the entire process. My grandmother has helped keep me grounded as well as pushing me to be the best I can no matter what.” Even though his grandmother was deceased, he said all members of his family have come to the events he has hosted as part of his duties as a teacher. “That is very special and heartwarming for me.”

Bess specifically recalled not being pushed into the education arena by her parents. She did mention, “They were supportive of my decision to become a teacher, but it was my decision. I owe them a lot, but they are only a part of the teacher I am today. Numerous people have shaped my teaching.” She said the support her parents provided has been invaluable. When she started teaching, her parents became her sounding board and because both she and her mother taught lower grades, they would bounce ideas off one another on what might work, why, and if it was worth the effort. She remembered, “She [mom] taught first grade and I taught kindergarten so it helped me to know what she expected of them. I was preparing kids who went to her room. That was very helpful.”

In order to support her now, Bess said her parents have been great sounding boards. Her parents have listened to her problems, and then addressed how they handled similar situations

when they were actively teaching. She also noted that her father's experience as an administrator helped when she had to change systems or schools within a system because he seemed to understand from that standpoint.

Hillary said she has been supported by her family as a teacher but not necessarily in her decision to become a teacher. In fact, she said her family wanted her to "do anything else but teach." She insisted, however, that she would be happy as a teacher and decided to enter the field anyway. Although Hillary's father still advised her to not close opportunities on other career choices, he encouraged her, if she were to remain in the education profession, to continue gaining more education. Hillary revealed:

My mom came in over the summers to help me get my room ready and prepare for the next year. There have also been times where I had lots of papers to grade and she would help me there. My dad was busier with his own teaching and could not help as much, but he did listen to problems I was having and we discussed them together and tried to figure out ways to solve them.

While the initial family support was lacking at first, Hillary said she definitely knows her family has been behind her as a teacher today and would do whatever they could to support her.

Mamie's decision to become a teacher came about largely through her father's love and overall impression of his job. She stated, "Daddy had a big influence on my decision [to become a teacher] and the security of the job. I have always tried to make an informed decision and watching Daddy helped me with that decision." Her father also gave her support through life experiences and advice. Mamie recalled, "Dedication, planning properly, being ready were all advice and things I had seen Daddy do. I think my dad's character certainly was also a very positive influence." Mamie maintained that this kind of support was a major reason she was still teaching today.

Mamie speculated her family realized from an early age she had many of the qualities of a teacher. Therefore in that way, her family always encouraged her to continue on with school

and become a teacher, “because they thought I might make a good one.” Mamie also noted, “My parents supported me by paying for my education and they certainly would not have done that if education and my career choice was not something they supported.” Also as far as support was concerned, Mamie mentioned that her family was like most, providing their children with love and support no matter what they did; however, she did mention that her father tried to help her whenever she had a bad day at school or a particular problem she could not seem to overcome, “Daddy was always there to listen, and give me the best advice.”

Mary recalled her family as always having supported her in whatever she chose to do with her life. However, she said their support differed from what she experienced at the college level as she stated, “The only reservations my family had involved my getting in front of students because I am so shy.” However, when Mary enrolled in college, the support at that level was different. “People were always asking me if there wasn’t something else I would rather do, and I could honestly say, no.” In some ways, Mary admitted, the negativity at that point helped her realize this was what she should be doing. She also said her family had been supportive by helping her prepare her room, organize, and whatever else she needed them to do. In short she said, “They are great.” She expressed that while her dad never encouraged or discouraged her to become a teacher, “In the end I’m sure it probably pleased him, he just never came out and said you have to be a teacher.”

Eleanor said her mother was the most significant influence she had in her desire to become a teacher. She quoted her grandfather as having said, “I want all of my children to be certified to teach because you can always work if you are a teacher.” Eleanor recalled her mother retelling those types of stories around her and that helped her to realize there were all kinds of support for her as a teacher. She also said, “My father had 3 years of college in and

quit. He always said that was one of the biggest mistakes he ever made.” This familial emphasis placed on education, made Eleanor realize that not attending college was not an option and she could fulfill her goal of becoming a teacher.

Eleanor also remarked that both parents wanted her to be independent and self-sufficient. For that reason an education and eventual job in teaching meant she did not have to be dependent on anyone else for what she had. She also recalled both her parents being interested in not only the education of their children but their jobs when they were finished with school as well.

Eleanor remarked that her mother has been extremely supportive even today. Because they do not live in the same county, she said her mom's long distance support was even better. She acknowledged, “I can call her up and trash somebody at school; she is 100 miles away, and it doesn't hurt anyone and I can vent and often feel much better.” She continued by saying her mother provided “good, sound advice.” She also could not take away the fact her parents had helped her out whenever and whatever she chose to do educationally. As with many people, financial help with school was only part of what was provided to her. Eleanor vividly recalled:

If I had something I needed help with, she was always there to help me, and when I worked on master's degree, she was in her 70s then. I remember she would go with me to the library. She would sit on the floor and help me find articles, books, and other relevant research. She's very helpful. She is very interested; I guess that's why she is so good to be as old as she is now.

This support, according to Eleanor, really helped her through some difficult times.

Rachel admitted she had an enormous amount of family support. Although most of her support has been emotional or moral in nature, she said it had made a difference for her. She mentioned both her parents were encouraging in her decision to enter college and later in selecting teaching as a career. She also recollected her father “really staying on me to study hard and not goof off.”

Dolly said she had her family's support and blessings when it came to choosing a career. She remarked, "My mom knew that's what I wanted to do, so one day she finally said, 'Hey when are you going back to school to be teacher?' and I needed that kind of push and support." She also remembered some of the more difficult times in her career and mentioned that her mother and sister were always there to provide support. "They would remind me that I had come too far, and that I was too good a teacher to quit at that point." Dolly stated that her mother's marriage to a teacher and her sister who was a teacher helped them to understand there would be difficult days. She remarked this often helped her to get through some of the tougher times.

Dolly also used her sister as a litmus test on how she should handle certain situations. Accordingly, "We talk a lot of shop at home." She continued:

I'll ask her, like especially with parents, they did not teach you how to deal with parents in college. So I will ask her about how to deal with things like that. Mostly, because she has been here so long, she gives pretty good advice and knows how to handle those most difficult situations.

Dolly said all this support and help from her sister made the 1st couple of years much more bearable.

When Pat made the decision to become a teacher and entered the same system as her mother, she recalled her mother being a great encourager. She said she felt her mom understood because she had been in the same or similar positions. "She always gave me words of encouragement whether I needed them or not." She noted the strong sense of encouragement that was always present whenever she talked about school with her or any other opportunity that arose. She described the encouragement in the following way:

Knowing that it is difficult in certain situations and that things do make it hard--sometimes the interaction with families, and getting out of kids what you need out of them--it's difficult. . . being able to compare those kinds of stories and have somebody who truly understands . . . I think unless you have been an educator, you don't get it. You don't understand what it means to try to work with a child who is not your own. I think

just the support of her saying, 'Well I know.' You understand things will be okay--just that kind of emotional support.

While others interviewed made references to other types of support, this emotional support, at least to Pat, seemed to have made all the difference.

In her case, Pat also mentioned that both her mother and grandmother were pleased with her decision to be in the education field. Not only have they continued to support her in her chosen career, but also according to her, "They are very proud, proud that I would choose such an honorable profession."

Barbara was a teacher who said she felt extremely lucky to have the support she has received from her own family because she understood there could be major differences. She admitted enjoying teaching enough that she had no problem encouraging others to enter the profession. This was in stark contrast to other people in her family:

Some people in my husband's family, some of them are teachers and they said they told their daughters they would not pay for college if they became teachers. But my family was never like that; they always supported my decision.

She also noted that because her brother and sister were involved in the school setting, they often bounced ideas off one another or provided a place to vent. She said she thought her family, in this case her siblings, had really helped her to grow in her chosen career.

Martha remarked that her family had been consistently supportive in her career choice. The only reservation they had, if any, was that she was making the choice because that was what she wanted to do. According to Martha, they did not want to put any pressure on her to become a teacher. She said their support for her to attend college was more important than her career choice. Martha recalled also that when her mother retired, she was able to take many of the things she had collected through the years for her own classroom. Martha said her mother has continued to help her whenever she chose to do special projects and things at school. Parental

support was also extremely important when she decided to further her education and obtain a master's degree. She remarked, "They would take care of my kids when I had class or had some work to do. If I ever needed help toting my kids around, they have always been supportive with that."

Support also came in the form of providing advice and guidance. Martha mentioned she could always count on her parents to help her through a difficult time relating to school. She mentioned she thought all parents were supportive of their children, but having parents who were in the same profession as their children gave them an advantage. Martha remarked, "My parents understand for sure what I am going through and always offer such good advice." She said this helped her maintain a more positive attitude and overall to be a more successful teacher.

Jackie stated she couldn't have been any more strongly supported than she was by her family. She noted she received complete support including emotional and financial support. From the time she was in high school until their death, she noted that her parents were very supportive, "We were very tight-knit, so from basketball games, to plays, to programs I was putting on at school, they were there to do whatever I needed them to do." When she became a teacher, her father was always willing to give her advice and become someone to whom she could voice her frustrations. She also noted that he wanted to know how her day at school went or what was happening in the field of education. The advice from Jackie's father was exceptional because according to her, "He had been there, so he pretty much knew how to handle a parent or how to leave certain things at home, or leave others at school, which is not always an easy thing to do." She considered it was their support that made her a much stronger teacher.

Sarah's situation was different because she and her mother entered the teaching profession at approximately the same time. During the 1st year she was teaching, she spent long



hours grading papers and preparing for the upcoming day. She reported being tired all the time, as she recalled, “I’d bring home lots of papers to grade, and I’d be up until midnight and she showed me some short cuts, things they just don’t show you in college.” Although her mother was not a veteran teacher, she was doing the kinds of things parents often do to support their children. Sarah’s mother has also given her ideas about things to teach and new strategies to use as well. Sarah stated that her mother being a teacher, even though it was not in a traditional sense, really made an enormous difference. She recalled, “In my 1st couple of years I would be at school at six or seven and my mom would call and say 'come home.' When I got there, she would help me combine things and plan. It made the difference.”

Sarah said her entire family was close. They have all supported her in her job throughout her career. She noted that her mother has always helped her find things to use in class and create materials she could use in the future. This family support helped Sarah to overcome many of the obstacles teachers face on a regular basis.

Rosalyn cited her parents as being a primary factor in her decision to become a teacher. She stated, “My parents encouraged me in whatever I chose to do. They just wanted me to get a degree from college and have something that made some money; I didn’t have to make a lot but some.” Her parents’ support also revolved around the fact they were always able to talk about school. Because her mother taught a personal relationships class, Rosalyn was able to share ideas with new topics she taught. She stated, “Mom was always giving me ideas and things. Even though she taught home economics, I could use it from the counseling side.”

Abigail said she had been greatly influenced to teach and received tremendous support from her family. She continued:

I think being around teaching so much has greatly helped me. I have watched my mom in the classroom, listened to all kinds of stories from my grandfather, and seeing what

goes into to it from a planning standpoint. But it is kind of like an innate ability almost. I mean I obviously have a lot to learn, but that is kind of just an ability to get up and speak, and it's not intimidating to me, like it is for some people I guess.

She said the support took different forms. Family members gave her inspiration for lessons, classroom management, and overall ideas and pointers that all teachers need in their 1st few years.

### *Differences in Experiences in Being a Student and Teaching*

Many of the teachers interviewed remarked about the differences in what they thought it would be like to be a teacher and their actual experience. The differences ranged from teaching being much more difficult than they would have thought as a student to differences in the students themselves.

Betty said she noticed a big difference in her experiences as a teacher and those of a student, especially in student teaching. Betty pointed out she was a good student who enjoyed school. She noted that even though the class she taught was a special class, there were still some students who did not like school or anything about it. She pointed out that was a major difference in her experiences as a student to actually being a teacher. She also pointed out that student teaching experiences can sometimes give students an unreal expectation of what actual teaching might be like, more so in the special areas.

William noted that teaching today was very different from how he remembered school. William noted he always had support from home, "As a child I made assumptions that everyone's home life was like mine. Boy was I fooled once I started teaching." That was one of the biggest differences he noted between teaching today and just a few years ago. He recalled advice his first principal gave him:

He said, William, some of the children you are going to teach at this school, you don't know them. One of the best things you can do is get on the bus and see where these kids go home to every night. That will help you relate better than anything you have learned in the classroom.

This advice seemed to pay off, according to William, and as a result he said he has grown as a person and teacher. William also noted that even though he had been in the school system as a student and substitute teacher, there were still areas he was not completely comfortable with or knew how to handle, but the experience and wisdom passed down from his grandmother was “a life jacket, if ever I needed it.”

Bess's recollections of her parent's jobs when she was a student were different from when she became a teacher. As a child, Bess said she did not remember her parents being more tired at certain points in the year, but upon further recollection, she said those signs were present. She stated:

I look back now and think that was how it was for them. It's a good thing for me, because I was not totally blasted the 1st year, like so many others. I knew what to expect, like a parent phone call or coming to school to talk to you, because they had that. I knew to expect tough times because they had tough times with discipline or a new curricula being handed down, or changes, or moves. I had seen that, and I guess that prepared me for times that a lot of new teachers don't see and don't know about.

Mamie stated that having a parent as a teacher really helped her when she entered the actual profession of teaching. When asked about how her memories of childhood education and the memories of her father as a teacher compared to her actual experiences, she stated:

I think it was probably very much right on and I mean, yes from a child's perspective, I may have been seeing things differently from what Daddy was experiencing, but I feel like my life has always been intertwined with school. I feel like school is a comfortable place for me. So I don't feel like there were any adjustments necessarily or anything like that. I feel like I knew what I was getting into so to speak. I went into this with my eyes open.

The experiences of being around schools helped Mamie to have a clear understanding of the expectations, work load, and overall job of teachers. Mamie pointed out this was especially true when compared to teachers “who did not grow up like I did.”

Mary mentioned she remembered student behaviors, especially, being very different from what she remembered from her experiences as a student. Mary also mentioned she started her student teaching in fifth grade and completed it in kindergarten. It was at that point she noticed things were so much different from when she was a student. She recalled, “When you are little, you just see the good parts of it. You see all the fun things, the field trips and activities, you do not see all the paperwork and lesson planning that bombards you.” This difference was important to note, because Mary said many teachers were not prepared for the “not fun stuff” when they entered the classroom. “That is a part of it too,” she said with a smile.

Eleanor recalled an enormous difference in school for her as a student from what she sees now as a teacher. She recalled, “I have been here a long time and it has changed a lot. We were very respectful of our teachers and much less test driven.” She regarded standards and test driven curriculum as anything but positive for education in general. She stated that school was much less for students today than it was for her. She smiled, “it’s not as much fun for these kids as it used to be. They don’t have time to grow tomatoes.”

Rachel noted some stark contrasts to being a teacher today versus what she remembered as a student. She remarked, “I think school is much harder now than it was then. Especially when I taught kindergarten; children today are expected to do a lot more than I was at that age.” She also noted she never actually realized all the duties and responsibilities teachers had until she became a teacher.

Dolly, like Rachel, took note of sharp differences between teaching today and what she remembered about it as a student. She stated, “You have to learn a lot more academics now. I remember learning nursery rhymes, naptime, and playtime. I am not sure there was all the

academic pressure on the teachers then.” Those differences, she said, have also been supported by other teachers of the same grade level.

For Pat, after she obtained a job in the school setting, it was completely unlike what she had witnessed as a student. “In part that is because there were no counselors in elementary school then, so I did not know what to expect.” As time went on, the more teaching she did, the more problems she realized students had. She said she did not remember that many "problem children" during her early educational career. She recalled, “I guess I was a little naïve, but I did not realize, when I was in school, that kids had the kinds of problems I currently deal with as a counselor. I guess they did, I just did not realize it.”

She also noted the way parents act today as being very different from when she was in school. She continued, “My mother would never believe me over the teacher. This is a common occurrence now and it’s a hard pill to swallow sometimes, because the stories the kids tell their parents can be so ridiculous.” (This change in parenting behavior was also a recurring challenge for many of the teachers interviewed). Pat also said she thought students and parents were more respectful in years gone by. She noted her mother saying, “It didn’t used to be this way; the respect that is shown to teachers by families is very different from just a few years ago. Today on both parts, it’s generally disrespect.” These changes are all part of the changing face of education in the United States, according to Pat.

Barbara, the veteran teacher of 30 plus years, stated that teachers and schooling in general were very different from her student years and how she perceived herself as a teacher. She contrasted the two as follows:

I think I try to go around and help each student more. I think when I went to school it was, they showed you how to do it and they went to their desks and sometimes you could bring it there and ask questions, but they didn’t go around and help. I try to do more of that, more monitoring and more hands-on things, and experiences, than I had when I was

in school. Of course, I also don't have nearly 40 students in my first grade class, so it is different all the way around.

She noted this as a major difference between schooling for students today and those from a generation or more ago.

Martha commented on the enormous differences in her educational experiences as a student compared to her experiences as a current teacher. Whereas at the time of the interview she was teaching at a level (prekindergarten) she never actually attended, she has taught at various other grade levels and remarked how different things are now from when she attended school. She stated differences between the two experiences as follows:

Well of course where I am in pre-K, we do not do like worksheets and seatwork and stuff like that. It's a lot more hands-on, and I think it was not like that so much when I was at this age. We move a lot more now, and we are a lot louder. We really don't sit down at tables and do seatwork like we would have back then. It's definitely a lot different now than then.

Martha noted that the classroom she now taught in was doing a better job to prepare students for later grade levels than what she experienced.

Jackie remembered her school experience with fondness but mentioned she has tried to make it much more enjoyable for her students. She stated, "I tried to take my feelings into consideration when I was in the classroom. I did not want to take pleasure in giving my students a pop quiz or something like that." She mentioned she always tried to keep from putting her students on the spot in order to embarrass or put them down. She said that teachers were not overtly mean when she was in school, but sometimes they would make their students uneasy. She admitted that even though she might have done things like that when she was in the classroom, she said she always worked to tell students she was sorry and to build a good personal connection with them. In this way, she said she hoped her students would remember more positive experiences from school rather than negative ones.

Sarah recalled when she was a child she thought that teaching was easy. She laughed, “I thought teachers just sat at their desks all day grading papers and enjoyed fussing at kids.” When she entered the profession, she noted how incredibly different her expectations were. She remarked about the differences:

You realize when it’s you, it’s so much more time consuming than I realized. There is not enough time in your planning time to do what you need to do for the next day, let alone the whole week. But it just looked so much easier to me as a child than it really is.

Sarah also mentioned that this difference was interesting because so many other people outside the educational setting seemed to have this same belief today.

Rosalyn was like many of the others interviewed regarding the difference in school when she was a child and now as a teacher. She said she has even remarked to her students in a purely joking manner, “I hope some day you get to grow up and see how horrible it can be doing bus duty.” She mentioned her teachers making their jobs seem so much easier than she has found it to be. She remarked that she hopes she has made her job look as easy as they did, but it was just not.

Abigail made note of the amount of planning that goes into each and every lesson as being a major difference in her experience as a student versus being a teacher. She said that most other things were similar or the same, but even with a mother as a teacher she had no idea the amount of planning it took on a regular basis. She also noted that time was a factor although it had not seemed to be when she was a student. Because there was limited time for each lesson, there was no time for the students to sit and talk. She stated, “When I was their age, I never understood why the teachers tried to keep us so busy, but they weren’t. That was just the time it took to get the lesson completed.”

### *Encouragement to Others*

Most of the teachers interviewed offered encouragement to others who have or might have an interest in entering the field of teaching. Although most were very positive, there were some teachers who had negative or slightly negative feelings about becoming a teacher.

Franklin stated it would be difficult for him to encourage someone else to enter the teaching profession for a variety of reasons. Franklin expressed:

Unless someone has an extreme, strong desire to teach, I would tell them [sic] to weigh their options, if they still have a strong drive to teach, that is fine. But I would tell them to make sure they have gotten that out of the way. They should not say I am going to be a teacher, because it's a tough thing to go through all of this and our financial rewards after 30 years are not much, that's painful.

The monetary gains did not seem to be as evident to Franklin as they were for other careers. For that reason, Franklin said he thought teaching as a career in some ways did not pay off.

Betty said she would encourage her own children or students to enter the profession if they so desired. She noted that was especially true for women who were or were planning to become mothers. She noted, "Being a teacher is so rewarding and when you are a good mom, you are usually a good teacher and vice versa." Betty stated that teaching was truly a calling for many people.

William said he loved his job and wanted to encourage more people to think about education as a career choice. Furthermore he said:

There are not enough good young men and women out there who want to become teachers. I try to encourage all kinds of people to at least explore the option of teaching. Despite some of the potential pitfalls, it is the hardest and most rewarding job I have ever had. So yeah I would definitely encourage people to enter the profession.

William's overall positive attitude toward teaching was contagious and pushed him and others to want to see more people have the positive rewards he saw on a regular basis.



Bess had little problem encouraging people to enter the education profession, especially if they had a personality that was well suited for it. The encouragement she provided has been in the form of sharing expectations and guidance to those who wanted it. She stated, “I would tell someone, it’s not a job where you are going to make a lot of money, but I happen to believe money is not everything.”

Hillary said she would also encourage someone to enter the teaching profession. She stated, “When teachers love what they are doing, it is the best job in the world. I would recommend they spend some time in a classroom setting to make sure that is what they really wanted to do.” Hillary continued by mentioning that if some of her former students or close friends asked her about becoming a teacher, she would first be glad they had a desire to continue their education. Furthermore, she said she wanted more teachers who were entering the profession to make informed decisions. She stated, “Even though my dad was a teacher, I am not sure my decision was as informed as it could have been.”

Mary said she loved teaching and would encourage people to enter the profession but stated she felt there were some important things for them to realize first. She also warned other people not to enter the profession unless they had a passion for teaching. She stated:

You have to be passionate about kids and about wanting to teach them. It can’t be for I get 3 months off in the summer or getting to leave at 3:30. It’s way more than that. So many people do not realize the extra stuff that goes on and the meetings and all these things and I think you have to be passionate about it for it to work out.

The encouragement she provided was to help ensure that if someone was entering the profession, that person was doing it for the right reasons.

Dolly noted she would definitely encourage her own children or anyone else to become a teacher, “but only if that’s what they wanted to do.” She continued by saying that too many children were pushed to do what their parents wanted them to do. As a result, many of the

students she saw made their choices to please their parents not themselves. Oftentimes, parents were reliving their own childhood through their children. She said, although she would encourage anyone to become a teacher, she would also take time to make sure that person understood exactly what that meant: “I would want anyone to have what I had. I watched my sister struggle, and when I started, I had her to help me through some of the rough times. Everyone should be so lucky.”

Pat, who entered the profession as a counselor, and only recently began a job as an administrator, said it was not difficult at all to encourage someone to enter the school setting for a career choice. She remarked, “I just spoke with my daughter about this a couple of days ago actually; she likes art, so we discussed how cool it might be to become an art teacher.” She further mentioned she did not want to push her children or anyone else into a particular direction when it came to a career, but because she maintained she has been so happy in the educational setting, she stated not only her children, but more people should explore the potential benefits of becoming a teacher.

Martha conceded she would not have any problem encouraging others to become a teacher. She remarked, “This is a great job to have, but you have to go into it for the right reasons. You have to have the heart for it. You have to really love kids or they can drive you crazy.” She also noted that teaching provided many intangible rewards that other professions and jobs did not. In this respect, Martha mentioned, “Why wouldn’t someone who is being pushed a little this way not want to become a teacher?” Martha’s enthusiasm for teaching was very evident.

Jackie’s love for her job was evident; therefore, she said encouraging others to become a teacher was not hard. Jackie explained:

I would definitely encourage them if that is what they thought they wanted to do. There are several teachers here at this school that I actually taught, now that is wild, and they say well, I don't know, they saw that I tried to make learning fun and that pushed them to want to bring that kind of enjoyment to other students. I don't want to sound like I am bragging, but that is very gratifying. So because of that, I could easily encourage someone to become a teacher.

The love Jackie had for her job and the impact she seemed to make upon her students truly enabled her to encourage people to think about teaching as a career choice.

Sarah could easily have supported someone to become a teacher, including her own children. She remarked it was a good career for someone who had an intense desire to become a teacher. She did mention that because of the increasing demands placed on classroom teachers, people might want to consider entering the special teaching positions like speech, art, music, or librarian. This would give someone who was a teacher more options than he or she would have otherwise. Sarah offered this advice to new teachers:

It takes a very strong personality. You have to be tough. I mean, you can't be a mild person that could get upset when there are problems in the classroom, problems with parents, maybe problems with your supervisors. You have to really be able to take criticism, I think, and learn from that. I think you also have to enjoy it. You have to make learning fun for kids, they look to you to enjoy school, and you don't want them to be miserable because that makes everyone else miserable. So I think you have to have fun in the classroom and joke with them.

Abigail said she would encourage others to enter the teaching profession for a variety of reasons. She stated teaching had the potential to be one of the most rewarding jobs anyone could have. She cited that aspect as reason enough, but when she was in the classroom teaching students and was able to see the excitement on their faces, she knew she had chosen the right profession. There was true happiness for most teachers when learning took place and for most teachers that was more than enough.

### *Parental Guidance From Job Standpoint*

This section deals with how parents provided their children with guidance for their current jobs as teachers through their children's observation and remembrances of their parents' careers. This is not only how parents supported their children but how having parents and grandparents as teachers helped to prepare the interviewees for their careers as teachers.

Living as the child of a teacher, Nancy was keenly aware of all the different activities and extra duties that were required of teachers. She recalled:

I remember walking around at football games, while my mom was in charge of the cheerleaders. My mom commented that she regrets being gone so much...but I don't really remember her being gone that much.

Nancy noted that her job was more difficult than her mother's was. Even though both taught special classes, Nancy's mother had more help and much smaller classes. Nancy related, "She never had all the students in the school; she had only a few because she taught high school."

Nancy also talked with her mom and sister about problems at school. "Especially when I was in the classroom...I would ask mom if I had acted too hastily or what she would do in a similar situation." Nancy said this helped her adjust to her second career. She looked to her sister for ideas about lessons, equipment, games, and books. Nancy stated, "As a teacher you have to beg, borrow, and steal...Having my mom and sister has helped me a lot in this area especially."

Nancy also stated how naïve she was coming into the profession, "I was not realistic with it at all...I had no idea how hard parents and students could be to deal with...but I had my mom and that helped a lot."

Franklin also cited his mother as being a different kind of teacher:

At least two or three nights a week, my mother would bring home some children who needed some extra care. We call them underprivileged today. She would give them a bath, wash their clothes, and take their families food. She was that kind of person and teacher. She taught the basic subjects, but she also taught children. She taught more kids than school.

The additional care she provided was a vivid memory for Franklin. “Being a caring person, as a teacher, was her number one goal.” Although Franklin said he strived for this same level of care he remarked, “Times are so different now. I can’t bring them home with me, even though I want to sometimes, so I have to let them know I care in different ways.” This was one way he said he saw his mother in himself.

Franklin also recalled his mother’s classroom as being very inviting. She wanted her students to be active learners. She encouraged the students to bring in animals, plants, or anything else that might engage them and their learning. As a teacher, he said he was also trying to instill in the children independence and the “walking around sense” he saw his mother as being famous for developing in her students. Franklin stated he endeavored to be the kind of teacher he remembers his mother being, but he was not there yet. When asked, he responded:

I wish I was as good a teacher as my mother, that’s what I have strived for. Several people have told me I have attained that; I don’t think so, I am not sure; I am not really sure, that is not how you look at your momma.

Franklin stated he was prepared for the extra activities that are required of a teacher. He said he vividly remembered his mother being at school for something all the time. He stated, “I don’t remember her being in charge of any particular club...everyone just piled in and helped with whatever.” This made her very busy at school, but he also mentioned he felt that was one of the greatest satisfiers she had in her job.

Franklin pointed out many similarities in his and his mother’s approach to teaching and to their qualities. Franklin said he strived to have patience like his mother’s and mentioned, like his

mother, that he cannot stand for children to be disrespectful of him or any other teachers. “She would not tolerate that [disrespect]. She would tolerate a lot of things but not that.”

Betty’s memories of being the child of a teacher provided her a completely different insight from other children her age. She recalled, “I just remember my dad seeming to have a good time. Even though I did not really want to become a teacher until I was older, I remember it being fun.” Betty noted the importance of dedication her father and other teachers instilled in her, especially as a teacher. She stated, “I think I use every thing they have taught me...every year I have taken what they taught and then expanded it in some way.”

Like so many of those interviewed, Betty mentioned all the extra activities her father took part in as a teacher. She fondly remembered going to football games and her father having to check on particular things at school because he was in charge of the building. This helped her to have a better understanding of all the extra time that was required of teachers. Betty also remarked that her father was still actively teaching when she began her career, so they used to discuss school more than they do currently. She mentioned she does think having a parent who was a teacher provided her with an advantage over other teachers.

William discussed the numerous stories his grandmother had shared about her career as a teacher. He mentioned, “She always related stories to me to make me understand it could always be worse, either in the classroom or life in general, and what people used to have done as a teacher.” The recollection of these stories, William said, helped him have a better understanding of the daily struggles teachers face. In particular, in his early days of teaching, recollections of those stories made some of his earlier trials and tribulations “seem not so bad, especially compared to what my grandmother went through.”

William brought up all the extra things his grandmother had to do as a teacher. The summer time visits as well as the fact the family lived here until he was in the fourth grade gave him many memories of his grandmother's other teaching duties. William said his grandmother talked about the extra duties that were necessary of teachers. Furthermore, she mentioned how the extra things just seemed to make the school an overall better place and for that reason they did not seem to be extra, but "an integral part of the job."

Bess recalled that her parents viewed their jobs in a favorable manner but they were busy. Specifically, she stated her mother graded papers quickly. Like many other children of teachers, Bess was in her mother's classroom and helped with duties of the classroom. These included cleaning the board, dusting erasers, or cleaning the room. She said, "Grading papers was something only my mom could do!" Bess also remarked:

I have never really thought about it before, but I try to run my classroom in much the same way my mother did. If we make a mess, that's fine, but it must be cleaned up before we leave for the day. She also had a lot of what I am going to call, tub activities, while that's not what she called them, but they were for students who finished their work early, and I have a tendency to do the same thing. So I guess in those ways we are similar.

Bess said she never realized those similarities between her and her mother until our interview was conducted. She also noted, from a personality standpoint, that both she and her mother were soft spoken but were firm when they needed to be. She stated there were probably other similarities of which she was not even aware.

Teachers' children are sometimes subjected to the numerous meetings, extracurricular activities, and other aspects of teaching that those who are not reared by teachers may not be aware take place on a regular basis. Bess mentioned, "I remember tagging along with both of them. Because Dad was an administrator, we went to all different kinds of ball games, spaghetti suppers, and chili suppers. We were at school a lot growing up." She later mentioned this

helped her when she began teaching because she had a better understanding of what was expected than did some of her friends in education.

Hillary's dad did not enter the profession until she was almost in high school, but she said he always had something to do for school or at school. She also stated, "He is very hands-on in everything. He learned by doing. That's his motto in everything." She said this hands-on approach impacted her own teaching style. Although he did not teach a subject area that required him to bring a lot of work home, Hillary's dad often had to go the school early and stay late to plan for materials and upcoming activities. Hillary stated, "We have different kinds of work, but seeing all the time he put in, it did not surprise me I had to do the same when I started teaching. I expected it."

Mamie said her father had a very favorable impression of school. She mentioned he told her it was good field to be in for a variety of reasons. She also said her father was very active in his job. The extra activities were her favorites. "Those were some of the most wonderful times and memories of my life. I always enjoyed going to the games and spending that time with my family." Mamie said the extra work associated with her father's job was a pleasant memory. According to her, "It did not seem like work at all. As a child it was a lot of fun." This helped her later on, especially in the early years of her teaching, because she knew that being a teacher was not limited to classroom activities; there were other things that went with it.

Mary's dad was an upper-grade teacher in the same school she attended. While some people might have not liked having their own parent as a teacher, Mary mentioned it had its advantages and disadvantages. She expounded:

Some of my friends thought I might get special treatment because I was his daughter, but it was actually much worse than the other students. I was just like everyone else, and I felt he expected much more from me. I felt like I had a lot to live up to, but I saw how a great a teacher he was. I looked up to him and respected him, and I think part of that was



what, seeing the impact he had on the other students, helped me to concrete, yes, I want to be a teacher.

The ability to see her father as her teacher helped Mary to ultimately decide that teaching as a career was just what she wanted to do. Mary also said, “I remember being at school a lot when I was little, but I did not realize all the work Dad was doing.” Mary also noted her Dad liked his job and because both are in the school system now, they discuss school a lot. “Dad is always a good listener and gives good advice. Between him and my mentor teacher, I don’t know what I would do without them.”

Mary said she has also seen herself doing some of the same things her father did as a teacher. Even though they taught different grade levels there were some things that were applicable at all levels. Mary noted, “I know he has a big thing of going beyond the teaching and trying to instill good life skills. I find myself doing the exact same thing. We are a lot more similar in that than I realized.” The experience of having a parent in the profession while both she and her father are still involved has helped these two people keep connected. Despite what she believed was a typical 1st semester of teaching, she maintained that the experiences drawn from her father and family support have helped get her through it. She further mentioned that some other people she knew who were also in their 1st year of teaching did not seem to be making that adjustment as well. She said, “I have a friend who is having a difficult time because she really didn’t have the same experience as me, and has no support because she moved away. So for her it has been really hard.”

Eleanor pointed out that her mother did not teach while she was a small child, but began when Eleanor entered high school. She remembered her spending long hours at school and bringing home papers to grade. “This kept her busy, but she never asked me to help her grade them.” She said her mother was not a good typist, so that was one area she always helped when

she could. Eleanor said she also remembered some of the units and overall lessons her mother taught at school. She stated, “Because she taught home economics, students left her class really knowing how to sew, how to make something, how to really do some basic cooking, and should know some basic nutrition.” When Eleanor became a teacher, she found herself hoping to be able to pinpoint those same types of skills in elementary school. Eleanor said her mother wanted to teach the basics but also wanted her students to leave the classroom knowing a quantifiable amount of information. Eleanor remarked on her mother’s natural abilities as a teacher. She said both she and her sister entered school knowing how to read. She continued, “Even if the grandkids are helping her cook, she is always teaching them, do this, and you do this. She’s just a natural at it.”

Rachel mentioned that her dad was a very quiet person, so he did not talk about school very much at home. However, she said she distinctly remembered him grading papers nightly through the week. She recalled, “Friday nights were football nights because he was a coach.” She said she recalled his classroom as being neat and orderly. She also mentioned he was extremely meticulous with his work. She said she remembered the time commitment school took. She remarked, “He was always busy with something for school, whether it was practice, a game, or some other activity. I just remember he spent a lot of time at school.” She also said he looked at his job in a serious manner. “He always took his job very seriously and went above and beyond what was required of him. I did not fully realize that then, but I do now that I am a teacher.”

Dolly noted that although her dad died when she was young, she still has people who talk about him to her. She also watched her sister become a teacher and said that was an enormously gratifying experience for her. She noted the interaction her sister had with students as well as the

respect the rest of the faculty had for her as a teacher. She mentioned, “I hope to have that someday.” She also said being so close with someone who is a teacher helped to prepare her for what was to come. She remarked:

I have seen what all my sister does and everything. I mean some kids going into college thinking, I am going to be a teacher and have no idea what it’s like at all. They want to be a teacher because you get off work at 3:30, and have the summers off. And you really don’t. When I leave at 3:30, my kids are always on my mind. But I knew it would be this way, because I had seen my sister and what all she went through, so that part of the job was not unexpected by me.

Dolly’s guidance and observations of her sister in the years preceding her decision to become a teacher helped her to transition much more smoothly.

Pat recalled her mother and grandmother and their observations about teaching. She explained, “My grandmother was very proud of her 46 years of teaching and talked about it quite frequently.” Although she said she recalled her grandmother always looking at her career as a teacher, she said her mother did not always see things in a positive way. She recounted:

My sister was 5 years older than I was, she was entering college in the early 80s, and that was time of educational reform in Tennessee. My mom did not like all the changes that were coming, so she tried to convince my sister to rethink her career choice. I don’t think that is why I didn’t really ever think about education. But I do remember that being an issue for my mom. She felt the reforms were not good at all.

This difference in attitudes between her mother and grandmother were short lived, but Pat does think it gave her a slightly more negative opinion of teaching upon entering college.

Pat said she recalled helping her mother grade papers. She said, “I liked using red, because I did not get to use that in other classes, so that made it fun.” She said her mother brought work home from school, as well as spent lots of time preparing for the next day. She also mentioned she does not really remember her mother spending a lot of extra time at school, but she said that could be because, “I stayed with my grandmother and I enjoyed that so much.”

She also said because her mother was so involved in the system, she felt very good about her own decision to try to become a counselor.

By the time her mother retired, however, Pat said her mother really loved her job. She said her mother became increasingly frustrated with the discipline issues she had to deal with in high school, but on the whole, she said her mother truly loved her job. Pat discussed her mother as a teacher:

She was very thorough in teaching the content of her classes. I was amazed too, if I ever had any reason in high school to go to her classroom and needed something throughout the day, I always remember going to the door and thinking, well, she's teaching. Because she'd be up on a podium lecturing and teaching, that was something that did not really register with me until much later. I never took her classes, but it really spoke to me that she planned out lessons, and she would sit and read the chapters and take notes on the chapters for herself so that she could really know the material and teach it, rather than just open the textbook, and assign reading and questions to take up space.

This later understanding of what kind of teacher her mother was helped her strive to be a better teacher to her students. She mentioned that when she started teaching, like her mother, she always wanted to be prepared for the next day.

Pat noted her grandmother taught in a different era from either herself or her mother. Pat stated, "She would talk about students who didn't come to school with shoes on, or didn't have them, and writing on small chalk boards, and just mention things that are so foreign to us today." While the experiences were very different from her experience or her mother's, she remarked her grandmother was still very proud of her work as a teacher.

Pat remarked of the guidance her mother offered when she was in her early years of teaching. She stated, "Because my degree is in counseling, I had no idea what a lesson plan was, or a strategy to help manage my classroom better and my mom helped though all of that."

Martha said she remembered her parents actively discussing school around their house when she was younger. She further stated her parents always shared their days with one another.

Her parents also talked about issues they were having with a student, parent, or new policy being implemented at school. Martha stated, “They definitely did not leave school at the building, it was with them all the time.” While the nature of grades and subjects her parents taught did not lend themselves to bringing a lot of work home, she said she helped her mother create bulletin boards, craft projects, and checked over a few papers.

Martha said music was an integral part of her mother’s classroom. When asked about what her mother’s classroom looked like, Martha stated:

Well her room looked pretty much like this one, toys and centers everywhere. She always had a piano in her room. She still plays the piano for church and stuff. Music was a big thing in her classroom. It always has been a huge part of her life. She would play for her students' programs and things like that. And of course she used records, whereas I use CDs and sometimes an iPod.

Martha continued by remarking that her mother still comes to her classroom at holidays and for special times during the year and plays the piano and the students sing. Martha exclaimed, “The kids really like that.”

Martha talked about all the different activities she went to as a child that were associated with her parents being educators. She explained, “Of course with Dad being a principal, we went to all the ballgames. Because it was a K-12 school and if you wanted to see Dad during basketball season, you went to the games; but I enjoyed them.” Martha also explained, because her mother taught kindergarten, she had extra duties as well. She detailed, “Mom always put on a program in the fall and the spring and all those extra meetings and stuff.” While she was aware of all the extra duties, she noted that her parents, and even herself, when she started teaching, enjoyed this part of the job. This provided them with different kinds of stress, but it was still very enjoyable.

Martha saw her parents with a very positive viewpoint of being a teacher from many different standpoints. Like many of the other teachers interviewed, Martha’s mother liked being

a teacher because she had time off to spend with her children, especially when they were out of school. Martha recalled her mother telling her, "If you want to have children, this is the perfect career choice. I felt that very strongly when I decided to become a teacher."

Martha stated having parents who were teachers has made an incredible difference in her career as a teacher. She said she thought she had an advantage other teachers did not have. She stated, "It has really helped me having parents who were teachers, because when I started, I had someone to help me create lessons for my kindergarten class because my mom taught that as well." She also noted that because she had the support and help coming from her parents, she was also much more willing to help newer teachers who might not have had that same support.

Jackie was very close to her father. She said they spent a lot of time together while she was in school and when she began her career as a teacher. She stated he was very busy with teaching. She said, "He was always rushing in and then rushing back out to teach a night class or something." Because her father was an administrator and classroom teacher at different points of her life, she stated, "His job was much more than an 8 to 3:30 job; so many other things went into it."

Jackie also noted that her father had a very favorable opinion about his job. She admitted there were times he seemed to be frustrated, but when she became a teacher she fully understood why. According to Jackie that was also to be expected whenever one was involved in any career. Furthermore Jackie said:

My dad has a reputation of being a disciplinarian. He also asked for and received respect from his students. I think, for me, that kind of made me proud that he had respect in the classroom. I expect that same kind of respect. So it's like that carried over, because I have people all the time say, "Oh your dad, he was wonderful I really respected him" and when he said something people did it, they listened. And that's one of my biggest things- I want to be respected.

Jackie's desire to approach teaching like her father has seemingly made her a better teacher.

Because Sarah's mother was not a teacher until about the same time she became one, the guidance offered was different but equally effective. Sarah stated this about the help she received, "She helped me out a lot because she completed student teaching in the same grade I was in the year before, so we talked about it a lot and shared ideas and materials."

Both of Rosalyn's parents were teachers so she said she remembered school being discussed at their house all the time. Because her parents were at the same school, she said she recalled they were always discussing students they shared with one another or events that had happened at school on a particular day. She related:

I guess they were so involved and they talked about school all the time because it made conversation easier. I've noticed my husband, when it's me and mom and dad, that he, you know, feels totally left out of the conversation. But I don't know how that feels because I've always been involved with them and them with me and school. So that's all we talked about. That's all we have ever talked about and it's hard to believe other people have not had that same experience, but I know they haven't.

All the discussions about school and challenges teachers face have enabled Rosalyn to work through any problems she had because she had such positive role models and clear expectations of what she was supposed to be doing.

Both of Rosalyn's parents were sponsors of clubs relative to the particular classes they taught. This was a huge time commitment, and, as Rosalyn said, as a result she sees herself really getting involved at school. She stated, "I spent many hours of my childhood with one or both of my parents at school, and now I see my daughter doing the same thing." Rosalyn remarked she always understood that teaching was not a job that ended with the school day, but that it required hard work, dedication, and at times long hours. Rosalyn credited her parents with being one of the major reasons she has been able to remain in the profession long term. She said

she thought the experiences her parents provided have enabled her to remain in the profession as long as she has.

Abigail said the memories of her mother's job were very positive. She said she recalled her mother spending a lot of time after school getting ready for the next day or trying lessons out on her to see if it was appropriate for her students. Most of all she said she remembered that "even though she was doing all of this work, she seemed to enjoy it, so even though it was work, as a child it seemed like a natural part of anyone's job, especially a teacher's." Her grandfather also influenced her decision to become a teacher. She remembered he would share stories of his own teaching experiences, and it appeared that he had many good years as a teacher, so Abigail wondered, "Why would everyone not want to do this?"

### *Satisfiers*

Nancy said she was more satisfied with her job than dissatisfied. Satisfiers included time off to spend with her children. She stated she also liked the idea of a steady paycheck. Nancy stated, "When I owned my own business, I only paid myself what I thought I could out of the account, and I might go without pay to keep the business running...I like that I know exactly what will be deposited in my account each month." The students, sporting activities, week-ends off, and the "supposed" hours of the day were even more reasons Nancy said teaching was a good job to have.

Franklin said teaching children who want to learn was a satisfier. Franklin also said he enjoyed when former students came back and talk with him about their year together. Franklin stated that some of his former students and their parents would mention things they started the



year they had him as a teacher that they still keep up with today. “That is very gratifying and satisfying to know I made a difference.”

Unlike Nancy, Betty said she enjoyed the challenges of teaching all the students at a school and especially liked a job that enabled her to travel to three different schools. She enjoyed getting to know so many different students and watching them make progress. Furthermore, she noted, because she teaches a special class, students who may not excel in the academic realm are able to excel in her class and that brought her great joy. Motherhood has also helped her to see many benefits of teaching including the schedule. She stated, “I have the summers to spend with my daughter, that’s a good thing. Definitely not why I did it, but it is a perk.”

William cited the need to stay fresh and focused as a satisfier. He further stated the ability to touch many children, especially those who are seemingly neglected in some way was another satisfying factor. Furthermore he stated:

When we went for our interviews to get into the education department, we were told not to answer the question why you want to teach with ‘I love kids.’ Well, that is really one of the reasons why I want to teach-- I truly love them, being around them, and potentially helping them to become better human beings in the process.

This overall love of children was very evident throughout the conversation.

Another satisfier for William included the ability to work with other teachers to make the profession better. William was extremely active in a local education association and as a result has been able to meet teachers across the state and nation, and, according to him, “to meet people discover their stories, and then utilize that to help shape public policy in education.” Because the teachers were in a more rural setting, William also cited the fact that the school was such an integral part of the community as another satisfier.

Bess said she enjoyed most aspects of teaching. One of the greatest satisfiers for her was students who enjoyed learning new things. The fact she teaches a lower grade made that one of the most rewarding parts of her job. She also stated she liked designing and implementing new lessons and ideas for lessons. She said this was a little more relative to the particular grade level she taught, but it was one of the best parts.

Hillary said she enjoyed getting to know her students and becoming a part of their lives in a positive way. Furthermore, she said she enjoyed supporting her students in “more than just the day to day in-class activities.” She also said she tried to support them when she could outside of the classroom and relished the opportunity to be that kind of person. She also stated she wanted the opportunity to be a positive role model for the students she taught. “Elementary school teachers often spend as much time with the children during the year as their parents do, so we can help shape them.” Also, the ability to instill the love for learning was important her. Hillary mentioned:

If they are not getting any encouragement, they need it somewhere, because I see it as a cycle. If you want them to succeed, and you want them to be lifelong learners, you want them to go on to college and have a career, then you, as their teacher or one of their teachers, are going to have set these examples, because they might not be, in a lot of cases they are not getting that at home.

This provided an opportunity many people in other careers do not get. With a smile on her face, Hillary also mentioned having summers off. She continued by saying when she decides to have children, she thinks the scheduling will be beneficial for her and her children. Hillary also pointed out there was job security in teaching. “There will always be children who need an education. So I don’t have to worry about my job going overseas or something.”

Mamie truly seemed to enjoy all aspects of her job. She exclaimed, “I love my job! Everyone should be able to color and paint everyday at work.” This enthusiasm for her job was evident as she lit up when asked about it. She said she liked the security that comes with her job.

She also said she thought that even though she travels between several different schools, the physical demands were low compared to some other jobs. Also as a mother, like many of the other interviewees, she said she liked having the same or similar schedule as her child when she was in school.

Mary stated that she enjoyed children and their outlook on life. She explained, “I think it’s just so fun to come to work everyday.” She said she liked talking with the students and seeing how they think things work or should work. She said she also liked the ability to know she has taught them something and in many cases skills and things they will use the rest of their lives. “Overall that is extremely gratifying.”

Eleanor, although extremely satisfied in her job, because of her age and other factors did not see herself as teacher for too many more years. She currently was working in a school writing grants and said she loves doing that. She also pointed out that as a parent, the hours were good and they enabled teachers to spend time with their children. She said she also enjoyed building relationships with her students. These relationships often lasted a lifetime. Furthermore, she said she enjoyed igniting a spark for learning in her students.

Satisfaction areas for Rachel included the pure joy and excitement students have in class on a regular basis. She noted although this might be more prevalent in lower grades, it was gratifying none the less. She said she also liked the progress that was apparent especially with younger grades. She noted, “By the end of the year, I can always see some progress and that is wonderful. I love that part of teaching especially.” She also said she liked making students feel special and worthwhile, “because in many cases this is not something they get to feel at home.”

In Dolly’s opinion, there were numerous things that provided satisfaction to her as a teacher. She made a special note, “Just seeing them, and looking at their faces when they learn

things. That is really something special.” Even though it was something that was very different from when she went to school, reading being expected in kindergarten, she said she enjoyed watching kids read for the first time. She also said she liked students who, at this early age, were still excited about learning. She had taught in an intermediate grade and remarked that the same excitement was not present there as it was in kindergarten. She also mentioned, even though it is somewhat cliché, that she enjoyed just spending time with kids. She said, “It keeps me young and I enjoy that part of it as well.”

Pat’s reasoning as to why she was so satisfied with her current job, even though she has a new title, was that she felt comfortable--not so much in the teaching or counseling aspect, but in the fact that she knew she could contact a number of different individuals to help her draw the right conclusions or find answers to different problems she might encounter. She also said she enjoyed seeing something "click" with the students. She said she also liked to provide kids with hope. She noted that living a rural area with limited economic opportunities was a challenge but providing kids with information that showed them they do not have to accept their current situation, and that there were ways to better themselves has proven to be especially gratifying.

Barbara said, in her mind, there was no better job than that of a teacher. She noted she especially liked the hugs. She remarked, “I don’t remember hugging my teachers, but there are very few days that I come to school that I don’t get a hug from someone.” This comment caused a big smile to come across her face. Barbara was one of those people who truly have a love of children and teaching them. For that reason, she was completely satisfied in her job.

Martha was, on the whole, very satisfied. She stated, “It is not perfect, because there is always room for improvement.” She noted she loved the changes she was able to see in her students from the time they started school until they left her class. She remarked that the change

students go through was often really amazing. She stated, “They’re babies; they grow up so much and mature. They are on their own. In the beginning, we have to do everything for them and when they leave, they can do so much for themselves.” She said she also enjoyed having time off to spend with her children at the same time they have time off. She said she liked being able to travel with her family as well. Overall, the change she saw in her students was an area she said made her feel much better about her job.

The enthusiasm Jackie had for her job was contagious and it was very easy to understand why she loved her job so much. She cited several things as giving her satisfaction. She said she felt as if she was making a difference in the lives of children on a regular basis. This difference, she hoped, would enable some of her students to escape poverty or come back to the community and provide the same things she was providing now to a new group of students. She said she also liked that she was able to keep her heritage alive through her teaching. Because her father and grandfather were teachers, this continued to make them proud, and in that respect, she said she liked that aspect of teaching. She also remarked, “Although it is not a reason to enter the field, the hours and summers off are a nice perk, but it is still a tough job.”

Sarah said she enjoyed her job, especially because everyday was a challenge and different. She stated, “No two days are the same, I like the variety teaching provides.” As did so many other teachers interviewed, she said she loved the children and enjoyed spending time with them. Because she taught a lower grade, she said she liked what the kids said and how they were always saying something funny. She also said she liked the flexibility the job gave her; especially, because she has children, that part was really important. Sarah also remarked, “I like that even though I teach kindergarten, every day I learn something, either in preparation for the lesson or from my students, and I love to learn.”

Rosalyn looked at her job more as a privilege. She described the rock star status, especially in elementary school, that teachers received and how every time they saw her in school or out in the community it seemed as if she was someone famous. She also said she liked being able to help people in some way. While she said this was not unique to being a counselor, it was probably more prevalent than in other areas.

Abigail said she saw the look on students' faces when they were excited about learning or having an intense desire to learn as being a great satisfier in education. She also said she liked the ability to share her knowledge with others on a regular basis. She said, "If you have this knowledge and don't share with anyone, what is the point?" She said she also liked seeing students' sense of accomplishment when they have completed an assignment or learned a new concept.

### *Challenges*

Nancy cited problems with her role as a specialty teacher as a personal challenge. "No other teacher in this type of setting has all 500 or 600 kids twice each week for 40 minutes" Nancy discussed how exhausting the job was on a regular basis. There were also always those children who seem to be problematic for everyone.

Franklin said he saw the amount of paperwork teachers were continually bombarded with as a problem. He told, "Teaching is not the problem today, it's the paperwork...that's the foolishness you have to put up with in order to teach the math or reading." This, coupled with a lack or parental concern, was an ever growing problem, according to Franklin.

Betty stated several challenges to schools and teachers today. She explained one of the biggest problems as she saw it:

I think kids have no responsibility for their actions. If you call them on something, even if it is something minor, they always look to blame someone else. I think this is in large part because they do not have to take responsibility at home.

This problem has been a growing trend in education and Betty said she believed the break down of the family unit has caused it.

Like so many other teachers, William said he noticed that parents often had unreal expectations for their children. This particular challenge was especially difficult for teachers.

He remarked:

I hear all the time, I want my children to have it better than when I was a kid. Having it better does not mean having more stuff; it means better morals, a better way of living, a better way of life, and more people loving you. It seems like today everyone has become so materialistic.

Another facet to this problem was that so many of these parents try to replace time spent with their children with stuff and that was hard for teachers to ignore, justify, or fix.

Another challenge involved community support of education. William mentioned that society, as a whole, does not embrace the importance of education nationwide or in the small community where he taught. He stated, "I don't think Americans in general support education. I don't think we hold it in high enough esteem. When things aren't going well, education is the way to change things." This lack of support for teachers was a challenge that must be addressed in the near future. According to William, "The entire institution could continue to crumble and lose its effectiveness."

Like so many other teachers, William said he thought making a living was becoming more difficult. He noted that through his association work, he has met people who have left the profession, and they cited the increasing pressure that is put on teachers without any kind of reward as one of the main reasons for leaving. While he noted this does not always include

monetary gain, teachers must be justly compensated for all their hard work and dedication and not be in the “gutters of society.”

Bess was very quick to point out that teaching was an exhausting job, both physically and mentally. She stated, “This job is exhausting and coupled with the breakdown of the family unit, children are much harder to deal with now in part because there is a lack of discipline at home.” This breakdown means that children have been shuffled from one parent to the other or one home to the other. She also mentioned she does not like to sell things or collect money.

Hilary’s challenges might result from being a special teacher today. She said she saw the whole school throughout the week and missed the personal contact and interaction she was able to develop as a classroom teacher. She said salary was a continual challenge for teachers. She noted, “Especially in a rural system, you look at surrounding counties making more money for the same job and it’s very disheartening.” While the pay issue was a difficult one to deal with, she noted it was getting better, just not where she thought it should be.

Even though Mamie was generally upbeat about her career as a teacher, she pointed to low pay and overall impression of teachers as an area that could be better. She pointed out:

We have kind of beaten pay to death, but having been in education as long as I have and adding some income to my paycheck through degrees, and career ladder, I think it would be nice if I made a few thousand dollars more a year than I do, I guess I think my education is worth a little bit more than I get paid for it. I think teachers are probably some of the most important professionals for the future of this world and I do not think their income matches their importance.

Like many other teachers, pay was an issue, but Mamie was quick to point out that while more money would be nice, she was still very satisfied with her job.

Because Mary was a 1st-year teacher, she was aware there were things about her job that could be overwhelming, but she was the most amazed or dissatisfied by the number of little things. She explained, “All that little extra stuff you have to do. I mean, that totally shocked me.



My mentoring teacher asked me, have you done this or that and I was like, I thought I was supposed to be teaching.” However, Mary did add that part of that impression might be because she was new and feeling overwhelmed. She remarked she did not like lesson planning, but understood, “it’s just something you have to do.” In addition, another challenge for teachers was that it was difficult to leave your job. Mary remarked, “Unlike so many other jobs, I think about my kids all the time.” She said, because she was somewhat tender hearted, that made her job even more stressful. “On top of everything else, many nights I wonder if my kids have enough to eat, or someone at home to help them. I worry a lot.” She also said she thought that was why she could make such a positive impact on students and needed to remain in the profession long term.

Eleanor pointed out that for her dealing with ignorance was a continual problem especially in a rural area. She noted that parents in the area she taught in were not stupid, but ignorant to the source of many problems and unwilling to seek solutions. This was an ever growing theme from the teachers in this interview process.

Rachel cited that another potential pitfall for the educational system was red tape. She noted in her short career there had been instances where there was so much red tape, the students could have easily gotten lost in the shuffle. She stated, “That is so frustrating; there were situations going on around me I want to fix and was unable to.” These red tape situations were an ever growing problem according to Rachel.

Dolly said her job was nearly perfect. There were so many things about it she enjoyed, but she said she thought parents were becoming increasingly difficult to deal with. She said that much of the time parents had unreal expectations for their children. She also said that it could be difficult when almost everyone got a concept or an idea and there was the one child who did not.

This challenges even the veteran teachers to find a way to help that student understand why something works that way. In her words, “It’s just hard coming up with all those different strategies to get through to every one of them. It can be frustrating I think.”

Pat cited a couple of very serious challenges she saw at the time or on the horizon for education. She said that the educational system in this country was not perfect, but she did not like educational reforms. Her concern came from those who often shape educational policy, “With the changing of presidents, it’s frustrating to see what I feel are people who don’t know about education make the hoops and rules for us.” She said that too often educational policy becomes a political issue and reforms follow because they sounded good coming from a politician, and they truly did not offer any serious solutions to the problems facing education in the United States. She agreed with other teachers in the study--parents were posing significant problems. “Too often, parents think we are doing something wrong to their children, and, even worse, they think it is intentional. It gets very frustrating dealing with that on a regular basis.” Parents, according to Pat, were also less supportive than they could be. She said their attitude often centered on what had the school done wrong toward the child, instead of seeing that perhaps their child had made a mistake. Pat said these problems were more prevalent now that she was in an administrative role.

As mentioned earlier, Barbara was extremely satisfied with her job, but as she said, “There is always room for improvement in even the best working conditions.” She pointed out there was limited planning time in the school day for her as the teacher. Most nights, Barbara stated, she left school well after 5 or 6 in the evening. Planning for six subjects was extremely challenging with such little planning time. While she was willing to put in the extra time the

preparation takes, she noted, “There has to be a better and fairer way to help teachers with this burden.” This was by far her main complaint.

Martha had few complaints with her job as a whole. She did see money as a problem but not in terms of salaries as much as for supplies. Teachers have been forced to spend a lot of money out of their own pockets, and Martha stated when they do not make a lot of money, that puts an even bigger burden on them. Martha said she would like to see more funding come to education so that teachers do not have to continually be inventive to have basic needs met.

Jackie pointed out that the stress teachers were under at almost all times was an extremely difficult challenge. She pointed to the fact that for herself failure was not an option, so she became stressed when students did not seem to grasp a concept, especially when she approached that topic in many different ways. She stated, “It’s like oh man, what am I going to do? I’ve got to succeed at this, I’ve got to make this happen.” This challenge was mentioned by some of the others interviewed in this study. She also noted that another challenge with teaching as opposed to other jobs was having “no down time or ability to just get by.” She stated the challenge this way, “You have to walk in and be in tip-top shape or the students will call you on it. You are their constant thread so you have to be on it always. I can’t think of another job that is like that.”

Sarah was quick to point to parents as a challenge to teaching. She pointed out that parents could be difficult to deal with, but also that teachers often wished parents would realize that teachers were there to work with children, to help them develop, and to become better, stronger students. Although Sarah said she believed she made a decent salary, she noted it could always be better.

As mentioned before, Rosalyn said she really loved her job but saw challenges that she and other teachers face. She said she did not like having to complete duties that put her in an authoritarian role. As a specialty teacher, she said she did not like having to be authoritative with her students.

Abigail made note of only a few things that were growing challenges for educators. She noted that students who did not seem to care were a growing problem in schools today. She said she saw their complacency with education as being detrimental to society as a whole. Also, she said that sometimes other teachers, administrators, and students did not give special teachers or special classes the respect they deserved.

CHAPTER 5  
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, AND FUTURE  
RESEARCH

*Introduction*

Wilcox and Mumford (n. d.) said about family in an episode of the television series *M\*A\*S\*H*, “I don’t care how poor a man is; if he has family, he is rich” (n. p.). The teachers interviewed for this study definitely attested to that fact. The teachers interviewed for this study had a close relationship with their families and in some way or another, their families made them the people they are today. The purpose of this study was to determine if having a parent, a grandparent, or both a parent and grandparent who were educators was a contributing factor for teachers in not only choosing education but also remaining in the profession long term. The goal was to develop a grounded theory for explaining why second- and third-generation teachers enter the profession and remain there long term. The overall question being answered was: As a second- or third-generation teacher, what impact did your family have on your decision to enter the education profession as a teacher?

I interviewed 18 teachers whose immediate family members were also educators in an attempt to see what, if any, connection existed based on their decisions to enter and remain in the teaching profession. Based on my review of literature, there has not been a similar study conducted; therefore, I could draw only on my own personal experiences when thinking about the topic. As the data were coded, several different themes emerged as outlined in Chapter 4. Those themes addressed the overall and subsequent research questions for this study.

### *Conclusions From the Study*

There was a wide variation in the responses provided by the 18 teachers interviewed, and initially it would seem as if there was little relationship between the respondents. A close examination of their responses indicated they were much more alike than different regarding their approach to education, love of children, and their overall opinions of teaching. The conclusion section is divided into four categories: (a) the impact of family, (b) childhood experiences, (c) parental guidance and experiences, and (d) other factors.

The conclusions categories were developed based on the research questions and subsequent responses of the participants and their alignment with those questions.

#### *The Impact of Family*

*Findings.* This study and analysis of the data showed there was little doubt that in the cases of those people interviewed their families had a major impact on their lives as teachers. The findings showed that those who were interviewed were not pushed into the educational setting or overtly encouraged by their parents or other family members; however, once they selected that particular vocation, their families were almost always pleased with their decision. The selection of teaching as a career did not seem to be as important to the families of those interviewed as was the furthering of their education. In each interview, participants mentioned the importance of getting an education and learning all they could. Actually, this particular value was presented more than the desire for children of educators to become teachers.

When those who were interviewed became teachers, the support offered to them by their families has been invaluable. In interview after interview, teachers mentioned how beneficial having a parent who had been a teacher was because it gave them a better understanding of what

was expected in the job, how to better deal with parents, and in general how to overcome adversity related to being a teacher. The fact that they had parents or grandparents in the education profession helped these teachers deal with problems such as burn-out or lack of motivation for their jobs. In short, having other teachers in the family made a difference in how these teachers approached their jobs and in their subsequent success in the profession. They each had someone to go to for comfort and advice.

Of those interviewed who had children, their families also provided a support system for helping with their children when they were unable to care for them. The schedule of a teacher is somewhat flexible, but in many cases they still needed help caring for their children, especially if the teacher decided to go back to school for more education. In every case, these teachers reported a strong support system in place and said they could count on their families for help whenever they needed it. This might have been because of the more close knit nature of a rural community, but in the cases of the research conducted, it was strongly present.

*Recommendations.* Further research needs to be conducted regarding this topic. In particular, research needs to be conducted in other areas across the country. There might be variation between rural, suburban, and urban areas as to the type of phenomena present in each of the areas. The findings, from this more rural, area seem to indicate a parent's vocation is a strong indicator of children's choice of a profession. In addition, further studies should include how other members of one's family, not just parents, but also brothers and sisters, impact someone's overall job satisfaction.

### *Childhood Experiences*

*Findings.* My study's analysis of childhood experiences showed that most teachers who were interviewed had a very positive school experience. Almost all the participants mentioned they liked school at an early age. In many cases they thought about the possibility of becoming a teacher from a young age. This positive experience led many of them to want to become a teacher because of the experiences they had when they were younger. They also wanted to bring the same joy, excitement, and love of learning to their students as many of their earlier teachers had brought to them. Virtually no interviewee had an overall negative experience in school. Not only did each of them recall with great fondness different activities and learning experiences, but also most strived to maintain the same basic characteristics their favorite teacher possessed. Each teacher interviewed seemed to want to provide students the best of his or her experiences.

*Recommendations.* Further research needs to be conducted with teachers currently in the classroom and their experiences with education as a child. This could be a major factor in "burn-out," or teachers leaving the profession because they did not have a positive experience with learning as a child. Those teachers interviewed also stated they had some of the characteristics of their favorite teachers. Research should also be conducted to see if the characteristics of the teacher's favorite educators are currently present in their own teaching. In addition, principals might want to begin asking prospective teachers about their own educational experiences in an effort to find those teachers who enjoyed school and might enter the profession eager to instill the same values they were given by some of their favorite teachers.



### *Parental Guidance and Experiences*

*Findings.* This study and the analysis of the data showed that when those teachers interviewed entered the profession, the experience of being a child of a teacher or the guidance provided to them from their parents and grandparent proved to be beneficial. In many of the cases of those interviewed, it helped them through a difficult situation, provided a different learning strategy to implement, or helped them develop into stronger, more efficient teachers. All teachers interviewed looked to their parents for guidance at some point in their careers. Most participants remarked that having a parent who was a teacher helped them to be more prepared when they first entered the profession or when they were having difficulties. The guidance from parents or grandparents who were educators and the experience of being the children of teachers enabled those people interviewed to have a more realistic approach to expectations that come with their jobs than did other people they mentioned throughout the course of the interview.

*Recommendations.* Further research should be conducted to determine if the kind of guidance offered to teachers in this region is present in other regions across the United States. Specific attention should be paid to children of teachers in other rural areas, as well as suburban and urban areas. Additional research should be conducted to see what kinds of guidance parents who are teachers give to their children who are teachers that help them overcome obstacles. Additional research could include information on the type of relationship the parents have with their children to see if that has any bearing on the appropriateness of overall advice given to the children.

### *Other Factors*

*Findings.* This study and the analysis of the data related to the study showed there were other factors that influenced participants to enter the teaching profession. Most of the participants were women and they either had or expressed a desire to have children. In each case, they said they felt teaching was an excellent choice for a career because they could be on the same schedule as their children. This meant that in many cases they had extended periods of time off to spend with their children. This seemed to make both teaching and parenting very rewarding for them.

Many of the teachers laughed about the hours and amount of work for teachers but stated as parents they liked the extra time to spend with their children, especially in the summer. This gave those teachers interviewed opportunities to travel and spend more time with their families. Several stated this was fortunate for them and their children because many other jobs do not provide this same luxury.

Other motivating factors came from an intense desire to see children learn. Many of the teachers interviewed cited this particular factor. Also, an overall love of children encouraged many teachers to enter the profession. Teachers also acknowledged that despite economic times being unsure, teaching provided a steady income with little concern for the loss of their jobs as long as they were doing what they were supposed to be doing. Lastly, the “love of learning” was cited as a reason to enter the profession. Most of those teachers interviewed said they loved seeing students' faces light up when they learned something new. Teacher commitment to lifelong learning enabled many of the teachers to see that as their role--helping children to become lifelong learners.

*Recommendations.* Although there have been numerous studies on motivation for teachers entering the profession, there should be additional research in this area. More specifically, the research should focus on motivating factors for elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school teachers separately. Although the nature of the rural school system did not adequately provide ample participants from all grade levels, there might be some differences in teachers at the elementary grade level from the others; therefore, this particular study could be warranted.

### *Conclusion*

This particular study evolved from my first graduate-level course in research methods and my own personal experiences with education. As a child and grandchild of teachers, the choice of becoming a teacher seemed natural, but I did not always see that in my future. I looked around the place I lived to see if any of those teachers whose parents or grandparents were teachers had the same experiences, beliefs, and overall impression of education that I had. I found that not all the teachers interviewed replicated my story exactly although theirs were close. I found that when families are close knit, as is often the case in rural areas, it seems that having parents who were teachers greatly influence their children to choose the same career path. There might be other factors that cause this in rural areas, but families made a difference in this decision.

As I conducted my final interview on a cold and snowy January night and arrived back at the childhood home of my father, where I now reside, I realized that our parents and grandparents provide an enormous impact on who we are and what we want to be. Our families make us who we are and the results of this study reinforced that to me. Families do have an

enormous impact on our career choices and how well we can adapt when those choices have been made. The interviewee I had spent a portion of the evening with was discussing the great pride and respect she had for her heritage as a teacher. I realized that night I was extremely proud of who I was and I wished other people were so lucky and could have such a great pride and respect for their own family as I had for mine. It was not just being proud, I saw it every day in the numerous people I had met who told me what an impact my grandmother, father, or mother had made in their lives. My hope is that someday my own children and grandchildren will hear the same things said about me.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Letter to Participants

H.Clay Blazer  
XXX Any Drive  
Any City, ST XXXXX

Date:

Dear Teacher:

I am a student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City working on a doctoral degree in Classroom Leadership in the Education Leadership and Policy Analysis department. I am currently writing my dissertation on Familial Influences on Teachers in the Tennessee Valley Area, and I would like to know if you would be interested in being part of the study.

The intent of this study is to examine teacher motivations and familial influences related to entrance into the education field. As a willing participant, I will ask you questions related to your relationship with your parents, motivating factors that led you to teaching, impact of notable teachers you had, overall job satisfaction, and driving forces in your professional life. Persons participating in this study can expect an interview, lasting at least an hour, recorded on an audio-recording device. Participants may withdraw their interview data from the research after the interview if they decide they do not want to participate.

Participants' identity and personal information will be kept strictly confidential in accordance with the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board policy. By participating in this study you are giving me permission to quote you. Your name will not be used when quotations are used. You will receive a transcription of your interview prior to the analysis phase of the project to ensure you feel you are being fairly represented. The results will be published in a dissertation document and possibly a qualitative or higher education journal.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw your name at any time. If you are interested in participating in this process please contact me at school XXX-XXX-XXXX ext. XXX, at home XXX-XXX-XXXX, or on my cell XXX-XXX-XXXX. You may also email me at [clayblazer@hotmail.com](mailto:clayblazer@hotmail.com).

Sincerely,

H. Clay Blazer

## APPENDIX B

### **Informed Consent Form EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

This Informed Consent will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this research study is to see if immediate family's vocation as a teacher was a contributing factor to these participants to choose education as career.

**DURATION:** The participants will be asked to share their information in a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. If the participant chooses to move ahead with the interview, they will be accommodated with a mutually convenient time and place. Any additional information that may be needed or clarified will be done via telephone. The duration of the data collection and analysis phase will be completed from May 2008 through May 2009.

**PROCEDURES:** The procedures, which will involve you as a research subject, include a face-to-face interview which will be audio recorded. Information gained will be analyzed using NVivo 7 computer software. This program will allow comparison and analysis of questions so that conclusions can be drawn about participant response involving motivators for becoming a teacher.

**ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES/TREATMENTS:** The alternative procedures/treatments available to you if you elect not to participate in this study include not being burdened by the loss of 60 minutes of time it takes to participate in the study.

**POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:** There will be minimal to no risk to participants of this study. The participant may decline to answer any part of any question at any time for any reason. The participant may also terminate the interview at any point in the process if they choose and withdraw from further participation of the study. The participant may withdraw or alter their data once transcribed and read. Interviews will be conducted off campus.

**POSSIBLE BENEFITS:** Possible benefits of your participation include the potential for this research to open new avenues of research, as well as personal satisfaction of helping further academia by participating.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this research experiment is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate, the benefits or treatment to which you are otherwise entitled will not be affected. You may quit by calling H. Clay Blazer, whose phone number is XXX-XXX-XXXX. You will be told

immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Clay Blazer at XXX-xxx-xxxx, or Dr. James Lampley at XXX-xxx-xxxx. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in (name the location where records will be kept) for at least 5 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, ETSU IRB, and personnel particular to this research, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

---

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

---

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide

#### Educational Background

- Describe your childhood and early experiences with education.
- How did college influence your desire to become a teacher?

#### Influences on Teaching

- Describe the people and your relationship with those who most influenced your decision to become a teacher?
- How has the description and related remembrances compared to your actual experiences as a teacher?

#### Family Life

- How do recall your parent's opinion of their job as a teacher?
- What do you remember about your parents job as a teacher?

#### Family Impact

- In what ways did your family influence your decision to become a teacher?
- How has your family supported you as a teacher?

## APPENDIX D

### Letter to Director of Schools (City)

March 1, 2008

Dear Xx. Xxxxxx,

I am a student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City working on a doctoral degree in Classroom Leadership in the Education Leadership and Policy Analysis department. I am currently writing my dissertation on Familial Influences on Teachers in the Tennessee Valley Area, and I am interested in potentially interviewing teachers in your school district.

The intent of this study is to examine teacher motivations and familial influences related to entrance into the education field. Participants will be asked questions related to your relationship with your parents, motivating factors that led you to teaching, impact of notable teachers you had, overall job satisfaction, and driving forces in your professional life. Those teachers participating in this study can expect an interview, lasting at least an hour, recorded on an audio-recording device. This may or may not take place at the interviewees school classroom. Many of the teachers in your district will not qualify for the study because their parents, grandparents or both were not teachers.

The study being conducted will not take away instructional time from the students. Nor will the teachers be interviewed during the school day. There is no cost to school system. The intent of the letter is to receive your permission as the director, to contact those teachers who may qualify for this study. At this time I am not certain of which teachers in your system may qualify, but if you have any additional information or know the names of any teachers who are 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation and would be interested in participating in the study please contact me.

In any case, please contact me with either acceptance or rejection of the request to contact teachers in your district at home XXX-xxx-xxxx, cell phone XXX-xxx-xxxx, or by email [clayblazer@hotmail.com](mailto:clayblazer@hotmail.com).

Thank you in advance for your help and consideration.

Sincerely,

H. Clay Blazer

## APPENDIX E

### Letter to Director of Schools (County)

March 1, 2008

Dear Xx. Xxxxxx,

I am a student at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City working on a doctoral degree in Classroom Leadership in the Education Leadership and Policy Analysis department. I am currently writing my dissertation on Familial Influences on Teachers in the Tennessee Valley Area, and I am interested in potentially interviewing teachers in your school district.

The intent of this study is to examine teacher motivations and familial influences related to entrance into the education field. Participants will be asked questions related to your relationship with your parents, motivating factors that led you to teaching, impact of notable teachers you had, overall job satisfaction, and driving forces in your professional life. Those teachers participating in this study can expect an interview, lasting at least an hour, recorded on an audio-recording device. This may or may not take place at the interviewees school classroom. Many of the teachers in your district will not qualify for the study because their parents, grandparents or both were not teachers.

The study being conducted will not take away instructional time from the students. Nor will the teachers be interviewed during the school day. There is no cost to school system. The intent of the letter is to receive your permission as the director, to contact those teachers who may qualify for this study. At this time I am not certain of which teachers in your system may qualify, but if you have any additional information or know the names of any teachers who are 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation and would be interested in participating in the study please contact me.

In any case, please contact me with either acceptance or rejection of the request to contact teachers in your district at home XXX-xxx-xxxx, cell phone XXX-xxx-xxxx, or by email [clayblazer@hotmail.com](mailto:clayblazer@hotmail.com).

Thank you in advance for your help and consideration.

Sincerely,

H. Clay Blazer



VITA

HENRY CLAY BLAZER

Personal Data:           Date of Birth: July 11, 1979  
                              Place of Birth: Newport, Tennessee  
                              Marital Status: Single

Education:                Public Schools, Cocke County, Tennessee  
                              Walters State Community College, Morristown, Tennessee;  
                                  General, AA  
                                  1999  
                              University of Tennessee, Knoxville;  
                                  History, Political Science, Secondary Education, BA  
                                  2001  
                              University of Tennessee, Knoxville;  
                                  Secondary Social Sciences, MS  
                                  2002  
                              University of Tennessee, Knoxville;  
                                  Social Science Curriculum, Ed. S.  
                                  2004  
                              East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;  
                                  Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, EdD.  
                                  2009

Professional  
Experience:                Teacher-Intern, Karns High School; Knoxville, Tennessee,  
                                  2001-2002  
                              Teacher, Cocke County High School; Newport, Tennessee,  
                                  2002-Present

Honors and  
Awards:                    National Board Certified Teacher,  
                                  Social Studies-History--Adolescence and Young Adulthood  
                                  2006-2016