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Special education teacher burnout: the effects of efficacy expectations and perceptions of job responsibilities

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SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER BURNOUT:
THE EFFECTS OF EFFICACY EXPECTATIONS
AND PERCEPTIONS OF JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

By

Rachel L. Berry

Accepted in Partial Completion
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER BURNOUT:
THE EFFECTS OF EFFICACY EXPECTATIONS
AND PERCEPTIONS OF JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

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May 2011

MASTER'S THESIS

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Rachel L. Berry

May 2011

Abstract

Special education teachers work with some of the neediest students in our nation's public schools and experience higher levels of attrition and emotional burnout than those teachers who work with the general student population. The purpose of this study was to examine a variety of teacher belief variables and job characteristics to help understand the phenomenon of emotional exhaustion experienced by special educators. Results indicated that 43% of the variability in the level of burnout reported by special education teachers can be attributed to differences in levels of outcome efficacy, the amount of experience teaching special education, levels of self-efficacy, and the level of perceived agreement with families about their job responsibilities. These findings indicate that rates of burnout and attrition among special education teachers might be decreased by clarifying or altering job expectations to increase teacher perceptions of agreement with others and their efficacy beliefs.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures and Table

Special education teachers have a significant impact on the success of some of the most at-risk students in the United States. As such, it is critical that each special education teacher is dedicated to providing effective instruction to students with a range of learning challenges, meeting the reporting and accountability requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and supporting their school's efforts to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Special education teachers and general education teachers fill different educational roles and have different job responsibilities. Many scholars and professional organizations have outlined the specific job expectations for special education teachers but there is considerable variability among the resultant descriptions. It is clear, however, that special education teachers experience higher rates of burnout and are more likely to leave their positions than general education teachers, both of which may be due, at least in part, to the different roles and distinctive responsibilities expected of special education teachers (Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). Boe, Bobbitt and Cook (1997) estimated that at least 20% of special education teachers (compared to only 13% of general education teachers) had voluntarily resigned from a job. Some left to seek employment at a different school but many left the field of teaching altogether. While burnout and attrition certainly occur in all educational professions, special education teachers experience them at higher rates than do general education teachers (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). High teacher turnover leads to inconsistent instruction for students and unstable working relationships among professional

colleagues (Billingsley, 2004a; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997; Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Miller, 1997) while emotionally exhausted and burned-out teachers who remain in their positions are less effective instructors, colleagues, and problem solvers, and frequently have more negative attitudes toward their jobs and the people with whom they work compared with those who are not experiencing a sense of burnout (Gersten et al., 2001). Therefore, attrition and burnout negatively affect both schools and students and jeopardize the quality of education offered to some of the nation's most vulnerable children and young people (Billingsley, 2004a; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, et al., 1997, Brownell et al., 1997; Gersten et al., 2001).

Attrition among special education teachers has been extensively studied over the past 25 years. Many potential contributing factors have been examined including, (a) teacher characteristics, beliefs, and affective reactions to work; (b) training and teacher qualifications; and (c) characteristics of the job or specific work environment (Billingsley, 2004b). The causes of the problem are likely multifaceted and complex and, so far, no universally applicable explanation has been advanced. Instead of adding to the considerable literature exploring teacher attrition, this study focuses on the examination of factors that may contribute to the relatively high levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion experienced by many special education teachers. Specifically, this study analyzes the relative contribution of a number of specific predictors to emotional exhaustion and burnout in a sample of special education teachers: perceptions of the level of agreement with others about job responsibilities, beliefs about outcome-efficacy

2

and self-efficacy, the size of assigned caseloads, and number of years teaching special education.

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework that guides this investigation of the variables associated with special education teacher burnout. Specifically, higher levels of self-reported burnout are expected to be associated with:

- greater perceived discrepancies with others with whom the teacher works about job responsibilities;

- lower levels of self-efficacy;

- lower levels of outcome-efficacy;

- larger caseloads;

- more years of experience working as a special education teacher.

The following section will describe each of these components in more detail.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.

	Current Job & Beliefs	**Level of Burnout**
Individual Teacher Special Education Teacher	To what extent do teachers agree with others about their job responsibilities? (Discrepancy) How feasible is meeting job expectations for special education teachers? (Outcome-Efficacy) How capable do special education teachers believe themselves to be? (Self-Efficacy) Are there other factors or beliefs about special education teacher job responsibilities that impact burnout (caseload size, years teaching, etc)? (Other Factors)	High Level of Job Burnout Large Discrepancy, Low Outcome-Efficacy Beliefs, Low Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Other Factors Small Discrepancy, High Outcome-Efficacy Beliefs, High Self-Efficacy Beliefs, Less Other Factors Low Level of Job Burnout

Literature Review

Currently more than 6 million children in the United States qualify for specially designed instruction in the public school system and are served under the title of special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Individuals may be eligible for services provided through the public schools from birth to 21 years of age, with each person displaying a unique set of needs, specific disabilities, strengths, and skills. Some disabilities are relatively mild whereas others are complex and exist in combination. Each special education teacher must be prepared to teach students all along this broad continuum of difficulties that affect learning including, but not limited to, learning disabilities, sensory impairments, cognitive delays, emotional and behavioral problems, motor and mobility-related disabilities, and autism spectrum disorder. A plan with individualized goals and clear articulation of the type and quantity of support to be provided, including specifically tailored instruction and any services to be delivered by specialists, must be developed for every student who qualifies for special education services. These plans must be reviewed and updated at least once per year. Each eligible student has a special education teacher who supports his or her learning, oversees the execution of the educational plan, and coordinates services (IDEA, 2004).

Special education teachers have a distinctly different role than general education teachers. While general education teachers are responsible for providing high-quality instruction of the core curriculum, consistent routines, and a safe environment for all learners, there are limits to the amount and type of individualized instruction that they can provide. The general education teacher's main responsibility is to facilitate the

development of academic skills for the majority of students, those who function close to grade level, as quickly as possible. Additional support for struggling learners, including those with disabilities, may be provided as schedule and workload allows.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) have created similar descriptions of the complex roles fulfilled by special education teachers, including utilizing professionally recognized best practices for instruction, management, and assessment, knowing each individual student's strengths and challenges, advocating for students, and collaborating with families and other education professionals involved with students' instructional teams (CEC, 2004; NBPTS, 2001). These descriptions of the special educator's responsibilities provide a framework from which special education teachers can base their practices, but actual day-to-day duties required of special education teachers vary by school, district, and state; no single list of job responsibilities can fully encompass all of the aspects of an individual special education teacher's actual job. Compared to a general education teacher, a special education teacher has the direct responsibility for ensuring the learning and development of a group of highly variable students with unique individual needs. Thus, special education teachers function as active problem solvers, continually designing and redesigning instruction, evaluating learning and behavior, and making frequent adjustments to instruction based on the results of these efforts in light of individual student progress. By working as a problem solver, whether in regards to academic, social, or emotional skills, a special education teacher's day-to-day responsibilities are much more variable and the problems much less predictable than

those of a general education teacher. Special education teachers must cooperate with general education teachers to ensure continuity of instruction and expectations in inclusive classrooms, and typically have more direct and frequent contact with families, education specialists, paraprofessionals, and administrators than do general educators. Managing these relationships so they are productive and collaborative adds an extra layer of complexity to the jobs of special education teachers.

In addition to the challenges inherent in the teaching of students with special needs, the need for ongoing, active problem solving on a daily basis, and the necessity of developing and maintaining constructive collaborative relationships with a wide variety of other people, changes to federal education laws have placed additional burdens on special education teachers. Under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), students with disabilities must be held to the same standards of academic achievement and assessed in the same manner as their nondisabled peers (Vannest, Temple-Harvey, & Mason, 2009; Yell, Katsiyannas, & Shiner, 2006). Further, the accountability mechanism of NCLB, adequate yearly progress (AYP), is tied to performance of the total student population and to the performance of separately defined subgroups including students with disabilities. To meet AYP goals, all student groups must demonstrate expected levels of academic proficiency. Failure to meet AYP expectations for even a single subgroup has direct financial consequences for schools and districts so the stakes of such failure are very high.

Albritten, Mainzer, and Zeigler (2004) discussed the potential effects of NCLB accountability requirements on students with disabilities, their teachers, and the

schools that serve them. Students receiving special education services frequently make up the primary group preventing schools from reaching AYP. This may intensify existing negative attitudes toward students with disabilities, thus considerable concern has been voiced by disability advocates that students with disabilities and their teachers are being blamed for school failures. A recent survey reported that over 70% of school administrators, and 88% of special education directors, believe that special education teachers and students are used as "scapegoats" by districts for failure to make AYP (Cole, 2006).

As outlined, special education teachers continue to complete the complex job responsibilities required to encourage the academic achievement of students with special needs. Even so, they are often blamed for the failure of their schools due to increasingly rigorous AYP standards for all students. Based on the complexities of the special education teachers expected job responsibilities, it is not surprising to find high levels of stress and burnout among them.

The Problem of Burnout among Special Education Teachers

Significant research has uncovered information about special education teacher attrition (Billingsley, 1993; Billingsley, 2004b). Attrition refers to loss of workers from a work force due to resignation or retirement rather than through termination. Some researchers studying attrition among special education teachers have limited their definitions to include only situations where teachers leave the teaching profession altogether regardless of the reason whereas others include teachers who transfer from special education to general education in their estimates of attrition rates (Billingsley,

2004b). Typically cited reasons for attrition include retirement, family responsibilities including child bearing, and job-related stress or dissatisfaction.

While attrition has been a focus of concern for multiple decades, the related construct of burnout has been significantly overlooked. As attrition focuses on individuals who leave their positions, burnout focuses on factors that affect individuals who often remain in their positions. Overtime, burnout among individuals can lead to attrition, but additionally important to the field of special education, is the impact of burnout on special education teachers who remain in their jobs (Gersten et al., 2001).

Burnout refers to the fatigue, frustration, or apathy that can result from protracted periods of overwork and stress. It has been described as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work'" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99). Burnout refers to a sense of depleted emotional resources resulting from an imbalance between the demands with which a person must contend, and the time and emotional energy he or she has to expend. It is especially common in service professions and among those with high levels of personal responsibility for the wellbeing of others. It is a risk factor for attrition but the fact that many people continue to work in their professions while suffering the effects of emotional exhaustion and burnout is also of concern.

Burnout is a major problem in the field of special education (Gersten et al., 2001; Stempien & Loeb, 2002). Burned out, emotionally exhausted special education teachers are considerably less effective in their work compared with those who are less stressed and exhausted (Brownell et al., 1997; Gersten et al., 2001). Withdrawal from the job

9

and failure to achieve goals are also likely to occur among teachers who experience

burnout (Gersten et al., 2001).

While a variety of teacher characteristics and work-related factors have been

proposed as predictors of attrition (Billingsley, 1993; Billingsley, 2004b), significantly

less information has been uncovered about the factors as predictors of burnout. While

previous research has been primarily on the attrition of special education teachers, this

study focuses on both teacher and job-related characteristics as predictors of the

emotional exhaustion component of burnout.

Measuring Burnout

A key aspect of the burnout syndrome is, "increased feelings of emotional

exhaustion" (Maslach & Jackson, 1981, p. 99). Emotional exhaustion is central to the

definition of burnout on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981), a

major tool used to measure burnout among educators. Burnout is described as a

chronic state of exhaustion and feeling of overextended energy that results in the

withdrawal of emotional investment in work and other people, and the lessened sense

of accomplishment. People experiencing high levels of burnout are pessimistic,

emotionally withdrawn from those with whom they work, have lower levels of both

mental and physical energy, expect that their efforts to solve work-related problems

will be ineffective, and lack openness to new ideas (Egyed & Short, 2006). Maslach and

Jackson (1981) claimed that burnout is made up of three primary components:

emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal

accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is the fatigue and apathy that results from

10

prolonged exposures to work-related stress. In an attempt to reduce emotional exhaustion, many people will attempt to distance themselves emotionally from others in the stressful social environment and thus "depersonalize" by performing their jobs in a mechanical and detached fashion. Such professionals can become callous or angry. Coping strategies involving psychological distancing are typically ineffective long term and ultimately result in a reduced sense of personal accomplishment (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Yee referred to burned out teachers as "retiring on the job" (as cited in Gersten et al., 2001). Teachers who have high levels of burnout are less innovative in their practices, provide less encouragement to their students, and are less effective in fulfilling their job responsibilities overall.

Special education requires a substantial emotional investment on the part of teachers. Consequently, emotional exhaustion is an especially important characteristic to consider when examining the phenomenon of burnout among special education teachers. Because these teachers are self-selected into the service of some of the neediest and most vulnerable students, they can easily internalize responsibility for the failures of their students to meet expected achievement outcomes thereby increasing their personal levels of stress and exhaustion.

Billingsley (2004b) calls for additional research looking at teachers' perceptions about their experienced stress and burnout resulting from the unique demands of special education. While suggesting increased investigation of teacher views regarding job stress, she focused her recommendations on job responsibilities such as the quantity of paperwork and number of meetings. The accountability mandates required

by NCLB add a potentially more complicated set of frustrations for special education teachers. The population of students with whom special educators work typically has a level of academic proficiency significantly below grade level. Nonetheless, special education teachers are still expected to help their students achieve the same high level proficiency goals required for students without disabilities. The effects of added stress and potential burnout associated with the charge to assist a group of students often defined by their lack of academic proficiency to meet AYP goals has not yet been fully explored.

Efficacy beliefs as predictors of burnout and emotional exhaustion

Teacher efficacy refers to the beliefs teachers have about the probability that expected educational goals and outcomes can be successfully achieved. Teaching efficacy has internal components, those believed to be under an individual's control, and external components, factors outside an individual's control that affect the likelihood of achieving the desired educational outcome. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) reported a clear distinction between the beliefs teachers hold about their own competencies regarding instruction and management (i.e., self-efficacy) and their perceptions about what is generally possible to achieve through education (i.e., outcome-efficacy). They note that both types of beliefs can affect burnout and stress the importance of conducting more research on both constructs. As an older construct, self-efficacy has much more research behind it. Outcome efficacy is a newer construct that developed from the research in self-efficacy. Both are discussed in this section.

Grounded in Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is the degree of confidence a person has about his or her ability to successfully complete a particular task in his or her life (Betoret, 2009; Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are typically highly motivated individuals with ambitious goals. They also tend to be quite persistent and resilient in the face of challenges and complications that arise while striving to meet their goals. Individuals with lower levels of self-efficacy may express pessimistic attitudes and display symptoms of anxiety, feelings of helplessness, and depression (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). In an attempt to more fully explicate the construct of self-efficacy, Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) outlined the following aspects:

- self-efficacy implies an internal attribution (I am the cause of the action);
- it is prospective, referring to future behaviors, and;
- it is an operative construct, which means that this cognition is quite proximal to the critical behavior, thus being a good predictor of actual behavior (p. 154).

Levels of self-efficacy in general education teachers have been associated with differential teacher behavior, including the amount of criticism given to students and the amount and effectiveness of questioning to guide student thinking (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Lower levels of teacher efficacy have been linked to decreased academic performance of students (Ashton & Webb, 1986, as cited in Egyed & Short, 2006). Although not specifically studied among special

education teachers, it seems reasonable to hypothesize a similar effect occurs in special education teachers with low self-efficacy.

Teachers who have high levels of self-efficacy are likely to be more resilient in the face of the daily challenges associated with teaching whereas those with low self-efficacy may be more likely to be overwhelmed and have trouble keeping up with routines and daily expectations (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). When teachers have low self-efficacy their frustration and work-related stress can affect their level of emotional exhaustion and burnout, potentially increasing the risk of attrition (Gersten et al., 2001). Low self-efficacy has the potential to be especially problematic for special education teachers. The job responsibilities of special education teachers are complex; working with a wide variety of students with complicated needs, interacting effectively with numerous other people with sometimes differing expectations, and the need to continually solve problems that develop on a daily basis is challenging. Doubts about ones ability to successfully navigate all these demands could easily lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Tsouloupas et al., 2010).

Outcome efficacy is the belief about the actual feasibility of successfully accomplishing a particular task by anyone who may attempt it. In regards to teaching, Skaavik and Skaavik (2007) defined outcome-efficacy as the teacher's belief about the extent "that students' achievement and behavior can be influenced by education" (p. 612). Beliefs about outcome efficacy effect teachers' perceptions about the chances that they can be ultimately effective in helping their students and schools achieve expected outcomes, even if they have high levels of self-efficacy about delivering instruction and

14

performing their other day-to-day job responsibilities. If teachers doubt that expected

outcomes are feasible, their motivation can be expected to suffer and emotional

exhaustion and burnout become more likely.

While a certain amount of job stress is a part of any teaching position, special

education teachers must deal with situations that are inherently less controllable than

those faced by their general education counterparts. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007)

purport that,

> The stressors [experienced by special education teachers] may include
>
> students with behavioral problems, problems in the parent-teacher
>
> relationship, conflict with colleagues, or having to organize teaching in
>
> new ways as a consequence of working in teams or because of school
>
> reforms (p. 613).

Working with students who have lower levels of academic proficiency and are less

likely to show achievement gains of sufficient magnitude to meet their school's AYP

goals, coupled with increased responsibility to families whose needs often exceed what

districts can support all contribute to the potential for high levels of emotional

exhaustion and burnout.

Teachers with lower levels of efficacy—self-efficacy, outcome-efficacy, or both—

are likely to approach their jobs with less optimism. Some teachers may doubt the

sufficiency of their skills but many others question the extent to which expected

educational outcomes are even possible (regardless of their own skills). Increasingly,

especially in light of the NCLB requirement that all disaggregated groups within a

school meet AYP or the entire school fails, educators and policy makers question the feasibility of the task set before special education teachers. Gersten et al. (2001) declared a call to action by stating that, "seriously addressing the design of the special educator's job is a critical national need… as districts think about teacher retention, a focus on understanding job design and finding a means for reducing stress due to job design is critical" (p. 563).

Research Questions

This review of the literature has discussed: (a) the complex jobs of special education teachers, (b) the problem of attrition and burnout, and (c) proposed a link between efficacy beliefs and level of burnout. Based on this information, this study asks if there is an inverse relationship between level of burnout among special education teachers and:

- level of agreement with others about special education teacher job responsibilities,
- level of self-efficacy,
- level of outcome-efficacy; and
- actual job responsibilities (such as caseload).

In an effort to uncover information about these factors and to help answer this research question, the researcher has developed additional questions about special education teachers:

1) To what extent do teachers perceive agreement with others about their job responsibilities?

2) How feasible do teachers believe it is to achieve the educational outcomes expected of special education teachers?

3) How capable do special education teachers believe themselves to be in meeting their students' needs?

4) What other factors related to the job responsibilities of special education teacher job responsibilities (e.g., caseload, years of teaching) impact burnout?

These individual questions are outlined in the conceptual framework and combine together to form the primary research question: Does a combination of disagreement with others about job responsibilities, low self-efficacy, low outcome-efficacy, and other factors result in higher levels of reported burnout?

Method

This purpose of this study was to determine the effect of special education teachers' beliefs about their competence to do their job (self-efficacy), the feasibility of achieving the outcomes expected of them on their jobs (outcome efficacy), and perceived disagreement with other people about their jobs on their feelings of burnout. While the survey questionnaire was administered online, a copy of the survey can be found in Appendices A through G.

Participants

Special education teachers (N = 88) from 11 public school districts in Northwest Washington State were recruited to participate in this study. 100% of the participants who provided data reported being current special education teachers. The respondents had an average of 15 years of total teaching experience (special education and general education), with an average of 13 years of experience teaching special education. All of the teachers had at least 2 years overall teaching experience and 27% had taught special education for 20 or more years. Twenty-four percent of the teachers had been in their current positions for 10 years or longer. Fifty-six percent of the teachers had Masters degrees and 91% of the teachers held an endorsement in special education. Six percent of the teachers held a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certificate.

Procedure

Initially, each school district in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties in Washington State was contacted for participation in this study. Recruitment was

18

subsequently extended to six large districts in King County to potentially provide access to a larger sample of special education teachers. After initial contact was made with the special education directors of each school district, two districts from Whatcom, six from Skagit, and three from Snohomish counties elected to participate in the study, whereas those in King County all declined participation.

To distribute the questionnaires, access to special education teachers was gained through contacting the special education director or another district representative (such as the superintendent in districts that did not have a special education director) by either phone or through e-mail. These people acted as the gatekeepers in that they decided whether or not district employees would have the opportunity to participate. In each district, the special education director or representative was asked to either personally contact their special education teachers about participation in the study or to make teachers' contact information available to the researcher so that she could contact them directly. Of the 33 directors contacted, 11 agreed to provide access to their teachers, with 10 (91%) of those contacting teachers themselves and one (9%) providing contact information to the researcher. Those who choose the first option committed to forwarding four emails from the researcher to all special education teachers in their district. The link to an online survey questionnaire was sent via email to a total of 182 special education teachers. Teachers were sent an initial request to participate with the link to the online survey, two reminders with the link, and a final e-mail thanking them for their participation. Of the 182 teachers contacted, 88 agreed to participate, making the response rate 48%.

Questionnaires

      The questionnaires were developed after reviewing a variety of published instruments. The *Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs Scale* (Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier, & Ellett, 2008), *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Hoy, 2010a), and the short and long versions of *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (Hoy, 2010b) were used as references before developing the more general self-efficacy and outcome-efficacy scales for this study. Maslach and Jackson's (1981*) Burnout Inventory* and the *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) were used as the basis of the development of the burnout questionnaire that included only factors of emotional exhaustion. The researcher developed the demographic information related to teaching section.

    The online questionnaire included multiple sections:

- consent to use information provided for the purposes of this study,

- verification of current employment as a special education teacher,

- the beliefs about discrepancies in understanding of job responsibilities questionnaire,

- the self-efficacy questionnaire,

- the outcome-efficacy questionnaire,

- burnout questionnaire, and

- demographic information related to teaching questionnaire.

    Consent and current employment (Appendices A and B). These initial questions served a screening function. If a participant did not give consent for his or her

responses to be used for research purposes or answered "No" when asked "Are you currently a special education teacher?" termination of the online survey was triggered. Only those who met the screening criteria of current employment as a special education teacher and who granted permission to include their data in the study were given access to the rest of the survey questions.

Beliefs about Discrepancies (Appendix C). The discrepancy scale consisted of seven items with a single question: "To what extent do you and your _____ agree on what your job responsibilities should be?" repeated. The seven questions asked about agreement in job responsibilities between the respondent and seven other people: district administrators, general education teachers, school psychologist, school's secretaries, school's paraprofessionals, school's specialists (e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist), and school's families. For each item, participants responded on a 6-point Likert-type scale with 1 = *we strongly disagree* and 6 = *we strongly agree*.

Self-efficacy (Appendix D). The self-efficacy scale consisted of a series of eight statements about perceived confidence in one's *ability* to perform the kinds of behaviors necessary for success in a special education teaching job. Items were phrased both positively and negatively. Items included statements such as, "I am confident in my skills as a special education teacher" and "I doubt my ability to meet all the requirements of my job." Participants rated their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point, Likert-type scale with 1= *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree.* Responses to the negatively worded items were reversed for scoring such that 1 = 6, 2 =

21

5, and so on prior to calculation of the scale score. The possible range of total scale scores was 8 to 48 with higher scores reflecting greater confidence in one's ability to successfully perform one's job responsibilities. Items on the scale were reasonably internally consistent with a Cronbach's Alpha of α = .77.

Outcome-efficacy (Appendix E). The outcome-efficacy scale consisted of six statements about the perceived feasibility of *anyone* being able to fulfill the expectations of the participants' jobs. Statements were phrased positively and negatively. Items on this scale included statements such as, "My job responsibilities are easily accomplished" and "It is unrealistic to think that all my job responsibilities can be completed by a single person." Participants rated their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point, Likert-type scale with 1= *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree.* Responses to the negatively worded items were reverse scored such that 1 = 6, 2 = 5, and so on prior to calculation of the scale score. The possible range of total scale scores was 6 to 36 with higher scores reflecting greater confidence that it is possible for a single person to accomplish all aspects of one's job. Items on the scale were reasonably internally consistent with a Cronbach's Alpha of α = .75.

Burnout (Appendix F). The burnout scale included ten statements reflecting different attitudes about one's level of perceived stress relative to job responsibilities. Statements were phrased positively and negatively. Statements included sentiments such as, "I am working too hard on my job" and "I am eager to go to work each day." Participants rated their level of agreement with each statement on a 6-point, Likert-type scale with 1= *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree.* Responses to the negatively

worded items were reverse scored such that 1 = 6, 2 = 5, and so on prior to calculation of the scale score. The possible range of total scale scores was 10 to 60 with higher scores indicative of greater perceived job-related stress. Items were highly internally consistent with a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .90$.

Other demographic information related to teaching (Appendix G). This section of the survey was used to solicit information about caseload, teacher experience and training. There were seven questions in this section. The first four were open-ended and asked about the number of years of experience (a) as a teacher, (b) as a special education teacher, (c) in one's current job position, and (d) the number of students on the current caseload. The other three questions asked about level of training and participants selected a response option from a list of options. These questions were (a) "what is your most advanced degree?" (b) "what is the highest level of teaching certification that you have?" and, (c) "what endorsements do you have?".

Descriptive Statistics

The research hypotheses in this study predicted that special education teachers'
beliefs about their competence to fulfill their job responsibilities, perceived feasibility of
fulfilling the expectations for their jobs, and the level of agreement with other
professionals and families about job responsibilities were inversely related to the level
of burnout. Specifically, the researcher predicted that special education teachers who
doubted their competence, believed the expectations for their job could not be fulfilled
by any teacher, and perceived disagreement with others with whom they work would
have higher levels of burnout. Possible score ranges were 10 to 60 for burnout, 8 to 48
for self-efficacy, and 6 to 36 for outcome efficacy. Higher scores indicated higher levels
of each of these variables. Means and standard deviations for burnout, self-efficacy, and
outcome efficacy are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Burnout, Self-Efficacy, and Outcome Efficacy Variables

	M	SD
Burnout	34.41	7.51
Self-efficacy	33.74	5.60
Outcome efficacy	19.22	4.59

Perceived agreement with families, specialists, paraprofessionals, secretaries,
school psychologists, other teachers, and administrators was rated on a scale of 1 to 6

with higher scores reflecting greater perceived agreement about job responsibilities.

Means and standard deviations for the level of perceived agreement with each variable

are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Agreement Variables

Perceived Agreement	M	SD
Families	4.61	0.84
Specialists	4.89	0.93
Paraprofessionals	5.05	0.88
Secretaries	4.60	0.88
School Psychologist	4.64	1.24
Other Teachers	4.13	1.08
Administrators	4.45	1.00

Level of agreement/disagreement with each of the seven types of people with

whom special education teachers work was dichotomized with responses of 1 =

strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, and 3 = somewhat disagree grouped together into

"disagree"; and responses of 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree

grouped into "agree." Most special education teachers reported agreement with others

about job responsibilities with the highest level of agreement observed with secretaries

(92%), families (93.2%), specialists (95.5%), and paraprofessionals (96.6%). Levels of

agreement with other teachers (80.7%), administrators (84.1%), and school

psychologists (84.1%) were somewhat lower.

Means Comparisons

A series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine

whether there were statistically significant mean differences in the level of burnout,

outcome efficacy, and self-efficacy between those who agreed vs. disagreed with others

about their job responsibilities. As discussed above, level of agreement/disagreement

with each of the seven types of people with whom special educators work was

dichotomized into a "disagree" group and an "agree" group. Statistically significant

mean differences were found in the level of burnout for special education teachers who

said they disagreed (vs. agreed) about their job responsibilities with other teachers [F

$(1, 86) = 5.37, p = .023$] and for those who said they disagreed (vs. agreed) about their

job responsibilities with administrators [F $(1, 86) = 5.38, p = .023$]. Those who reported

disagreement with other teachers about their job responsibilities (M = 38.11, SD = 7.88)

had significantly higher levels of burnout than those who said they agreed with other

teachers (M = 33.52, SD = 7.19). Those who perceived disagreement with

administrators (M = 38.57, SD = 9.69) also reported significantly higher levels of

burnout than those who reported agreement (M = 33.62, SD = 6.82). No statistically

significant mean differences in level of burnout were observed between those who

perceived agreement vs. disagreement about their job responsibilities with families,

specialists, secretaries, paraprofessionals, or school psychologists.

Statistically significant mean differences were found in the level of outcome efficacy reported by special education teachers who perceived agreement vs. disagreement about job responsibilities with administrators [F (1,86) = 9.42, p = .003] and for those who said they disagreed (vs. agreed) about job responsibilities with families [F (1,86) = 7.20, p= .009]. Those who reported disagreement with administrators about their job responsibilities (M = 15.93, SD = 4.58) had significantly lower levels of outcome efficacy than those who said they agreed with administrators (M = 19.84, SD = 4.35). Those who perceived disagreement with families (M = 14.54, SD = 3.84) also reported significantly lower levels of outcome efficacy than those who reported agreement (M = 19.57, SD = 4.47). No statistically significant mean differences in level of outcome efficacy were observed between those who perceived agreement vs. disagreement about their job responsibilities with other teachers, specialists, secretaries, paraprofessionals, or school psychologists.

Finally, statistically significant mean differences were found in the level of self-efficacy reported by special education teachers who said they disagreed (vs. agreed) about their job responsibilities with families [F(1, 86) = 4.21, p = 0.43], for those who reported disagreement (vs. agreement) about job responsibilities with other teachers [F(1, 86) = 7.21, p = .009], and for those who said they disagreed (vs. agreed) about job responsibilities with administrators [F(1,86) = 5.08, p = .027]. Those who reported disagreement with families about their job responsibilities (M = 29.29, SD = 7.00) had significantly lower levels of self-efficacy than those who said they agreed with families (M = 34.06, SD = 5.40). Those who perceived disagreement with other teachers (M =

30.57, SD = 5.81) also reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy than those who reported agreement (M = 34.50, SD = 5.32). In addition, those who perceived disagreement with administrators (M = 30.71, SD = 6.12) also reported significantly lower levels of self-efficacy those who reported agreement (M = 34.31, SD = 5.35). No statistically significant mean differences in level of self efficacy were observed between those who perceived agreement vs. disagreement about their job responsibilities with specialists, secretaries, paraprofessionals, or school psychologists.

Correlational Analyses

As shown in Table 3, special education teachers' levels of burnout were statistically significantly correlated with self-efficacy, outcome-efficacy, years spent teaching special education, caseload size, and level of agreement about job responsibilities with families. Statistically significant negative correlations were observed between levels of burnout and both self-efficacy and outcome efficacy. Thus, special education teachers who report higher self-efficacy (positive beliefs in their abilities to do their jobs) and higher outcome efficacy (positive beliefs that it is possible to achieve the desired outcomes for children associated with their jobs) report lower levels of burnout. Finally, there was a statistically significant negative association between level of agreement with families about job responsibilities and burnout. Those who perceived lower levels of agreement with families reported higher levels of burnout. Statistically significant positive correlations were observed between years as a special education teacher and burnout and between size of caseload and burnout. More

28

experienced special education teachers and those with heavier caseloads reported higher levels of burnout.

Outcome efficacy was negatively associated with years spent teaching special education and size of caseload. More experienced teachers and those with heavier caseloads reported less positive beliefs about the feasibility of achieving the desired outcomes for children associated with their jobs. In addition, statistically significant negative correlation was found between self-efficacy and size of caseload. Thus, those with heavier caseloads had lower levels of confidence in their competence to successfully fulfill their job responsibilities. Level of confidence in ability to do ones job was unrelated to the years of experience as a special education teacher.

Statistically significant positive correlations were observed between self-efficacy and outcome efficacy and between level of agreement about job responsibilities with administrators and outcome efficacy. Special education teachers who reported higher levels of confidence in their abilities to successfully perform their job responsibilities also reported stronger beliefs about the feasibility of achieving expected outcomes. Those who perceived agreement with their administrators about their job responsibilities also reported stronger beliefs in the feasibility of successfully achieving the outcomes expected for their jobs.

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations

Measure	Burnout	Outcome Efficacy	Self-Efficacy	Agree families	Agree Admin
Outcome Efficacy	-.561**				
Self-Efficacy	-.447**	.600**			
Years Teaching Spec. Ed.	.333**	-.261*	NS		
Caseload	.299**	-.249	-.299**		
Agree families	-.193*	NS	NS		
Agree administrators	NS	.244**	NS	.511**	

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Regression Analysis

The five potential predictor variables with statistically significant zero order correlations with burnout (outcome efficacy, self efficacy, years teaching special education, caseload, and level of agreement about job responsibilities with families) were used in a series of hierarchically ordered regression analyses to assess their relative contributions to the prediction of level of burnout experienced by special education teachers. The results these analyses are presented in Table 4. The linear combination of four of these predictor variables (outcome efficacy, years of experience as a special education teacher, self efficacy, and level of agreement with families) accounted for **43.2% of the variability in level of burnout**. Lower levels of outcome efficacy, more years teaching special education, lower levels of self-efficacy, and lower levels of agreement with families about job responsibilities predict higher levels of

burnout. Conversely, high outcome efficacy, fewer years teaching special education, higher self-efficacy, and higher levels of agreement with families about job responsibilities are associated with lower levels of burnout. Size of caseload did not significantly contribute to the prediction of burnout once the other predictor variables had been entered into the analyses.

Table 4.

Predicting Burnout: Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis

Predictor	R^2	R^2 Change	Sig. F Change
Step 1			
Outcome Efficacy	.315	.315	.000
Step 2			
Years Teaching Special Ed.	.352	.037	.029
Step 3			
Self-Efficacy	.398	.046	.013
Step 4			
Agreement with Families	.432	.034	.028

Discussion

This study was designed to investigate the effects of teacher characteristics, teacher beliefs, and job responsibilities on self-reported levels of burnout experienced by special education teachers. Specifically, I predicted that special education teachers who perceive disagreement about their job responsibilities with others with whom they work, doubt their competence to be successful at their completion of their job responsibilities, and question the feasibility of the outcomes expected of them being achieved by any teacher would have higher levels of burnout.

The most important finding from this study is that 43% of the variability in the level of burnout reported by special education teachers can be accounted for by a combination of:

- reported level of outcome efficacy;

- the number of years experience teaching special education;

- reported level of self-efficacy; and

- perceived level of agreement with families about their job responsibilities.

This is an important finding in increasing our understanding of special education teacher burnout. This result indicates that of all the potential reasons for special education teacher burnout, 43% of the burnout can be attributed to only these four factors. Additionally noteworthy is the finding that 32% of the total variability in level of burnout can be explained by the level of outcome efficacy beliefs expressed by special education teachers. This indicates that almost a third of the variability in level of

32

burnout is linked to special education teachers' belief that demands of their jobs are unreasonable and that it is not feasible for anyone to successfully achieve the expected outcomes.

While many researchers have emphasized the importance of increasing training and mentoring to provide special education teachers with the tools they need for success (Billingsley, 2004b), the primary finding of this study emphasizes that special education teachers, as indicated by their levels of reported self-efficacy, do not believe that they need more training. Instead, it suggests that the job expected of special education teachers needs to be recalibrated so that the expectations for outcomes are set to a reasonable level.

It is not surprising those special education teachers who believe that no matter what they do they will be unable to achieve the outcomes expected of them experience higher levels of burnout. These findings indicate that additional experience, training, and all the support are unlikely to positively affect special education teachers' levels of emotional exhaustion and burnout as long as they believe the expectations for their job are impossible for anyone to achieve.

Given the NCLB requirement that students receiving special education services meet the same high achievement standards as their non-disabled peers and the negative consequences to schools for not meeting AYP goals, special education teachers are faced with a daunting (and seemingly impossible) challenge. This current system of accountability could quite possibly be linked to the level of outcome-efficacy beliefs of special education teachers and therefore, linked to their level of burnout.

Additional findings, as found in the mean comparison section, indicated that the level of agreement with others about their job responsibilities was an important factor in understanding burnout. Special education teachers must work collaboratively with teams that include administrators and other teachers so it is not surprising that teachers' perceptions of their agreement with these people about who is responsible for what affects their level of burnout, self-efficacy, and outcome efficacy. Specifically, special education teachers who disagree with other teachers and administrators about job responsibilities, especially if they believe the expectations for success in their jobs is impossible, have increased levels of burnout. Conversely, a shared sense purpose and agreement about goals might provide important support for special education teachers who would otherwise feel incapable of meeting the demands of their job and thus provide a protective effect against burnout.

Overall, the findings from this study were similar to the predictions presented by the researcher. Special education teachers' burnout is affected by multiple factors. The primary factor identified in this study is a teacher's level of outcome-efficacy.

Limitations

The primary limitations to this study are the size of the sample, the relatively low response rate, and the limited geographic region from which the sample was drawn. Given that all participants work in northwest Washington State and random sampling techniques were not applied, the ability to generalize the findings of this study to the larger population of special education teachers is limited. Replication of the study in different geographical regions is recommended to evaluate of the generalizability of

the results. The questionnaire was administered in late May, a time of the school year bracketed by the completion of state accountability testing and the end of the academic year. The response rate and the responses may have been affected (one way or another) by the time of the year.

Implications

The burnout and attrition of special education teachers is a significant concern for the field of special education. As educators face emotional exhaustion, their effectiveness in the classroom and positive impact on their students can be diminished significantly (Billingsley, 2004a; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, et al., 1997; Brownell et al., 1997; Gersten et al., 2001). Additionally, the turnover in teachers negatively affects the academic achievement of students as they are faced with inconsistent practices (Billingsley, 2004a; Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, & Weber, 1997; Brownell, Smith, McNellis, & Miller, 1997). As outlined above, level of burnout is directly impacted by teachers' efficacy beliefs and perceptions of agreement with others about job responsibilities. Additionally important factors are the size of special education teachers' caseload and the number of years they have been teaching special education.

To effect reduction of burnout in special education teachers, particular attention needs to be paid by school district administrators to the expectations about outcomes required and attempts made to ensure that achievement of those outcomes is actually feasible. Special education and general education teachers fill different roles, serve different population of students, and have different job responsibilities. Consequently,

35

school districts should recognize the different challenges and support the needs of each group of teachers.

The current requirement of NCLB that students served in special education need to meet the same annual academic achievement standards as their typically developing peers, coupled with the day-to-day demands of teaching students with a variety challenging disabilities, demands exceptional levels of commitment and poise on the part of special education teachers. Developing outcome expectations that are realistic and ensuring that special education teachers perceive some degree of control over these outcomes is a critical step in reducing the potential for burnout among special education teachers. Each school district should recognize what is feasible to achieve, and focus efforts on commending special education teachers and their students for incremental success or rates of improvement rather than achievement of arbitrary achievement goals. A shift in local focus from achievement scores to rates of progress and magnitude of improvement provides a meaningful and feasible outcome for special education teachers and their students.

In addition to defining jobs and expected outcomes in such a way that they are actually attainable by well-trained educators, district administrators, special education directors, special education university faculty, and current special education teachers need to ensure that special education teachers are provided with the tools they need for developing high self-efficacy. Since the specific job responsibilities for special education teachers vary by district, school, and student need, it is imperative that each district match special education teachers with jobs in the field that they believe they have the

skills to successfully complete. Without efforts to increase self-efficacy, it is likely that high rates of burnout among special education teachers will continue to exist.

Just as the efficacy beliefs affect special education teacher burnout, so do teachers' perceptions of agreement with other groups of people. Regardless of how each school or district defines the specific responsibilities of their special education teachers, it is important to clearly express these expectations to special education teachers, families, other teachers, and administrators. Special education teachers need to believe that other people understand their roles in the school and are in agreement with them about their specific job responsibilities. Dissonance in this area is likely to negatively impact special education teachers' self-efficacy, outcome-efficacy and increase their levels of burnout.

The results of this study provide a point of departure for districts interested in decreasing the burnout among special education teachers. The views expressed by special education teachers in this study demonstrate that their beliefs and perceptions of themselves and their jobs have a significant impact on the level of burnout they experience. Additional research exploring special education teachers' perceptions of their jobs and job performance will also support school districts and researchers in the field of special education who are interested in decreasing the burnout and attrition among special education teachers.

CONSENT FORM

PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS:

The purpose of this study is to identify the correlation between special education

teacher beliefs about job responsibilities, amount of work, self-efficacy, outcome-

efficacy, and stress on special education teacher job burnout.

The potential benefit of this study is an increased awareness of the factors that

correlate with special education teacher burnout. The information from this survey

could lead to additional research in providing appropriate support to special education

teachers and methods for affecting special education teachers' levels of job burnout.

I UNDERSTAND THAT:

1. This experiment will involve the completion of an online survey. The entire survey
   should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
2. There are no anticipated risks or discomfort associated with participation in this
   study.
3. The anticipated benefits from this study are increased awareness about factors that
   relate to special education teacher job burnout.
4. My participation in this study is voluntary and I may chose to withdraw from
   participation at any time without penalty.

5. My participation in this study is confidential. Neither my name nor any other

identifying data will be requested in the study.

6. I should print or retain a copy of this consent form for my records.

7. I am at least 18 years of age.

8. This experiment will be conducted by Rachel Berry. If I have any questions about the

experiment or participation in the experiment I may contact her at 360-220-2314 or

reishur@students.wwu.edu. Additionally, if any adverse effects result from my

participation in this study I will contact her.

9. I am aware that I may also direct questions or concerns to the WWU Human

Protections Administrator (HPA) at 360-650-3220.

Do you give your consent to be a participant in this study?

     ❍ Yes, I give my consent to participate in this study.

     ❍ No, I do not give consent to participate in this study.

CURRENT POSITION

The purpose of this section is to identify whether or not you are a candidate for this survey.

1. Are you currently a special education teacher?

    ○Yes

    ○No

Appendix C

DISCREPANCY

The purpose of this section is to identify how closely beliefs about job responsibilities

are aligned.

Directions: For each question, choose the answer that most closely represents your

  belief.

1. To what extent do your district administrators and you agree on what your job
responsibilities should be?
   ○ We Strongly Disagree

   ○ We Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Agree

   ○ We Agree

   ○ We Strongly Agree

2. To what extent do your school's general education teachers and you agree on what
your job responsibilities should be?
   ○ We Strongly Disagree

   ○ We Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Agree

   ○ We Agree

   ○ We Strongly Agree

3. To what extent do your school's psychologist(s) and you agree on what your job responsibilities should be?
   ○ We Strongly Disagree

   ○ We Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Agree

   ○ We Agree

   ○ We Strongly Agree

4. To what extent do your school's secretaries and you agree on what your job responsibilities should be?
   ○ We Strongly Disagree

   ○ We Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Agree

   ○ We Agree

   ○ We Strongly Agree

5. To what extent do your school's paraprofessionals and you agree on what your job responsibilities should be?
   ○ We Strongly Disagree

   ○ We Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Disagree

   ○ We Somewhat Agree

   ○ We Agree

   ○ We Strongly Agree

6. To what extent do your school's specialists (e.g., occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech therapist) and you agree on what your job responsibilities should be?
    ❍ We Strongly Disagree

    ❍ We Disagree

    ❍ We Somewhat Disagree

    ❍ We Somewhat Agree

    ❍ We Agree

    ❍ We Strongly Agree

7. To what extent do your school's families and you agree on what your job responsibilities should be?
    ❍ We Strongly Disagree

    ❍ We Disagree

    ❍ We Somewhat Disagree

    ❍ We Somewhat Agree

    ❍ We Agree

    ❍ We Strongly Agree

SELF-EFFICACY

Below you will find a series of statements reflecting different attitudes about confidence in completing your job responsibilities. There are no right or wrong answers. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using the scale provided.

1. I struggle to overcome all the obstacles at my job.

  ○ Strongly Disagree

  ○ Disagree

  ○ Somewhat Disagree

  ○ Somewhat Agree

  ○ Agree

  ○ Strongly Agree

2. I am confident in my skills as a special education teacher.

  ○ Strongly Disagree

  ○ Disagree

  ○ Somewhat Disagree

  ○ Somewhat Agree

  ○ Agree

  ○ Strongly Agree

3. I doubt my ability to meet all of the requirements of my job.

   ○ Strongly Disagree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Strongly Agree

4. I am unable to meet the needs of my students.

   ○ Strongly Disagree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Strongly Agree

5. I have all the skills needed to be successful in my job.

   ○ Strongly Disagree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Strongly Agree

6. I can accomplish all aspects of my job responsibilities.

    ◯ Strongly Disagree

    ◯ Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Agree

    ◯ Agree

    ◯ Strongly Agree

7. I worry that I lack the skills to be an effective special education teacher.

    ◯ Strongly Disagree

    ◯ Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Agree

    ◯ Agree

    ◯ Strongly Agree

8. I am capable of meeting the needs of my students.

    ◯ Strongly Disagree

    ◯ Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Disagree

    ◯ Somewhat Agree

    ◯ Agree

    ◯ Strongly Agree

OUTCOME-EFFICACY

Below you will find a series of statements reflecting different attitudes about the

feasibility of completing your job responsibilities. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using the

scale provided.

1. It is impossible to complete all my job responsibilities successfully.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

2. My job responsibilities are easily accomplished.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

3. It is unrealistic to think that all of my job responsibilities can be completed by a single person.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

4. Even with all of the support in the world, it would be very difficult to accomplish all the requirements of my job.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

5. Successful completion of my job responsibilities is attainable.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

Appendix E

6. My job responsibilities can be completely fulfilled by a single person.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

BURNOUT

Below you will find a series of statements reflecting different attitudes about the level of stress you feel relative to your job responsibilities. There are no right or wrong answers. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using the scale provided.

1. I am working too hard on my job.

   ○ Strongly Disagree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Strongly Agree

2. I feel frustrated by my job.

   ○ Strongly Disagree

   ○ Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Disagree

   ○ Somewhat Agree

   ○ Agree

   ○ Strongly Agree

3. I am eager to go to work each day.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

4. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope when it comes to my work responsibilities.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

5. When I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job, I feel fatigued before I even start.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

Appendix F

6. I feel excited by what I've accomplished at the end of the workday.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

7. My job makes me feel burned out.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

8. My work drains me emotionally.

    ○ Strongly Disagree

    ○ Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Disagree

    ○ Somewhat Agree

    ○ Agree

    ○ Strongly Agree

9. I wake up energized at the prospect of spending the day at my job.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

10. I feel used up at the end of the workday.

◯ Strongly Disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Somewhat Disagree

◯ Somewhat Agree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly Agree

GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this section is to gather general information about the participants in this study. This information will not be used to identify you.

Directions: For each question, please answer as accurately as possible.

1. How many years have you been a teacher?   _____

2. How many years have you taught special education? _____

3. How many years have you been in your current position? _____

4. How many students are on your current caseload? _____

5. What is your most advanced degree?

    ○ Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)   ○ Master of Science (M.S.)

    ○ Bachelor of Science (B.S.)   ○ Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

    ○ Master in Teaching (Mi.T.)   ○ Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

    ○ Master of Education (M.Ed.)   ○ Other (please specify):

    ○ Master of Arts (M.A.)   _____

6. What is the highest level of teaching certification that you have?

○ Initial Certificate   ○ Standard/Continuing Certificate

○ Continuing Certificate   ○ Provisional Certificate

○ Residency Certificate   ○ National Board Certificate

○ Professional Certificate

7. What endorsement(s) do you have?

○ Agriculture Education   Sustainability Education

○ Bilingual Education   ○ Family and Consumer Sciences

○ Biology   ○ Gifted Education

○ Business Marketing Education   ○ Health/Fitness

○ Chemistry   ○ History

○ Dance   ○ Library Media

○ Deaf Education   ○ Mathematics

○ Designated World Languages   ○ Middle Level Humanities

○ Earth and Space   ○ Middle Level Mathematics

○ Early Childhood Education   ○ Middle Level Science

○ Early Childhood Special   ○ Music: Choral

    Education   ○ Music: General

○ Elementary Education   ○ Music: Instrumental

○ English Language Arts   ○ Physics

○ English Language Learners   ○ Reading

○ Environmental and   ○ Science

○ Social Studies   ○ Theatre Arts

○ Special Education   ○ Visual Arts

○ Technology Education   ○ Other (please specify):

○ Traffic Safety   _____

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