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Teacher Retention in Secure Residential Settings
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Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
_____

by

Daniel Froemel

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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study:

Teacher Retention in Secure Residential Settings

by

Daniel Froemel

A phenomenological study was conducted to identify the factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. Central to this investigation was the exploration of how residential teachers perceive they are supported in their position, how teachers in residential settings perceive the culture of the facility, and what factors are associated with teacher retention in secure residential settings. Through a series of fifteen interviews, common themes emerged from the coding that provided insight into these questions.

Teachers who had worked in residential settings for more than five years seemed to have very strong internal belief systems that drove them and were rewarded by the successes of their students, despite what else might be occurring at the facility. Success for the teachers did not always seem to depend administrative support, but they relied heavily on their peers for support.

Administrators may be able to improve teacher retention by focusing on these factors, as well as ensuring that education is a valued component of the residential program and that teachers are compensated on a level equal to their peers in public education. Suggestions for future research include quantitative studies to examine the differences between for profit and non-profit

programs, differences in retention that depend on the size of the program, and an analysis of retention as it correlates to teacher compensation.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father. He spent his career as a special education teacher and public servant and taught me that what you give to the world is greater than what you get from the world. His dedication to the pursuit of helping others has been an inspiration to me in my career and life. His continued dedication as a father and grandfather represents a model of love and family that I strive to accomplish.

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In addition, I would like to acknowledge the faculty, staff, and colleagues that have educated and inspired me through my academic career at West Virginia University, The University of Tennessee, and East Tennessee State University. This work is the culmination of an incredible journey that started twenty years ago.

To my wife, Angie, and children, Ellie and Ben, thank you for the sacrifices you made in allowing me the time, support, and motivation to complete this research.

This research was inspired by my time as an administrator in a secure residential program and so I would be remiss if I did not thank my work family that taught me how to be a successful administrator in this field and gave me the opportunity to lead. This group taught me so much about leadership, mental health, perseverance, and friendship. Thank you!

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Chapter 1. Introduction

According to the United States Department of Education (2018) Consolidated State

Performance Report for children and youth in neglected and delinquent facilities, there were over

11,000 students who resided in a residential setting in Tennessee during the 2017-2018 school

year. In addition, approximately 12,000 students moved through the 17 juvenile detention centers

(JDC) in the state, as reported by the Department of Children's Services (DCS) (2019). Students

who are sent to these placements for significant behavioral or mental health concerns must

receive both general education and special education services if applicable. The difference

between the services provided to students in traditional public or charter schools and students in

a residential setting is that the latter involves guards, secure hardware such as fences and

Plexiglas, and a highly supervised environment. Despite these barriers, the provision of academic

services must be provided to a student population that typically has significant academic needs.

It is a setting that is full of unique challenges and obstacles for educators.

The major challenge to providing education in this setting is ensuring that this group of

vulnerable students has access to high quality teachers trained to work in a detention setting.

Fundamental to establishing a highly qualified teacher work force in secure residential facilities

is ensuring teacher retention. Koyama (2012) found that, "Many facilities reported being

understaffed and that teachers had to balance several grade levels, subjects, and lessons in one

classroom" (p. 56). As with any school system, when there is a high turnover rate among

teachers, which requires a continuous training cycle of new teachers, it can be challenging to

provide quality instruction to students. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2017)

reported that 8% of teachers are leaving the field each year and 8% are transferring to other

schools annually. More concerning, their report showed that 12% of teachers in high poverty

schools moved from one school to another between the 2011-2012 school year and the 2012-2013 school year. This latter statistic more accurately reflects the setting of a secure residential facility as there is a direct link between lower socio-economic backgrounds and rates of incarceration as pointed out by Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report.

The goal of this study is to identify key factors that lead to teacher retention in secure, residential settings. Findings from this study may be utilized by the administrators in secure residential facilities to increase teacher retention, which will make a positive impact on student success as they will have access to more experienced and consistent teachers. Kraft and Papay (2016) report that the amount of experience a teacher has results in continued growth in student test scores. Ladd and Sorenson (2015) found that the growth is not just limited to test scores, as the more experienced teachers also had less absenteeism and fewer disciplinary referrals. This finding supports a commonly held perception that more experienced teachers have better classroom management skills. Therefore, it would follow that a more experienced teacher in a secure residential facility would be able to make a greater impact on student behavior and academic performance.

Residential facilities in Tennessee vary widely in the programs offered within the facilities, organizational structures and operational programs. As a result of these diverse organizational structures and range of services in secure residential settings, there is a lack of a standardized format for programs across the state. The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or at Risk (NDTAC) reports the educational offerings within the facilities vary greatly from program to program, noting that, "About 65% of residential juvenile justice facilities offer

educational services to *all* youth in custody. The level of basic educational programming offered in facilities varies: 78% offer high school, 73% offer middle school, and 46 % offer elementary school level education. The majority of facilities offer special education services (69%) and GED preparation (63%), whereas only 32% offer vocational or technical education and 21% provide access to postsecondary education opportunities" (NDTAC Fact Sheet).

The Tennessee DCS contract provider manual (2019) sets forth the different types of facilities licensed by the state. Characteristics of these programs include both residential and behavioral management components. The model for intervention in many of these facilities is a combination of programmatic interventions, intensive counseling and medication management to help youth experience success. The ultimate goal for all intervention efforts is to prepare students to move to less restrictive environments. The Child Welfare League of America (1991) reported that students in these types of placements tend to receive counseling, education, recreation, primary care, behavioral health therapy, nutrition, daily living experiences, independent living skills, reunification services and after-care services.

Statement of Problem

The U.S. Department of Education has established goals and standards for secure residential facilities to have quality education programs. Section 1401 of the Every Student Succeeds Act sets a goal to provide quality educational services to youth in secure residential settings for neglected and delinquent youth. The goal of this legislation is to ensure that students in these programs can meet the same academic standards of their peers in public school. This law supports quality educational programing. It has a central focus indicating that regardless of the

where a student is placed, they are entitled to a high-quality education and part of that quality program is an experienced, quality teacher.

Students in secure residential settings make up a small percentage of school age youth. Annie E. Casey Foundation (2015) found that only 97 out of 660 students find themselves in some sort of residential program or juvenile detention center. When these students enter a facility and are joined by peers with similar backgrounds and behaviors, a homogenous cluster is established, which creates a unique and challenging educational setting. Students entering these programs are often placed specifically for mental health/behavioral health treatment or are ordered by the court into placement due to an infraction of the law as referenced in the definitions below from the contract provider manual. The nature of the student's behaviors and mental health needs creates a challenging environment in which to teach. Lawton (2012) cites this challenging environment as a reason that many educators leave secure residential settings or become ineffective in this type of setting. The educators do not receive proper training and support to deal effectively with this group of students. This challenge and frustration can lead to a poorer quality of educational services as reported by the facilities' own students.

Systemic change is needed to improve educational services for youth in these settings. Leone and Weinberg (2012) point out that the current system of education services and supports is inadequate and that there is much work to be done to ensure that the services provided in a secure residential setting is equivalent to the services offered to students in public school. Secure residential settings lack the quality of educational services in comparison to public school.

The lack of quality educational services is echoed by USED and the Office for Civil Rights (2015) reporting that students in secure residential settings often have the greatest

educational needs but are receiving less academic support than their peers who are not in confinement. In addition, NDTAC (2015) found that there is consistently a lack of high-quality education for students in secure residential settings, especially when compared to that received by their peers who are not in these types of settings.

Many students in residential programs are lower achieving than their peers in public school. These academic struggles intensify the need for skilled educators working in the programs. Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, and Poireiir (2005) reported that youth involved in the juvenile justice system are typically two or more years behind in basic academics when compared to their same age peers. Additionally, youth in juvenile settings have a higher prevalence of mental health issues, behavioral problems and learning disabilities than their peers in public educational settings.

In addition, many of the students entering into these programs are lacking in basic skills when compared to their same age peers in school and are facing the additional challenge of transitioning in and out of many different educational environments. Koyama (2012) describes, "many court-involved youth, education programs in detention may offer the first opportunity to return to school after a long leave of absence. It may be the first time they can have their academic and social needs professionally assessed. It may also be the last chance for older youth to access or acquire necessary literacy, social, and vocational skills for the future" (p. 38-39).

NDTAC (2019) reported that over 20% of students entering delinquent facilities are not enrolled in a previous school at the time of admission, even though these students have not completed high school. The state evaluation of juvenile justice facilities in Florida (1998) sited

over 66% of students in secure residential settings had not been attending school on a regular basis.

Further complicating the issue is that the students are often behind in school due to high rates of mobility and transcripts are often incomplete, unavailable, or inaccurate. Baker and Curtis (2006) found that youth in residential placements typically had an average of five different placements. The overall range for placements though stretched from 1 to 34. When a student moves from one educational environment to another, this can result a decrease in the student's academic performance. Many of these students in the custody of the Department of Children's Services are in foster care. The Legal Center for Foster Care & Education (2007), found that the likelihood of a student graduating would increase by 50 percent by having one fewer academic move in a single year.

To improve the quality of educational services in these environments, The United States Department of Education has established guidance that emphasizes the need for high quality instructors and teacher retention through a joint report with United States Department of Justice in 2014, titled, *Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings*. Principle three of this report highlights the need for retaining quality teachers, claiming that the recruitment, employment, and retention of qualified education staff with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings is necessary to positively impact long-term student outcomes. Principal three instructs facility administrators to seek teachers who already have the credentials and experience to work with this at-risk population of students. In the absence of being able to find and recruit teachers with this prerequisite experience, facility administrators are directed to improve teacher retention in their programs.

Finally, teacher preparation programs and current professional development offerings do little to prepare and support teachers in this highly specialized environment. La Bouff (2008) found that there was an overall lack of proper knowledge, skill set and background training that educators need to be successful in this environment. Hoochins (2010) explains, "Juvenile justice teachers are a neglected population of teachers who educate a disproportionate number of students who have disabilities, come from poverty, are minorities, have mental illness, and have pronounced academic and behavioral deficits" (p. 641). The challenges described above, along with lower wages, year-round school schedules, and the confinement of working in a secure setting, may be a contributing factor as to why there are such high levels of teacher turnover in this field.

With all the factors facing this group of students, it is critical that secure residential facilities have high-quality educators who are well-trained and have experience with this population. This study provides recommendations to help administrators improve teacher retention and improve professional development opportunities. There are many elements to this issue, but ultimately, a quality education for students in residential placements is the goal. This cannot be achieved without retaining high quality teachers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study is to identify factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. Findings from this study will benefit future efforts to retain quality teachers in secure residential settings.

Research Questions

1. How do residential teachers perceive they are supported in their position?

2. What are the residential teacher perceptions of the work culture in the secure residential setting?

3. What factors are associated with teacher retention in secure residential centers?

Significance of the Study

Teacher turnover and retention is an issue in school systems across the country; however, this problem is exaggerated in detention center settings. Findings from this research can be utilized to enhance future teacher training and professional development directed at educators working in secure residential settings. This study will also be a resource for administrators of secure residential facilities as they explore ways to strengthen teacher retention in their programs. Findings from this study can be used to develop hiring processes and strategies that support teacher retention in secure residential settings. Finally, findings from this study will enhance the existing body of research on teaching and teacher retention in residential settings.

Limitations and Delimitations

The research method being used in this study is a qualitative phenomenological design. The research will take place in the middle and eastern geographic regions of Tennessee. Consequently, there are limitations that must be expressed in order to enhance trustworthiness of this study.

There are several limitations to this study including transferability, variations between secure residential programs, and participant drop out. Transferability is an issue because all of the participants are from east and middle Tennessee. The results may not transfer to programs in other regions of the country that have different guidelines and uses for their secure residential settings. Variations between the different programs the teachers work in is also a limitation. For example, teachers from privately run facilities may have different perspectives than teachers from publicly operated facilities. There are not enough long-term teachers in any one type of secure residential setting that would provide a meaningful sample size. Finally, participant drop out is a limitation in most studies and more so in a study that focuses exclusively on a hard-to-staff positions with high turnover rates.

There are several delimitations to the study as well, including the focus of the study exclusively on teachers and not any other residential staff and compensation data. The focus exclusively on teachers in the programs is a delimitation because these facilities have a plethora of different types of staff members who face similar challenges and could offer insight into employee retention and satisfaction. Compensation is another delimitation of this study. Compensation may play a role in teacher retention but given that the majority of teachers to be interviewed work for private companies, the information is not posted in a public forum like most teacher salary schedules. This information would then have to be self-reported which some participants may not be comfortable sharing or may not report accurately. In addition, private companies vary widely in their benefits packages, which would further complicate the ability to truly measure compensation rates.

Definition of Terms

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions used through the research.

1. Secure Residential Program: defined as any neglected or delinquent facility that serves students with behavioral and emotional needs in a residential setting.

2. Neglected Institution: a public or private residential facility that is operated for the care of children who have been committed to the institution or voluntarily placed in the institution, due to abandonment, neglect, or death of their parents or guardians. (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title I, D, Subpart 3, section 1432 of the Title I, Part D)

3. Delinquent Institution: a public or private residential facility for the care of children who have been adjudicated to be delinquent or in need of supervision. (Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title I, D, Subpart 3, section 1432 of the Title I, Part D)

4. Residential Treatment: a residential program that provides clinical services and therapeutic treatment in a 24-hour-a-day residential facility for children and youth with significant emotional and/or psychological treatment needs. (DCS provider manual, Section 4 p. 3)

5. Sub-Acute Psychiatric Residential Care: residential setting that is a physician-directed level of care focused on establishing the behavioral and emotional prerequisites for functioning in the most appropriate, non-hospital environments. (DCS provider manual Section 5, p. 3)

6. Juvenile Detention Center: hardware secure facilities designed for youth who pose a risk to the community due to delinquent behaviors and charges (T.C.A.) 37-1-114.

7. Facility Administration: defined her as any administrator in a secure residential setting that is directing educational services.

8. Professional Development (PD): "a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness" (Professional Development Definition, 2020).

9. Organizational Culture: "a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity" (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 177).

10. School Climate: "the set of internal characteristics that distinguish one school from another and influence the behavior of each school's members" (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 197).

11. Alternative Education Settings: as defined here, describes the alternative education setting in a secure residential program."

12. Comradery: "a feeling of friendliness, goodwill, and familiarity among the people in a group" (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

13. Intrinsic Motivation: "motivation that stems directly from an action rather than a reward" (The Definition of Intrinsic Motivation, 2019)

14. Burnout: "a psychological syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment" (Yang & Hayes 2020).

15. Stress: constraining force or influences: such as a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation (Merriam Webster, 2020).

16. Vicarious Trauma: "a transformation in self that a trauma worker or helper experiences from empathetic engagement with traumatized clients and their reports of traumatic experiences; its hallmark is disrupted spirituality, or disruption in the trauma worker's perceived meaning and hope" (Courtois, C., 1994, p. 729-730)

17. Mentor Teacher: A mentor teacher can be defined as a master teacher who helps to guide a new teacher through their first year who, observes, guides, and provides feedback to help them in the learning process (Pirkle 2011).

Overview of the Study

Results from this study will provide critical insights into the factors behind teacher retention in secure residential. A phenomenological research design will be employed to gather rich and deep data to support greater understanding related to how to enhance retention of teachers in residential settings, while also identifying factors associated with teacher satisfaction. Findings from this research will include recommendations for practice and for future research.

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the field of secure residential settings and underlying issues in teacher retention in secure residential settings. Research questions which establish a framework for this study are also presented in this chapter. Chapter two provides a detailed review of current literature and research on teacher retention in secure residential settings. In addition, the literature review examines teacher retention in special education and in hard-to-staff schools as they share many similarities with secure residential settings. Information in chapter three focuses on the methodology used by the researcher and the steps the researcher utilized to ensure a trustworthy study. Chapter four is a presentation of findings from the analysis of data

collected in this study from interviews with teachers who currently work in detention centers in Tennessee. Chapter five is a summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations for both professional practice and future research recommendations.

Central to the focus of this research will be to understand factors associated with teacher retention in secure residential settings. Data will be collected through in-person interviews with teachers currently working in these centers. At the conclusion of the interviews, an analysis will be conducted to determine common themes in the responses. These themes will be compiled to create recommendations for administrators in secure residential programs that may assist them in strengthen their teacher retention practices.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

In order to provide a comprehensive review of current literature and research on teacher retention in secure residential settings, this chapter will frame current and appropriate research surrounding teacher retention in a variety of settings. Research on teacher retention in juvenile detention centers, prisons, and residential settings will be examined as these three areas tend to make up the landscape of secure residential settings in Tennessee. Residential settings are considered settings in which students are placed for behavioral treatment but are not necessarily physically detained behind bars or other physical barriers. In addition, the literature review will focus on similar groups of educators in other environments to provide context and understanding to the issue. Specifically, the literature review will examine findings of teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools such as inner-city schools and schools with a high poverty rate. The research will also examine high need instructional areas such as special education. Special education is an area with a disproportionate number of students in residential settings. 33% of students in juvenile detention centers met criteria for at least one disability category per federal IDEA definitions. Some individual programs in the study had up to 77% of students served with an IEP (OJJDP, 2017).

The literature review contains several sections. First, an examination of teacher preparation and training is provided first to frame onboarding practices in secure residential settings and the professional development opportunities available to teachers in these settings. Next, a review of the literature around the overall topic of teacher retention. This section is followed by three sub-sections that frame the discussion in more specific terms. Teacher

retention in secure residential centers is the first sub-section and identifies common trends that exist in this environment. The review then sets forth a construct for understanding teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools and teacher retention for special education teachers in public schools. The literature moves on to discuss overall teacher stress as a catchall for areas not represented in the previous topics.

Next, the literature discusses themes that might assist a teacher in staying in their role with the school. A review of the research around teachers' personal mission and belief structures is provided. Following this, a review of the literature regarding culture and climate of a school is examined. The last supportive area reviewed is quality administration, examining the key characteristics of effective leadership. The final section of the literature review reaches out to examine retention in similar fields to secure residential programs including burnout in mental health professionals and burnout in corrections. Many of the settings represented in this study are part of or share strong components with the field of mental health or corrections and so evaluating the literature in these sectors can provide key insights into retention issues. Through the examination of these topics, a comprehensive picture of this unique learning environment emerges, providing a framework for understanding the complex challenges of teacher retention in residential facilities.

Teacher Preparation and Training

Teacher preparation and training programs will be examined first as they provide a framework for understanding teacher preparation for instruction in this challenging environment. There are few teacher preparation programs focusing on preparing teachers to work in this type of setting (Geurin & Lou Dentin, 1999). They also indicate that teacher preparation programs

rarely provide the training and resources that are needed for educators working in alternative educational programs in secure residential facilities. Unlike other specialized areas such as special education or English language learners, most teacher preparation programs do not offer specific certifications or degrees for individuals who are interested in teaching in residential settings. (Geurin & Lou Dentin, 1999)

Teacher preparation programs do not focus on teacher preparation for instruction in residential settings; moreover, professional development opportunities specific to this teaching population are limited. Detention centers are often a foreign environment for educators, and they have little professional development that adequately prepares them to be successful in this type of environment (USED 2012). Developing and maintaining high quality teachers in a residential setting is a problem that must be addressed to ensure quality educational experiences for students in these environments.

A deficit in teacher preparation programs is that they fail to expose upcoming teachers to this environment and that a paucity of professional development offerings at the district and state level make it difficult to train and develop quality teachers for residential settings (Weaver 2017). Weaver (2017) recommends that administrators create induction programs for new teachers in these programs with ongoing professional development, highlighting that there is a steep learning curve in this setting that can last for a couple of years. This professional development must be specifically tailored to provide effective pedagogical strategies for educators in this type of environment as well as ways to manage and persist in this unique environment (Weaver 2017).

Macomber et al. (2010) report that there is an overall lack of professional development targeting teachers working in alternative education settings such as juvenile detention centers and residential programs. They reported that educators in alternative settings lack proper access to techniques that work with this unique population.

When facility administrators are able to engage their teachers in professional development, they often struggle to find meaningful events for their educators due to the unique circumstances in which they work (Koyama, 2012). Koyama (2012) found that only 25% of educators in secure residential settings found the professional development offerings to be relevant. To improve upon this, Murphy (2018) recommends, that professional development be geared directly towards educators in alternative settings that focus on effective educational strategies and facility-wide positive behavior management strategies.

Supporting New Teachers: Mentor Teachers

The literature review has discussed the important steps involved in preparing teachers for the classroom from their formal education to ongoing professional development, but there is also an important step of onboarding and providing specific supports to new teachers during their first year. Consequently, it is important to examine the role a strong mentorship program on the effects of teachers in their first year. A mentor teacher can be defined as a master teacher who helps to guide a new teacher through their first year who, observes, guides, and provides feedback to help them in the learning process (Pirkle 2011). Mentor teachers can assist new teachers in some of their greatest need areas of classroom management, discipline, lack of communication, emotional support, lack of parental involvement, and adjusting to a new environment (Benson-Jaja, 2010).

In order to be effective, teacher mentoring programs must have clear and concise goals (Callahan, 2016). Mentors are encouraged to practice mentoring based on a variety of approaches including feedback based mentoring and direct mentoring. (Lejonberg et al., 2018) In addition, mentors that have strong self-efficacy and believe they would be strong mentors are often better suited for the role as they put in the extra effort and time required to perform this task in addition to their instructional duties. (Lejonberg et al., 2018).

Norman et al., (2004) conclude that mentoring is a complex endeavor that requires the same skill and passion as teaching. They assert that there is a true counseling component that is required for mentoring to be effective. They claim that one of the first steps to a successful mentor/mentee relationship is that the mentor must be a good listener. In order to master these skills, it is suggested that mentor teachers receive professional development in the area of educational leadership as this is the role they will be fulfilling (Pickle, 2011). This idea is supported in other studies, with one concluding that the new teachers would have benefited more from the program if the mentors had specific training in the process instead of just experience. Many of the mentors also reported a desire for more training on how to be an effective mentor (Benson-Jaja, 2010).

The results of an effective teacher mentorship program can help new teachers to be more successful in the classroom and increase teacher retention (Callahan, 2016). Benson-Jaja (2016) also supported this claim in her study of teacher mentor programs. In addition, Callan (2016) asserts that strong mentorship programs can also lead to increased confidence in the novice teacher. 75% of new teachers perceived the teacher mentor program to be effective and ranked mentoring as more effective than the other beginning of the year workshops hosted by the school

(Coker, 2016). The teachers perceived the one on one relationships developed with the mentor as one of the most important aspects of this program (Coker, 2016).

Techer Retention

Teacher retention is an important issue in both public schools and secure residential facilities. Understanding the factors behind why teachers leave a school and why they stay are critical to supporting efforts for greater teacher retention. This literature review will explore the different teacher fields more closely associated with teaching in a secure residential setting, after providing a more general picture of teacher retention.

Determining what factors encourage teachers to stay in the field and what factors move them out is a complex issue. Barholomew-Jones (2015) asserts that the most important reasons teachers stayed in their current positions is salary and benefits. He found that teachers wanted the opportunity to increase their earnings and would leave a school system to work in a different system with higher pay. Compensation is cited again as a reason for teachers leaving by Miller (2018) who found that half of the teachers who had left the field of education reported negative compensation as a significant factor.

Interestingly, as it seems to contradict the first reason which is an extrinsic reward, Barholomew-Jones (2015) found that intrinsic reward was the second reason teachers reported staying in the field of education. Intrinsic rewards were defined as "self-efficacy, student success, student and teacher relationships, or collegial relationships" (p. 127). Teachers enjoyed seeing the successes of their students and the supportive relationships that they developed with their peers. Richardson (2017) found that administrative support, arduous workloads, and

classroom management/student discipline were the driving factors behind teachers leaving the field of education. Teacher job satisfaction and burnout are also significant predictors in a teacher's decision to leave the field of education (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017)

Teacher Retention in Juvenile Detention Centers

Many students who are entering a secure residential setting are behind in school and have had negative educational experiences. To help overcome these experiences and for them to have a chance to catch up to their same age peers, these students must have access to high quality teachers who have experience and longevity in the field. However, joint guidance from USED and the Department of Justice (2012) report that hiring quality educators in the facilities can be challenging as they are often battling the pre-conceived notions that educators have about these environments. The report asserts that educators may be concerned about safety concerns and classroom management within the secure residential programs.

Francis (1995) found that 40% of special education teachers in juvenile detention centers were found to have elevated levels of stress due to their job. He also found that many of the educators had taken a significant amount of sick leave during the school year. This was attributed to the high levels of stress in their jobs. This research further supports the notion that burnout and stress can be driving factors of teacher turnover in a secure residential setting.

Another challenge that lead to the frustration and stress of educators in this environment is the transient nature of this population. For juvenile detention centers in particular, the length of stay can be a contributing factor that leads to the difficulty of educating this group of students. Tennessee's DCS (2018) data on incarcerated youth found that approximately two-thirds of

students exited the JDC within 72 hours. This challenge is consistent with Koyama (2012) findings which found that although behavioral concerns are evident in a JDC classroom, the larger concern was the transient nature of the students. They found that the short term stays of the student made it difficult to provide quality, meaningful education for this group of students. The shorter stays can make it more difficult to get educational records in a timely manner and enroll the student in meaningful coursework before they leave (Koyama, 2012). In addition, students can be pre-occupied with their upcoming court dates or concerns over their next placement and so are not as invested in their education at this time (Koyama, 2012).

Excessive stress in these environments cannot only lead to teacher burnout and turnover, but also to teacher absences. USED and Office of Civil Rights (2016) pointed out that 35% of educators in secure residential settings are absent for 10 days or more in a school year. This number is significantly higher than the national average of 27%.

Although much of the stress mentioned above may come from the challenging behavioral and emotional needs of the students, the overall system in which teachers work can be a significant factor. Macomber et al. (2010) found teachers had significant issues with the overall system they were working in rather than the students they were working with. In order for teachers to be satisfied in working in a JDC and see a decrease in teacher turnover, several aspects of the system needed to change. The teachers reported that they were dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the educational program, the importance of the educational program in relation to other programs within the detention center, and the amount and access to professional development (Macomber et al., 2010).

This study highlights a unique finding that teacher turnover may not be a personnel problem or even an education problem, but rather an issue that is reflective of the entire organization's stance on the importance of education. The spirit of the system is in need of significant changes that are adversely influencing the education department. (Macomber et al., 2010). Education should not just be considered one of many components of the juvenile detention center, but it should be treated as the most important component. (Macomber et al., 2010). This suggestion provides a simple step that correctional programs can use to enhance teacher retention. By placing a greater emphasis on the importance and potential impact of a quality education, they can increase the likelihood of teacher satisfaction and retention.

Similarly, Houchins et al. (2017) found that greater job satisfaction was positively associated with the intent to stay in teaching. Another critical finding was that teachers in short-term facilities reported more job satisfaction than juvenile justice teachers in long-term facilities. The conclusion to this was that the students in long-term facilities tended to have more significant behavioral issues. The researchers also found that female juvenile justice teachers were less satisfied compared to their male counterparts. This may be due to the high level of males that are arrested as compared to their female counterparts. (Houcins et al., 2017). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2019) issued a study that found females only made up about a third of the 921,600 juvenile arrests in 2015. The study also found that special education teachers had greater job satisfaction as compared to the general education colleagues. This difference in job satisfaction was attributed to the specialized training that special education teachers receive in their teacher preparation courses.

Wolford (2000) found that teacher compensation was making a difference in teacher retention. He found that detention centers that were able to compensate teachers based on a 235-day contract as opposed to the typical 182-day contract in public schools resulted in greater teacher retention. Teacher compensation being important is reiterated in a 2016 study on strategic compensation used in Tennessee. "This study can affirm that a statistically significant relationship exists in teacher quality as determined by TVAAS between teachers who voluntarily participated in the district's strategic compensation plan that included an alternative salary schedule that no longer compensates teachers based on years' experience and advanced degrees" (p. 89-90).

Comparing the high level of teacher turnover in secure residential programs to teacher turnover statistics across the state we see that although there are issues with teacher retention state-wide, they do not elevate to the level of turnover in a facility. For example, in a report released by the Tennessee Department of Education (2020) it showed that from the 2017-2018 school year to the 2018-2019 school year, 90% of teachers continued teaching in the state of Tennessee and 80% remained in their school. When examining high-needs content areas the rate of retention was lower, at 79% for special education. This number drops significantly when examining five-year cohorts which found that only 60% of teachers stay in their same school for five years or more.

Teacher Retention in Hard-to-staff Schools

Many connections can be made among the reasons for teacher turnover in public, hard-to-staff schools, and schools in secure residential settings. Examining the plethora of research around teacher retention in the public environment provides good context and insight into this

study's research questions and provides insight as to how this issue may be resolved in a secure residential setting.

Teachers leave the field of education, and specifically non-traditional schools, for a variety of factors. In Norton's (1999) research, she focused on the teachers' perceptions of their jobs and found that the educators perceived teaching in the setting as unrealistic due to limited resources, inadequate time, and vague guidelines. In addition, disruptive student behavior was cited as a major factor contributing to teachers' stress. This finding aligns with findings in the previous section that showed teachers were more stressed about the overall system they were working in rather than the actual student behaviors. Norton (1999) went on to conclude that teacher retention relied more on work conditions such as administrative leadership and support, school climate, teacher autonomy in the classroom, student behavior, and parental support rather than salary and benefits.

Homles et al. (2019) focused on the reasons that teachers are leaving these positions in hard-to-staff school and found that poor administrative practices and principal ineffectiveness were among the top reasons' teachers were leaving. Poor leadership, combined with disruptive student behaviors and inadequate compensation, contributed to teacher turnover which in turn leads to a poor school culture. (Holmes, 2019). Glazer (2013) concluded, "We're not doing a bad job at retaining teachers. We're doing an abysmal job." (p. 27-28).

Out of all of these factors listed above, building-level leadership was repeatedly reported as playing a crucial role in teacher satisfaction and retention. Holmes (2019) points out that this is perhaps the most influential of the different factors claiming that principals have the greatest impact on student outcomes and so therefore, there must be quality leadership in place for

success to occur. Holmes further declares that principals are vital to supporting, developing, and retaining teachers in these hard to staff schools. Hughes (2012) echoes this sentiment, listing specific items that teachers need from their administration in order to feel valued and to increase retention. Specifically, he mentions that school leaders need to be supportive of their teacher's decisions in front of parents and colleagues as this lends a sense of emotional support. Another form of emotional support he describes is the administrator's ability to communicate to teachers how they are making a difference in the jobs they are doing. Finally, the participants in the study stated that compensation was important to them feeling valued and wanting to stay in the field.

The significance of effective school-based administration and its impact on teacher retention is emphasized by Hoochins et al. (2004) who found that positive teacher dispositions in juvenile detention centers were often linked to how they felt about their school administrators. If the school administrator created a positive, supporting environment, the teachers were more likely to have positive attitudes towards their jobs.

Holmes, Parker, and Gibson (2019) came to the same conclusion in their research of hard-to-staff schools, finding that the principal tended to be the key to the school's success. They stated that although teachers are obviously the difference makers in the classroom, they have to be supported by quality principals, especially in challenging school environments. They found that principal support is critical because it can help "in retaining effective teachers, which helps to ensure stability in the classroom….additionally, effective principals may influence teacher retention by addressing other student outcomes that closely affect teachers, such as making efforts to reduce suspension rates, and improving graduation rates" (p. 30). These efforts, according to Clark, Martorell, and Rockoff (2009) can make a substantial impact on the

educational growth of the students, by raising standardized test scores by as much as 10 percentile points. Finally, Scott (2010) reported that 88% of teachers indicated inadequate administrative support as influencing them negatively and creating a greater desire to leave the field.

Teacher Retention for Special Education Teachers

Teacher retention and satisfaction among special education teachers in public schools is another critical subgroup. This is an important comparison group for a couple of reasons. First, as stated previously, a disproportionate number of students in secure residential settings are identified as having a disability (OJJDP, 2017). The American Institute and Research and the National Center for Education found "45.2% of the total number of youths detained or incarcerated was reported to have a disability. This finding is particularly interesting given that the U.S. Department of Education figures show that for the 1998-1999 school year (the most recent data available) the percentage of children and youth in the general population with disabilities was only 8.82%" (Osher et al., p. 11).

By default, teachers in these settings end up performing many of the same duties as special education teachers, providing individualized instruction, behavior management, and meeting the demands of extra paperwork. Hoochin et al., (2010) study on JDC teacher retention, they reported a strong correlation between the factors that JDC teachers face and the challenges that special education teachers face, proclaiming that both groups of teachers work with students that often have severe psychological and social challenges.

One of the major themes to appear from this section of the literature review was teacher job satisfaction. Teacher satisfaction is a major part of a special education teacher's decision to stay in the field or leave. Frances (2008) concluded that job satisfaction is directly related to a teacher's intent to leave the profession. Stempien and Loeb (2002) reported that for special education teachers, that job satisfaction is a major contributor to teachers leaving the field. They cited four main areas in which schools can support their special education teachers in order to increase teacher job satisfaction and retention: stress management, individualized attention, collegial relationships, and fostering creativity and the challenge of the job. Stress was a major indicator identified in the study. They suggest that administrators should look at ways to not only help the educators deal with stress but also find ways to reduce stress through the job design. They conclude that paying special attention to the needs of new special education teachers, starting at their first professional development days, can help to alleviate some of the pressures.

This professional development can be accomplished through cohort models for new special education teachers and mentorships as well as individualized support by administrators (Stempien & Loeb, 2002). The third factor of support they offer is through collegial relationships. Special education teachers often do not have enough time to network and connect with other special educators as they may be the only special education teacher in the school or one of only a handful. It is reported in the study that special education teachers prefer to connect with their colleagues in special education more so than their peers in the general education environment. (Stempien & Loeb, 2002)

This suggestion of increased networking opportunities with colleagues has particular importance in this study, as many teachers in secure residential settings lack a proper network of

peers. Many of the schools represented in this study are very small with only a few teachers at each facility and some only have one teacher for the whole program, leading to isolation. As Mocomber (2010) points out, educators in different facilities rarely, if ever, get the opportunity to engage in professional development with their counterparts in other facilities. This lack of opportunities results in an isolated group of teachers that have minimal opportunities to collaborate and network with their counterparts in the field (Mocomber, 2010).

Stempien and Loeb (2002) offer a fourth strategy for increasing teacher retention by encouraging the creativity and challenge of the job. They report that teachers need variety and ownership in their roles and should have some flexibility built into their duties. This factor is important in a secure residential facility as there are typically many different divisions that make up a residential setting, from the guards/front line staff, to the clinical staff to the nursing staff. Allowing teachers to have meaningful opportunities to work and grow among these groups is important to their flexibility (Stempien & Loeb, 2002).

Henderson's (2014) study found that special education teacher retention mirrored much of the findings in the previous section in that building-level leadership is vitally important to teacher retention. She suggests that in order to increase teacher retention for special education teachers' leaders need to build a positive school culture and climate, establish an expectation for collaboration, and show acceptance of all students. In addition, she reports that administrators need to be accessible to the teachers and show respect and appreciation for the work they are doing in the classroom. Additionally, her study recommends appropriate support from the district level leadership. For district-level leadership she highlights the importance of fiscal resources being used appropriately to assist special education teachers to ensure that they have the

materials and resources that they need to adequately fulfill their duties and responsibilities. In addition, district-level leaders need to be available to provide timely training and professional development.

Teacher Stress

In examining teacher retention, it is important to identify the stressors teachers perceive in their jobs as this can lead to higher turnover rates. There are a multitude of reasons a teacher perceives stress at work including work demands, testing, leadership, low parental involvement, student behavior, and lack of resources (Thompson, 2017). The top five sources of stress among teachers was, teaching needy students without enough support, too many duties and responsibilities of the job, lack of control over school and district decisions, unmotivated students, and the constant pressure of being accountable (Richards, 2012). These stressors were reported as significantly higher in low socio-economic status (SES) schools as opposed to high SES schools (Richards, 2012).

Other studies have found similar themes. Lack of material resources, lack of support and lack of opportunities to grow were cited as reasons by Marolis and Nagel (2006). They also cited the rate of change and the pressure put on teachers to implement this change as a significant stressor. Griffith (1999) had similar findings with lack of time and workload being the most significant stressor for educators. Educators reported that they were often taking work home and that work was affecting their personal lives, contributing to their stress (Griffith,1999).

Although steps can be taken to mitigate the amount of stress teachers are under, it is impossible to relieve an educator of all stress associated with their jobs. As a result, it is

important to identify effective coping mechanisms for teachers to utilize and schools to employ that will help to relieve the effects of the stress. Teachers are able to cope with stressors when they have strong relationships with their colleagues, choose positive attitudes, use humor, and utilize personal time to further their individual hobbies and interests (Richards, 2012). Botwinik (2007) reinforces these coping skills by finding the following coping skills to be effective in stress management: making time for yourself, exercising, getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet, making time for family and friends, mediation and solitude, using humor, and displaying a positive attitude. Effective social supports are also a mitigating factor for stress in the classroom (Griffith, 1999).

Personal Mission

Teaching in an environment such as secure residential setting can require more than support from administration and quality professional development. It may also require teachers that have a personal identity that attracts them to the field. Sarah Freedman and Deborah Appleman (2008) found that teachers that specifically go into the into the field of teacher education to work with high needs students tend to have grater longevity in the field with 73% of these types of educators still working in the field as opposed to a national average of 54%. They attribute this success to the fact that the students having a personal identify that it is intertwined with teaching in a high needs urban setting. The idea of a personal identity or mission towards working with a high need at risk group of youth is a compelling one that this research hopes to explore.

In a similar vein, there is research that shows us why teachers enter the field, stemming from their personal belief that they can make a difference in the lives of others (Mee et al.,

2012). They found, out of the top five reasons teachers entered the field of teaching one reason was because they felt they had a calling to the profession and could cite a personal moment that influenced their decision to teach. Another compelling reason was they felt they could relate to the student population. This study shows that an individual's personal beliefs around education can significantly impact his/her career choices and decision to enter the field of education.

Martin (2014) found that teachers in high poverty middle schools often stayed because of their own internal belief system and the intrinsic reward they received from students demonstrating progress. She determined that the teachers believed that the good they did outweigh any negative work conditions. They were able to deal with challenges such as behavioral problems or lack of parental participation because of the intrinsic rewards they received when their students succeed.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development found that "teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction mainly depend on and interact with their personality, personal experiences, competencies and attitudes" (p. 111). These more innate characteristics of personality and attitude can play an integral part in a teacher's internal belief system that they can positively affect a particular group of students.

Sometimes, the reason individuals stay in teaching are hard to capture in a research study and anecdotal stories are able to cut to the point more efficiently. Judith Shively (1992) points to the intrinsic rewards of witnessing individual student successes, helping the introverted child to become part of a peer group, seeing students grasp on to and then model her love of reading, and the feeling she gets from seeing one student helping another as motivating factors for teachers to

stay in the field of education. She lends insight into the personal mission and identity that educators have and why they remain in the field of teaching.

One teacher recounts their motivation to teach in a secure residential setting with the following, "Teaching here requires a special kind of person. For one thing…teachers must have extremely stable personalities, be emotionally centered and have a healthy sense of humor. If you aren't centered, I don't know if you could survive in this population" (Williamson, R., 2005). This theme of an internal belief structure is reiterated in the next section that examines public hard-to-staff schools.

An opposing argument to this internal belief and personal reasons is provided by Hoochin et al. (2017). They found that teachers who entered the field of correctional education for personal reasons, as opposed to employment opportunities, were more likely to leave the field. They concluded that teachers who were more attached to their personal beliefs in making a difference could be more affected by the behavioral challenges of the students as opposed to those teachers who were more focused on career development.

Culture and Climate

School culture encompasses a wide array of aspects of a school and typically refers to the traditions, rituals, shared norms and assumptions of the school (Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). Shared values, humor, storytelling, empowerment, networks, rituals and ceremonies, and collegiality are seven key components Pawlas (1997) uses to define school culture. He declares that school culture is the most important aspect to improving a school, more so than understanding the state and program requirements.

School culture is a critical piece of teacher retention as a healthy school culture is associated with high levels of school performance and teacher participation (Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). The principal's role in creating this culture of collaboration is significant (Gumuseli & Eryilmaz, 2011). Given that the principal's role is so critical to developing a positive culture, both leadership and culture must be examined together (Schine, 2004). Zahed-Bablean (2019) found that the leadership in a school had a positive association with work engagement and school culture. They point out that this is a new role for principals, shifting from traditionally a role of stability in the organization to becoming a change agent that drives the culture and creates interest in and among teachers in becoming more actively engaged in education. They recommend that a positive school culture that fosters work engagement can be developed by contextualizing teacher empowerment strategies, utilizing participative decision making, assisting leaders in increasing their awareness of empowering leadership behaviors. The idea of increasing awareness in the role the principal plays in shaping school culture is supported by Akinleye (2016) who found that principals were often times not aware of the role they played in shaping school culture. Miller (2018) found that a principal's ability to develop a positive school culture that supports collaboration among teachers is positively associated with teacher job satisfaction. He found that 76% of teachers who had left the field reported a negative school culture.

High needs schools benefit from a strong culture in multiple ways. Akinleye (2016) found that the culture in high needs schools had a bearing on a teacher's decision to stay in the school. In addition, teachers reported that feeling valued and their colleagues were two of the main reasons why they stayed in the school. Richardson (2017) also found that the theme of collegial support was significant in teacher's job satisfaction. Gaziel (1997) reported that a

positive school culture had a greater effect in improving school effectiveness at higher need schools when compared to their counterparts that were not considered high need.

School culture not only assists in retaining teachers, but it can also lead to increased academic performance by students. School culture can significant in improving a school's overall effectiveness with students (Gaziel, 1997). Gaziel (1997) found that 44% of the variance of school effectiveness was attributed to school culture factors. Most importantly, academic emphasis in the school culture was the best cultural component for predicting effectiveness. Academic emphasis was a higher predictor of school effectiveness, far outweighing orderliness (Gaziel, 1997).

Leadership Traits and Skills

The previous sections reference strong leadership as a critical piece of teacher retention. Therefore, the literature review would be remiss without a discussion on effective leadership traits and skills. Organizations need great leaders that that use their authority and power to inspire people and motivate them to follow them towards a new vision (Rucker & Russell, 2004). "leadership is something that is a much talked about and a seemingly desirable trait, however, it is difficult to define" (Denehy, 2008, p. 108). As a result, "people continue to ask themselves and others what makes a good leader." (Northouse, 2016, p. 1). Some of the common traits typically associated with quality leadership are intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, sociability, and emotional intelligence (Northouse, 2016). Mann (1959) found six common traits among leaders: intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion, and conservatism. Stogdill (1974) identified 10 characteristics of effective leaders that he included in his survey:

1. Drive for responsibility and task completion.

2. Vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals.

3. Risk taking and originality in problem solving.

4. Drive to exercise initiative in social situations.

5. Self-confidence and sense of personal identity.

6. Willingness to access consequences of decision and action.

7. Readiness to absorb interpersonal stress.

8. Willingness to tolerate frustration and delay.

9. Ability to influence other people's behavior.

10. Capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

Others in the field of leadership stress that skills matter more than traits. Katz (1955) argues that effective leaders must possess strong technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Mumford (200) and colleagues proposed a skills-based competency model containing three critical components: problem solving skills, social judgement skills, and knowledge.

Burnout in Mental Health Professionals

The literature review, up to this point, has focused exclusively on educators in public and secure residential settings. In order to lend richer context to the challenges associated with teaching in a secure residential setting, studies beyond the field of education must be considered. The secure residential centers represented in this study have evolved over the years and have become mental health based with a stronger emphasis on the underlying mental health issues a child may have, rather than just focusing on the behaviors. The facilities and programs

represented in this study all have strong mental health components with their own clinical

departments, nursing departments, and daily living departments. As a result, the literature

review would be incomplete without examining the underlying factors and stressors that lead to

burnout in the mental health arena. Many of these components are specific to the type of

environment these teachers work in that would not be found in a public-school setting.

Burnout is defined by Yang and Hayes (2020) as, "a psychological syndrome

characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal

accomplishment" (p. 426). This syndrome is now classified by the International Classification of

Diseases as an official diagnosis (World Health Organization, 2019). It is a major concern in the

field of mental health as 20% to 40% of psychotherapists could be categorized as experiencing

burnout (O'Connor et al., 2018). Some of the factors that led to burnout of mental health

professionals were similar to the stressors identified by teachers as being stressful in the schools

Yang and Hayes (2020). For example, professionals with less autonomy in their roles perceived

that as a significant stressor that led to burnout. In addition, unrealistic workloads were also

identified as a stressor. Unique to the clinical setting was the difference between in-patient and

outpatient settings. Professionals in in-patient settings perceived having greater burnout than

those in outpatient settings (Yang & Hayes 2020). This is relevant as all of the programs

represented in this study would constitute inpatient settings.

Professionals in the mental health field are encouraged to utilize coping skills to mitigate

the chance of burnout. These suggestions include mindfulness practices, obtaining emotional

support from colleagues, supervisors, friends and family, developing a healthy work/life balance,

and engaging in leisure activities. (Yang & Hayes, 2020). Many of these coping skills are reiterated in the teacher stress section of the literature review.

Another study of mental health professional in correctional facilities found that participants rated higher levels of burnout when they perceived they had less control over their environment (Gallavan & Newman, 2013). In addition, higher levels of burnout were reported for professionals who had a difficult time establishing clear boundaries between their work and professional lives. The converse of this was that professionals who had an optimistic attitude and a positive attitude toward prisoners were less likely to report burnout (Gallavan & Newman, 2013). Many of the findings in this study are similar to the factors discussed in teacher job satisfaction.

Personal history and number of hours worked can also have an effect on the degree to which an individual experiences burnout. Ray et al. (2013) found that individuals with trauma in their backgrounds reported higher levels of burnout than those who reported no previous trauma. In addition, full time employees reported higher levels of burnout than part time employees (Ray et al., 2013). This is significant because all of the teachers represented in this study hold full time positions with the secure residential programs.

Nayoung et al. (2010) found that age and gender may be risk factors that lead to increased burnout and depersonalization. They indicate that younger professionals and males may have greater tendencies to burnout. The researchers caution that this should not be used to stereotype against these groups, but rather some additional supports may be needed. In addition, the researchers found that the level of education an individual had resulted in greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but that the individuals also reported having a greater sense of

accomplishment. Finally, they found that lack of autonomy and control was listed as a perceived factor of burnout among the professionals, echoing previous studies.

Baruch et al. (2013) found that burnout among staff and job satisfaction can vary between staff positions within an organization. They found that psychologists and social workers tended to report higher levels of happiness than their nursing counterparts. In addition, professionals who had been working in the field longer reported higher levels of satisfaction. Another interesting finding from the study was that although some of the professionals, such as psychiatrists, described their job as more of a calling rather than a job, this did not directly correlate to them having greater job satisfaction.

Burnout Among Correctional Officers

Another critical field to examine when reviewing the literature is the retention and recruitment of professionals in correctional settings. Much like the section above that described burnout in mental health professionals, correctional staff face some of the same challenges and concerns as teachers in secure residential settings and so lend relevance to the study. Many of the programs represented in this study work with similar populations to those in correctional settings but are typically working with a juvenile population instead of an adult population. Although their students are younger, they still face similar acts of aggression and supervisory concerns that can be found in correctional settings.

Approximately 20% to 25% of correctional personal in juvenile detention facilities turnover each year (Minor et al., 2011; Wright, 1993). Compared to their peers in non-correctional programs, they experience greater turnover and less job satisfaction (Mikytuk et al.,

2016). The average length of stay for correctional officers in these settings was approximately two years and the turnover were higher among newer staff. The majority of correctional officers cite safety as a primary reason for leaving where staff in non-correctional programs cite retirement as their primary reason. The study also found that correctional staff were significantly less satisfied with their jobs as compared to their peers in non-correctional settings (Mikytuk et al., 2016).

In Lambert et al. (2009) found again that too much work, which they refer to as overload, had a significantly positive association with burnout. They also found that role ambiguity was a significant predictor of burnout. They go on to explain that role ambiguity occurs when the expectation for the role is not clear. For example, "correctional employees can be told to use their discretion to handle matters, but if something goes wrong, their action can be reviewed and questioned, and disciplinary action can even result if a wrong course of action was undertaken" (Lambert et al., p. 17). At times they had to be the enforcer of rules and at others they had to fulfill the role of advocate for the inmates. Another finding of the study was that danger and perceived danger were not significant indicators of burnout. They explain this may be because those working in these types of facilities expect a certain degree of danger when they enter the program (Lambert et al., 2009).

Mitchell et al. (2000) identified the following variables as being significant predictors of turnover. They found that younger employees were more likely to turnover than older employees. Race was a predictor of turnover with African American and Hispanic employees having greater levels of turnover. Employees with higher levels of education had significantly greater rates of turnover. In addition, they compared programs that were correctional in nature

and those that were rehabilitation oriented. In a somewhat paradoxical way, they found that the programs that were more rehabilitation oriented and showed higher level of care towards inmates had higher levels of turnover. An interesting finding to consider as the programs in the study will all be treatment based.

Mitchell et al. (2000) also compared individual versus organizational characteristics and found that individuals were more likely to leave a facility due to organizational characteristics. They conclude correctional programs should focus more on their own internal organization structure because if they are able to make systematic changes to the organization they can improve turnover rates. They found that employers tend to do the opposite, focusing on the personality traits of each individual employee and trying to replicate high performing employees already in the agency.

Correctional officers are exposed to an array of stressful and traumatic events while in detention programs that can cause burnout and vicarious trauma (Shively, 2017). Vicarious trauma is defined as "a transformation in self that a trauma worker or helper experiences from empathetic engagement with traumatized clients and their reports of traumatic experiences; its hallmark is disrupted spirituality, or disruption in the trauma worker's perceived meaning and hope" (Courtois, C., 1994, p. 729-730). Examples of this exposure include discussions about the significant abuse and trauma the inmates experienced as well as firsthand experiences of watching inmates' overdose or withdrawal from drug addiction (Shively, 2017). Shively (2017) goes on to describe burnout as a slow process that can creep up on an individual. He explains that it starts out as low energy and efficiency, this leads to lower work performance such as coming in late and errors on paperwork. The correctional officer than may become irritable over

small matters and this irritation may manifest itself as aggression towards other staff and inmates. In the end, the burnout can result in a lack of hope by the employee and cause them to leave the field altogether.

Summary

The literature review provided offers an extensive review into the factors behind teacher retention and turnover in secure residential settings. Because the term secure residential setting encompasses a wide variety of settings, multiple factors were considered in the literature review. Factors from teacher retention studies on teachers in juvenile detention centers, hard-to-staff schools, and special education were all taken into consideration. In addition, an examination of the teacher preparation for teachers in secure residential settings was provided as well. The review also examined related occupations and retention issues in the field of mental health and corrections.

The literature review provided key insights into potential questions and areas that should be examined during the interview portion of this study. It will be important to ask the teachers about their training prior to coming into a facility and their ongoing professional development while in the facility to determine if there is a connection between preparation and longevity in the field. One of the biggest factors that will be important to examine is the role of the building-level administrator in teacher retention in these settings to see if there is connection between the leader's effectiveness and the longevity of the teacher. Again, it will be important to define a broader term for an administrator than just a building-level principal. Many of the programs do not have principals, but instead have lead teachers, program directors, or other internal positions specific to residential facilities that the educational staff report to.

Other themes that emerged from the literature review that will be explored include an examination of the teacher's own internal belief system and the teacher job satisfaction. Examining these factors, in conjunction with the literature review, will hopefully provide key insights into the factors that help to retain educators in such a challenging environment.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to identify factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. Insights and perspectives were gathered through a series of interviews with teachers who have taught in a secure residential setting for five years or more. Purposive sampling was used to identify participants for the interviews. These findings were then summarized to provide facility administrators with strategies to enable them to increase teacher retention in their programs.

Phenomenological Study

In order to explore the topic of teacher retention in secure residential facilities, the methodology of phenomenological research was utilized. In a phenomenological study the researcher attempts to describe the lived experience of a group of individuals as they have experienced a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Through examining the experiences of all of these individuals that have experienced a similar event, the researchers draw some meaningful conclusions about that experience (Creswell, 2003). A more simply stated, yet equally descriptive definition of a phenomenological study is offered by Thomas S. Eberle (2013) who describes phenomenology as an analysis of "the things themselves" (p.2).

In this study, the phenomenon being examined was teacher retention in secure residential facilities. Two over-arching questions that Creswell (2003) places with phenomenological research center on what the individuals have experienced and what context or situations have typically influenced their experiences of the phenomenon.

Hyeseung and Othman (2016) indicate that phenomenological research is understanding a phenomenon from the teacher's point of view. This type of research is about reflecting the subject's voice as collected from interviews or personal accounts. It is the subject's understanding and perspective that create the major themes and categories which emerge from the data (Hyeseung & Othman, 2016).

Dermot (2000) describes the process as a practice rather than a system that digs into the truth of the matter in order to unveil the phenomena being studied. It allows the researcher to examine the phenomena as it emerges from the perception of the person experiencing the phenomena. This reiterates the need to examine the lived experience of individuals. Dermot (2000) cautions that researchers must suspend judgement and dogmas in order to allow a true inquiry into the phenomenon.

A phenomenological study lends itself best to this study for multiple reasons. First, there is a limited number of teachers in these settings in the state. Unlike the public education setting that employs tens of thousands of educators, the residential programs that operate in-house schools only employ a fraction of the teacher workforce in the state. Therefore, a wide-ranging survey or other mass-produced quantitative instrument would be limited in its approach. A qualitative, phenomenological approach will offer a deeper analysis into a limited number of subjects and resources in order to make meaningful connections to the work.

In addition, a phenomenological study is most appropriate for studying this because a theory or strategy is not being tested. There is not a hypothesis to confirm or disprove. Instead, this study is attempting to examine deeply and discover what perceptions these teachers hold that keep them motivated and engaged in this particular learning environment. In order to examine

the crux of the issue behind teacher retention, time must be spent with these educators and their experiences must be explored and dissected. Allowing the participants an opportunity to provide rich descriptions and insight into why they have lasted so long teaching in a field with high turnover will provide the study with rich and meaningful information.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to identify appropriate criteria for participation, design meaningful questions for interviews, conduct interviews in a curious and engaging manner, and then analyze the results from those interviews. In this way, the researcher serves as an architect of the study, designing the process from start to finish, overseeing each step along the way.

The researcher has an ethical responsibility to be as open and transparent about the study as possible, clearly communicating the purpose and intent of the study to participants. In addition, the researcher will ensure that all participants are aware of their right to decline or withdrawal from the process. The researcher will also ensure that participants are aware that their responses are anonymous so that they can answer freely.

Finally, the researcher will be aware of any biases and past experiences that could impact the study. This researcher, having served in a secure residential setting as an educational administrator for a decade, has substantial experience in this field. This will help the researcher to better understand the nuances of the field and hopefully build trust with the participants. The researcher will have to guard against any internal biases that he may have from his experiences and thoughts on teacher retention. Sema (2012) highlights some key factors that the researcher will need to be aware of and guard against during the research process. These areas include,

making assumptions about the meaning of events and not seeking clarification, assuming he knows the participants views on an issue, the participant assuming that the researcher already knows key pieces of information, closeness to the situation that prohibits the researcher from seeing the big picture. In order to guard against this the researcher will need to be sure that they continue to probe and ask questions to ensure that an accurate description to each question is answered by the participant. Answers should be analyzed to ensure that an outsider to the study could clearly comprehend what the participant is describing. Guarding against this will help to ensure that the study is free of any internal bias by the researcher.

Ethics

Ensuring that an ethical approach is used in the research is critical to protecting the participants in the study and ensuring that study is conducted in a professional manner. David Resnick (2011) lays out four key points around the importance of ethics in research. He claims that ethics help to promote the aims of the research, promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, ensure accountability to the public, and promote moral and social values. Following these reasons one can ensure that participants are not harmed in the study, that the study accurately reflects what the researcher set out to study, and that the research is conducted in a transparent manner that holds the researcher accountable.

With these four reasons in mind, the researcher will apply for IRB approval for this study from the Human Research Protection Program at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) prior to contacting any participants for the study. The researcher will seek this permission immediately after receiving approval on the dissertation proposal from the dissertation committee. A copy of the approval letter will be included in the appendix of this paper.

All participation in the study will be voluntary and participants will receive a detailed explanation of the study and its purpose. Participants will have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time or request at any time that their responses not be used in the study. Finally, participants will also be asked to sign an informed consent form, which will be included in the appendix.

To protect the privacy of each subject, pseudonyms will be used in place of the subject's name and the facility's name. It is critical that the facility also receive a pseudonym as many of the facilities only have one teacher on staff which would make it easily identifiable from the study.

Setting

This study occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and as a result, interviews were conducted using Zoom to protect the safety of the participants and researcher. Secure residential facilities will included residential facilities, psychiatric residential treatment centers, and level two group homes with in-house educational programs. All subjects worked in secure residential facilities in East TN or Middle TN.

Sample

15 teachers were utilized for this study. These teachers were all teachers who had been teaching full time in a secure residential setting for five years or longer. If needed, more teachers would have been identified and added to the study in order to ensure that saturation was obtained.

The benchmark of five years was chosen based on information from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics and an overall theory and understanding of education for how long it would take a teacher to show commitment and mastery in their field. The Bureau of Labor and Statistics released a report in September of 2018 showing the median level of years an employee had been with a company. This report showed that in the field of education five years was the median number of years that an educator stayed with their employer. Based on this statistic, a five-year benchmark for interviewing teachers seems to be what can be expected in the sector for a seasoned teacher at any type of school. In addition, it would potentially limit the number possible subjects if the study went beyond five years. In the overall labor sector, there was a difference between the number of median years for those working in a government job, seven years, and those working in a private sector job, four years. Facilities in Tennessee are run by private companies and so would fall into the later category of four years for retention.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sent an introductory email to the administrator at the identified facilities in east and middle Tennessee explaining the purpose of the study and the criteria for participation. Educators who had taught in a secure residential setting for five years or more were identified by their supervisors as potential participants in the study. The educators were then contacted to see if they would be interested and willing to participate in the study. Fifteen educators responded and completed the consent form to participate in the interviews. Participants were interviewed during the months of June, July, and August 2020. Initially interviews were to take place in person, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews occurred via Zoom platform, a program that allows video conferencing. This allowed for a safe interview process

that followed CDC guidance for social distancing. Several of the participants struggled with the technology or were not comfortable sharing their cameras, but audio was still available.

The interviews were approximately one hour in length and were recorded and transcribed. Transcripts of the interviews were then coded into broad categories and then axial coding was utilized to refine the categories into more specific themes. Credibility for the qualitative study was established through triangulation and through expert scholarly peer review of the coding data for agreement on the categories and themes.

Interview questions were standardized and conducted via zoom with educators. A detailed protocol was developed for this study to provide consistency. The protocol started with an overview of the purpose of the study and gave the participant a chance to ask any questions about the study before the interview began. Next, a set of preliminary questions were asked to gather demographic information and build rapport. The next section examined the teacher's beliefs and perceptions of working in a secure residential setting. The final section allowed the researcher an opportunity to revisit some of the previously discussed themes that needed clarification or elaboration.

The study also included three teachers who had taught for five years or more in a residential setting, but that were currently working in a different environment. The perceptions of these educators are still valid and relevant since they had taught within a residential program within the past four years. Allowing former educators to participate in this study opened up more potential subjects to interview, further enriching the findings.

Data Analysis

Fifteen teachers with at least five years of teaching experience in a secure residential setting were identified for this research. A phenomenological approach was used to code and interpret the interviews searching for common themes. A phenomenological study allowed the researcher to capture and describe the lived experience of this group of teachers as they have experienced the phenomenon of teaching a secure residential setting for five years or more. Through examining the experiences of all of these individuals that have experienced a similar event, the researchers draw some meaningful conclusions about that experience (Creswell, 2003).

A phenomenological study was appropriate for this study because of the limited number of teachers in this type of setting in the state of Tennessee. Compared to the public-school sector, or even the private school sector, there are far fewer educators working in secure residential settings. Compounding the sampling size, there are even fewer within this population that stay in a secure residential setting for five years or more. As a result, a wide-ranging survey or quantitative study would not have been limited in its approach. The interviews conducted and the subsequent coding allowed the researcher to conduct a deeper analysis of the factors behind teacher retention in this environment and offer meaningful connections administrators hoping to improve their programs.

Researcher's Coding Methods

Zoom virtual conferencing was used for the participant interviews which occurred in June, July, and August 2020. With participant permission, all interviews were recorded and then

transcribed. Following the interview, the researcher coded interviews line by line, cleaning up the transcript where the software had transcription errors and highlighting key insights.

Initially, each key insight was highlighted and then commented on by the researcher describing the general concept or category being discussed. For example, in response to question number eight, "Do you think you have a calling for this work? If so, where do you believe that calling comes from?" Erin reported:

> Truly I do believe the Lord called me here and, and usually when I try to make any decisions in my life, I say, okay, Lord open up the doors you want me to walk through open up the ones where I need to go. And if I don't need to go over here where I really want to go, Lord, you know, but if you don't want me there close that door. And I've had doors closed in my face before, so I knew, okay, that's, that's not going to work out. So, let's see what the Lord wants me to do. So, I tried to live my life like that. My dad taught me that so many years ago, my dad and my mom told me that so many years ago. So, you know, I tried to to live my life like that to do what the Lord desires for me today. Mom and dad brought us up in church.

The key insight from Erin's response was that she felt a religious calling to be in the field of residential and to work with at-risk youth. The comment feature in Microsoft word than allowed the researcher to put a comment out to the side of the transcript that noted this as an insight into the participant's religious calling to the field.

In another example, Angela answered the question, "How do your fellow teachers support you in your role?" with the following response:

We're a team here. A lot of us have worked here for, you know, years together. So, we have each other's back when, when things get tough, you know, during the day, we know we can depend on each other. So, it's like a family, community, I mean we just. It's to the point, a lot of us have worked together so long. If we do have an occasion arises and, you know, we have to jump on it. We know what each other is thinking before you know so we know what to do. That, I mean there's, there's a lot of reasons why I like it, but it just, you know, the team atmosphere. The, the family atmosphere

Upon reading and analyzing this portion of the interview, it was evident that the participant was describing a family like atmosphere at the facility. She felt that she could rely on her colleagues and was reporting strong comradery among the group of adults. As a result, the researcher made a comment that the participant was describing teacher comradery and a family like atmosphere.

One final example is offered to help ensure a clear understanding of the initial phase of the coding process. When asked to discuss the most challenging aspect of his job, Mike reported:

I have been assaulted, about six times. Now I have had bruised and broken ribs. I have had my car window busted out. I have been threatened. I've had someone come at me with a weapon intending to stab me I have been struck in the back of the head to the point where I had a concussion. I have been knocked down thrown. I've been stabbed in the hand. So, I still actually have our muscle thing right here where it's still in there. And that's just the realities of what it is. There are lots of days when Violence erupts. And that's just the reality of what this place is that is exhausting, and you hate it and you want to leave on the spot. But you find some reason to be able to keep going in it.

This statement clearly speaks to the significant behavioral struggles the student's exhibit and the stress this can cause on an educator. In the margins of the transcript, a note was created categorizing this as "student behaviors" to indicate that this was the primary stressor for the participant.

As the transcripts were being reviewed and commented on, the researcher started sorting them into broad categories and then refined them into more specific themes under subheadings. The statements were color coded to identify which category they represented and then copy and pasted into another document so that everything under the main category was together in one central location. Having all the statements of one category in a central place allowed the researcher to explore deeper the emerging themes using axial coding.

The seven initial categories that emerged were training (coded yellow), experience (coded green), extrinsic motivators (coded purple), stress and challenges of the job (coded gray), intrinsic motivators (coded red), support systems (coded dark green) and strategies and advice for success (coded teal). After sorting all highlighted statements into these eight broad categories, the researcher went back through the statements reading and clarifying their intent and making additional notes in the margins as needed. In doing so, more specific, themes appeared under each category through axial coding.

In the category of *training* the themes that emerged were *formal education, formal training for working in residential, and professional development. Experience* had three themes that were revealed: *years of experience, negative public-school experiences, and external experiences. Extrinsic motivators* was the next area examined and in this broad category three themes emerged: *pay, time off/schedule, and convenience*. The next category, *stress and challenges of the job*, was broken up into five themes: *transient nature of youth and variety of*

student levels, behaviors, staff issues, coping skills, and additional duties. Intrinsic motivators had five themes comprised of: *personal experience/connection to the work, religious calling, autonomy, student progress/making a difference, passion for teaching, and internal belief structure.* The next category that emerged from the coding was *support systems.* Within this area, the themes that emerged were: *teacher comradery, administration support, education being valued in residential, and culture and climate.* Finally, *strategies and advice for success* emerged as the last broad category. In this category there were no subthemes.

Trustworthiness

Dependability

Dependability for the study was established through a code-recode strategy and through expert scholarly peer review. As the researcher went through the study, line by line coding was used to identify key insights in participant answers. Axial coding was then used, and the statements were grouped together into common categories and then reanalyzed for more specific themes. This code-recode strategy allowed for specific categories and then themes to be identified through the research.

Once the data was sorted into categories and themes, the notes were sent to a peer expert in the field for review. This expert conducted a scholarly review of the notes and shared with the researcher the themes that they identified in the statements. Both the researcher and the peer expert agreed upon the final themes shared in chapter four.

Purposive Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants for the study. Emails were sent to the administrators at the different residential facilities in east and middle Tennessee asking them to identify teachers who had been working in residential for five years or more. Administrators sent back a list of teachers' names and contact information. The researcher then contacted each teacher to inquire about their ability to participate in the study. Participation in the study was voluntary and all participants singed a consent form.

Confirmability

Triangulation was used to confirm findings in the study. Major themes that presented themselves were confirmed with findings from the literature review. A full discussion of the various themes identified, and which ones were able to be confirmed in the literature is shared in chapter five.

Several participants asked to receive a copy of the final dissertation so they could review the research and work to make positive changes in their own programs. Participants will receive copies of this study upon completion of the research process.

Summary

Teacher turnover in secure residential settings is an issue effecting educational services for youth confined to these settings. Many of the staff do not seem to have the resiliency, skills, preparation or energy to perform in such a trying environment. Despite this, there are teachers who provide exemplary educational services in these same settings year after year and

demonstrate tremendous dedication to the field. Identifying the factors that lead to teacher retention in secure residential settings is a critical first step in providing quality educational services to neglected and delinquent youth. This idea is at the heart of this phenomenological study on teacher retention in residential secure settings. The goal is to determine a clear understanding of what factors, perspective, or idea allow for greater teacher retention. These findings can then be used by facility administrators as they construct high quality education environments for youth in confinement and improve their teacher retention. This will ultimately result in more qualified teachers that are more satisfied in their roles, providing educational services to our most vulnerable youth. These qualified teachers are integral to ensuring that youth in confinement have equal access to the same quality educational services as their peers in public school.

Chapter 4. Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to identify the factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. Three supporting research questions accompanied the central research questions, how do residential teachers perceive they are supported in their position, what are the residential teacher's perceptions of the work culture in the secure residential setting, and what factors are associated with teacher retention in secure residential centers.

The fifteen participants received gender specific aliases and a participant number:

Table 1

Participant Pseudonym List

Alias	Participant #
Heather	1
Jessica	2
Brett	3
Nancy	4
Mike	5
Erin	6
Jackie	7
Dawn	8
Angela	9
Phil	10
Kendra	11
Donna	12
Betsy	13
Melanie	14
Steve	15

Participant Profiles

Eleven females and four males participated in the study. The majority of the participants attended college in Tennessee and had a special education teaching endorsement. Most of the participants worked at psychiatric residential treatment centers in the state working with students who were placed for significant behavioral and mental health treatment. The majority of the programs had multiple teachers on staff and served greater than 30 students. Only two teachers reported being the only teacher on staff. The programs were all privately owned and operated, but there was a mix of profit and non-profit programs. The range of teaching experience was from five years to 37 years. The majority of participants had been teaching in a secure residential setting between 10-20 years.

All participants engaged easily during interviews and provided deep and rich expressions of data related to the research topic. Participants appeared comfortable in answering all questions and seemed eager to help this body of research.

Analysis of the Data

At the conclusion of each interview the transcription was analyzed and line by line coding was used to identify key statements and insights about the participants' perceptions. The researcher then evaluated each statement the participant made and created notes using the comment feature in Microsoft word to summarize participant data. Each relevant line was then highlighted in a different color to identify the category it represented.

Axial coding was used as a secondary analysis of data to refine the emerging themes. From this analysis, themes were sorted into these more specific topic areas. Finally, summary

notes were created at the end of each sub-section capturing the overall thoughts and perceptions of participants.

Interview Analysis

The following section provides a breakdown of the seven categories that emerged: *training, experience, extrinsic motivators, stress and challenges of the job, intrinsic motivators, support systems, and strategies and advice for success*. In each section, the overall category was analyzed for common themes. From each category three to five more specific themes emerged from the coding.

Training

In the category of *training* the themes that emerged were*: formal education, formal training for working in residential,* and *professional development*. *Formal education* included any statements that referred to undergraduate and graduate work and included statements about student teaching. These statements were very straightforward in nature. For example, Heather reported, "My undergraduate school was at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky and I majored in agriculture education." Another participant reported, "I attended college for psychology for undergrad. I then returned to here for my teaching, one for Masters of teaching, along with a minor for special education". A final example of formal education is in this statement from Dawn, "Well, I came into the back door because my first degree is in fine arts. I have a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University." In all of the examples provided the answers are to the point and very factual in nature, providing the researcher with a glimpse into the formal education each participant completed.

Participants did not have great commonality in the type of formal education they pursued. Most attended teacher preparation programs, but there was not consistency in the type of endorsement participants sought. Location of the school, size of the school, and when they went to school varied among the participants, indicating that there may not be much significance as to where one attends college in determining if they will be successful in a secure, residential setting.

The next subtheme in training, *formal training for working in residential*, included any statements about their coursework that specifically prepared them to work in a residential setting. Regardless of where the participants attended college, a common theme that did emerge is that most participants felt that their schooling did not specifically prepare them to work in a secure residential setting. Only one participant could make a clear connection between the preparation program they participated in and the work in residential. This was due to the fact they had an instructor who had worked in a secure residential setting and drew from their experiences there to share with the class.

Many of the participants did perceive that their college coursework in special education and in psychology had been beneficial to helping them in their current setting. Overall, the majority of participants reported that they learned most of what they needed to know about working in residential setting from on-the-job experience and training.

Several reported that the key to learning how to be successful in a secure residential setting was to find someone that was already doing a good job at the facility and modeling ones behavior after that person. For example, Erin commented, "I don't feel it could have prepared me" when discussing her formal education and Donna reported, "no, I don't think it was geared towards working in residential." Several other participants simply responded "no" or "no, none

at all" to the question in the interview that asked them specifically about their formal training and if it prepared them to work in a residential setting.

Participants also described learning on the job when they got into residential or referenced coursework in special education and psychology as being beneficial. This example is shown in Phil's response, "I just watched people and tried to, you know, model myself after what I thought was, what worked" and in Brett's response, "a cognitive psychology course and then because I was doing because my certificate was going to be K through 12 then we had to do, Adolescent Psychology as well. And so, I think that those courses probably were, were the most helpful in preparing me for this."

Professional development, the next theme in *training*, included statements that described the different types of training the teacher had received in the field. It is important to note that in all cases positive and negative statements were highlighted. In discussing professional development with the participants, two big themes emerged, internal professional development and external professional development. Many of the participants reported an appreciation for the internal training that they had received at the agency they worked in and perceived it as beneficial. Several participants discussed the behavior management training that they used at the program such as Handle with Care or Therapeutic Crises Intervention training. Others appreciated clinical trainings that were offered at the program such as Trauma Informed Care. As Dawn discusses, "Lately, it's been a lot of work in trauma informed care."

The majority of participants reported that they had opportunities to attend professional development outside the facility and the most common opportunity reported was the Partners in Education (PIE) conference, hosted by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) each winter. Participants reported that this training has a heavy emphasis on special education which

they found beneficial. Kendra shared this positive account describing the amount of opportunities she had been given in comparison to educators in the general education setting:

> Actually, I probably working there, I've had probably more than I would in public school and because like I said, I have two brothers that work in public school and they're jealous of my professional development because we get this special education grant every year. So, we're, we go to the PIE conference yearly and since we've gotten the Title One funding, we've been able to go to the LEAD conference and for the last two years. And then last year, we went to the non-public training.

Participants reported attending other trainings as well, but there was a common theme of these opportunities being irrelevant. Many of the other professional development activities were not strongly connected to the work they were doing in their classrooms and in their facilities. As Melanie describes, "The problem is when you bring people in from the outside as guest speakers, they are used to a regular school district, public school or a private school such as, you know, a Christian School or one of the other private schools, they're not used to the difficulties inherent in an RTC so they're not coming from that aspect. They, they just, they don't seem to understand that, yes, we're a school and yes these are necessary things, but these things have a tendency not to work in our setting."

Experience

The next large category of *experience* contained the following themes: *years of experience, negative public-school experiences,* and *external experience*. *Years of experience* referred to both the number of years of teaching experience the participants had as a whole and the specific number of years they had been teaching in residential. For a few of the educators that

included more than one residential experience. Again, as with formal education, these comments tended to be very straightforward in their response referencing a specific number of years. For example, Heather reported, "a little over 13 years" when asked how many years she had been working in residential and Jackie reported, "I'm at 23 years."

An interesting trend in *years of experience* was the longevity of the individual teachers in the programs. This was surprising as it took quite a bit of work to find teachers that had been in a secure residential setting for five years or more, but once they were found they revealed themselves to have substantial longevity in the programs. Several teachers reported working in residential for over 20 years with the highest number being 32 years in residential.

Negative public-school experience was the next theme of experience and was an interesting trend that emerged from the coding. Several of the participants had worked in a public-school environment and had negative experiences that they shared. This revelation was interesting because there was no direct question about this in the interview protocol other than a broad question asking them to talk about their career in education. Responses in this section described not being supported by their administrators in the public school, being overlooked for employment and promotion opportunities, and perceptions of a negative environment in the public school. For example, Steve reported about his experience in the public-school system in the following manner:

> And it was really difficult. And I couldn't maintain the classroom. They just pretty much just like were so unruly I couldn't teach them hardly anything. The only time that you know there would be some order into the classroom was that when the TA she would

come in, but she was nice, but really firm and loud person and you know they, they

cowered to her. So that that year, just, it was horrible. It was a horrible, horrible year.

Jessica shared another negative story from teaching in a public school, recounting her

first year of teaching where she took a substitute teaching position:

I got an interim position as a seventh and eighth grade math teacher in Sussex School

District. Um, it, it was a little bit of a mess. I walked into a classroom mid-September that

it was sub for three weeks for a teacher that had lost her licensure. So, there was a bit of

bitterness, where she had left, and I got treated more like a spot filler than a new teacher.

I was just given a pacing guide and here's your scores from last year, here's the rule book

and the grade book and the, you know, planning book from the teacher that left before

and, and that's kind of what I got. And it was a hard year. I struggled with behavior

modification. I had some kids that really, when, you know when I went seeking help, and

I would hear their back stories, and I would just be like, why didn't somebody tell me this

to start with.

In addition, several reported negative perceptions of working in a public school even

though they themselves had never worked in one, as Phil describes, "And then you remind

yourself that you probably wouldn't function well in a public setting." Another participant

gained her perceptions from friends who worked in the public system, "I had friends in the

public schools and they work pretty much all year and a lot of them had to work summer jobs

and I just didn't feel like doing that."

The final theme that emerged in the broad category of *experience* was *external*

experiences. Several of the participants discussed outside experiences with different agencies.

The theme for these responses was they perceived that these jobs helped them to understand the overall operation of the programs and improve their behavior management skills before they entered the classroom. For example, Brett reported that he had worked for a child welfare agency as a case manager prior to teaching at the facility. He reported that this experience prepared him for working with and understanding the underlying causes behind student behavior. Another participant shared a similar experience working for the Department of Children's Services, "I took a hiatus from teaching for a few years, right before I came here and I wanted to, I just wanted to see what social work was like, and I wound up being a foster care case manager with DCS. Obviously the experience that DCS was, was the biggest you know."

Others reported that they had jobs with the facility prior to securing a full-time teaching. Kendra reported, "No, I actually was a teacher assistant at [the facility] where I'm at now. And I just happened to get that job because I, they actually asked me to do that job because I was a direct care." Donna reported a similar experience of having prior experience at the facility in her statement, "So that's kind of how I went into it and I actually didn't go straight into the classroom. I actually went in to be like life skills coordinator and then moved into the role of being a teacher."

Extrinsic Motivators

Extrinsic Motivators was the next category examined. In this broad category three themes emerged: *pay, time off/schedule, and convenience*. The subtheme of *pay* is compiled from any comments the participants had about pay in the facility, both negative and positive. Participants were asked how their pay and benefits compared to those of their peers in public schools in the region. There was a negative theme among participants reporting that they were not being

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compensated adequately for the work they performed. Almost all of the participants reported that they were not compensated equally to their peers in the public school when taking into account that they are working during the summer months and have fewer scheduled breaks throughout the year. Several expressed bitterness over this and mentioned that they perceived the programs as having the money to pay more but did not out of concern it would damage their profits.

In one statement, Donna reported a significant gap in pay and benefits, "They really don't compare. I don't, you really can't compare the two. I think residential definitely is underpaid. In so many aspects in terms of retirement, in terms of even health insurance, in terms of financial compensation." Jackie reported a similar lack of compensation, "you're not getting the pay, you're not, you don't have the supports either that you'd have in a public school." Phil reported a similar perception of his compensation, "in general the pay the pay for teachers has been substandard. It's been because we go year-round."

The next theme that emerged were statements regarding *time off* and their schedule. Most of these answers were given when participants were talking about the pay at their school, the participants discussed the limited time off and the extra work days when compared to the public school. Again, the common theme here was that participants appeared dissatisfied with the amount of time off they received in comparison to their peers in public school. Kendra offers the following words on this:

> If teachers do desire this that they need to understand they're not, it's not going to be like
> the public schools. You know, there's, there is no pay, well we get PTO, but there's no
> summer break. There's no Summer Break and it's a year-round program. So, you know,
> of course, we can take our PTO time if needed, or as we want, of course, but
> understanding that it's, and it's a little different in that aspect.

Jackie reports having similar perceptions of the compensation not equating to the days worked, "We're not really paid the equivalent of what you'd be paid to work, you're working on Christmas Break, you're working on Spring Break, Fall Break So really, I think your motivation has to be pretty intrinsic to stay with it." In another comment, one of the participants shared similar feelings, "for one thing we're year round, no summers off or anything like that" This theme emerged again with a comment by Heather who compared her time off to those of her peers in public schools, "So they have a Fall Break and I don't. I just have the PTO, the only thing I have are the holidays. And I think there's several a year."

Convenience was the final theme that emerged from the larger category of *extrinsic motivators*. This theme encompassed a wide variety of topics with the overall theme of factors that made it attractive or easier to stay in the secure residential setting as opposed to venturing out into a different setting. Many of the participants reported that the facility accommodated their schedule when they needed a day off or had a family emergency. Several also reported that they felt comfortable and valued in their jobs and that this led to their longevity in the program. For example, Jackie described that she enjoyed the scheduling flexibility the program provided her so that she could care for her child if she needed to. Steve described being afraid to leave out of fear of failing in the public sector. Still, in a third response, Dawn stated that she enjoyed how close the facility was to their home, making for an easy commute as described in her statement, "I live very close to the schools. It's another reason why it's so convenient to work here."

Stress and Challenges of the Job

Stress and challenges of the job was the next category examined and it was broken up into five themes: *transient nature of youth and variety of student levels, behaviors, staff issues, coping skills, and additional duties*. The first theme, which was comprised of comments

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regarding the *transient nature of the youth and the variety of student levels*, reflects an inherit challenge of secure residential facilities. Programs like these serve students for only a part of their educational career. Most of the participants described their programs as being a three to six-month program for students. This means that students who are in need of treatment and behavioral modification come into the program for only a short period of time before returning to their school of origin. Additionally, none of the participants described a set enrollment period, which means that students were entering and exiting the program on a continuous basis, adding to the challenges of the job. Mike summed this up with his comment, "Probably the biggest challenge is the rotation of kids in and out." Another participant commented, "The number one challenge is that most of the kids that we get here that are in state custody have huge gaps in their education. However, the local school system is requiring them to be on grade level." One participant described the short stays in the following manner, "you've only got them for like two or three months and so you're trying so hard to help them academically, because like I said most of them are behind and about the time that you really feel like you're making some, some headway or some progress or you see them making progress, they leave."

Compounding these challenges is that all of the teachers reported that they were teaching multiple grade levels and ability levels within one classroom. A couple of the participants were operating one room schoolhouses in which they had students in grades 7-12, in multiple subjects, and on multiple ability levels within one subject. As Donna described, "I think the most challenging was definitely the different, different grade levels that you teach within one classroom and for, you know, in Tennessee it's a five years, a five-year five grade level span. So within that it's teaching, you know five different grades in one classroom and then within that it was all different ability levels as well." Steve reported various levels as his most challenging

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aspect of the job, "teaching in multiple levels and dealing with all those, well, you know, not just social emotional issues, as you know, as well as they had, like, you know, learning disabilities which made it difficult to take." Angela reported similar challenges, "you have such a variety of abilities and it's sometimes that gets a little bit hard"

All of the secure residential settings that were chosen for the interview serve students with significant behavioral and emotional needs. As a result, *behaviors* were a theme of *stress and challenges of the job.* In this section, participants described the various behavioral challenges they encountered in their work that led to stress. These behaviors were not always physical in nature, but also included emotional stress that students exhibited as well as more passive behaviors such as a lack of motivation to learn or participate in instruction. Betsy described the emotional stress the students go through in this way, "Actually, it's probably dealing with the kids, when they've come back from essentially baring their souls in treatment and they still have to function and lot of times there's not a whole lot of in-between time and it's hard for them. It's hard to keep their attention and it's hard to pull them back in."

One participant reported being assaulted by students in the following manner, "I got knocked out and concussed about three months ago and actually had to go home for the rest of the day." Another participant described the behaviors from younger students as follows, "I worked with the elementary kids, I felt fairly safe. I can't tell you how many times I've been kicked in the back or beaten in the back or knee shins."

Staff issues was another theme that emerged from the coding as a challenge of the job. Participants often described a shortage in staffing issues or an overall incompetence or lack of training of their support staff that were assigned to the classroom to assist with challenging behaviors. In discussing staffing shortages and turnover Phil reported, "It's turnover in general.

Not just with the kids, but with the staff. I can hardly keep abreast of it." Jackie commented on the competency of the staff in the following statement, "That can be really scary. If you have staff that aren't good that worries me a lot. And we've been through that here. And, you know, we had staff that don't watch the kids and then it reflects on you. You're like, I'm part of this facility." Dawn reported not having enough staff in the program, "you know because we're short staffed a lot. That's a problem. Actually, we're down two teachers right now."

Coping skills emerged as another theme that participants discussed when asked about stress management. In this section, any comment that discussed how the participant managed and handled their stress was captured. This section varied in its responses; some participants went to the gym to decompress after work while others used their drive home to relieve stress. Still, others played video games to get their mind off things after a stressful day. There was not a great commonality among the answers reported in this section, but almost all participants were able to point to something they did as a coping skill.

Mike reported, "I draw, and I color, and I literally have one this big filled with nothing but drawings and colorful bits that I've done." Another participant, Angela, reported that physical exercise helps her cope, "So I can leave here as one woman and leave the gym as another. It's good. It's been helping it helps with it with the brain." Steve reported yet another way to relieve stress in the evening, "Well, I played a lot of video games."

Additional duties was the final theme that emerged from the coding of this category. In this theme, participants described the various, additional tasks they had outside of their regular teaching duties. Some reported being on various committees or involved in additional meetings with other departments on the campus. Most participants had a commonality of having additional paperwork for the various roles they played in the facility or to meet other facility requirements.

As Mike describes, "I wear so many hats that lead teacher and principal are usually on the lower end of my list which leads to a lot of stress."

The largest area reported was the additional paperwork that was required for the facility program. For example, one participant reported, "There's more paperwork than just regular school. And so, I think if you come into a facility and you're expecting it to be like public schools and you're not told you know like this is different than then you're going to be in for a rude awaking." Jackie supports this notion of excessive paperwork with her statement, "And it's tough, because there's so many assessments. You have to do it. So, there's so much computer work. Not a lot of time for instruction work."

Intrinsic Motivators

Intrinsic Motivators was the next broad category examined. This category was the largest one, with the greatest number of coded responses. *Intrinsic Motivators* had five themes comprised of *personal experience/connection to the work, religious calling, autonomy, student progress/making a difference, passion for teaching, and an internal belief structure*.

Personal experience and/or connection to the work was a theme that emerged from responses in which the participant discussed personal experiences in their own lives. The common theme that emerged in this area was the background experience of the participants. Many of the participants reported having a personal connection to the work they were doing. Several reported experiencing abuse during their childhood and others reported having behavioral difficulties themselves as they were growing up. Several reported that they could have been a student in a residential setting under different circumstances. The participants perceived this experience as being beneficial in helping them to relate, empathize, and connect with the students and the issues they were going through. They felt it made them more empathetic to the

students' experiences and gave them a better understanding of the hardships and struggles this population often faced with.

For example, one participant described being abused as a child and growing up in a family that had mental health issues. This experience helped him/her to relate to the experiences that many of his/her students are going through as he/she shared here, "I'm honestly a childhood of abuse, honestly. Um, I grew up with a very verbally and physically abusive father and my mother obviously had all these traumas happened as a child, and she's schizophrenic. So, I grew up very much taking care of myself." Another participant described his similar background experiences in the following manner:

Originally I went for psychology because I knew that I liked working with the population type adolescents. Usually I was drawn to the ones who had more intense behavioral and social issues, from my own background. I grew up as trailer park kid, man. I could understand where a lot of them went wrong and ended up in somewhere like this, because I'll be honest, I could have been there, if not by the grace of God myself.

A final statement that helps to capture the shared experiences of this group of teachers is provided here,

At one point, my brothers and sisters and I were in foster care for about a year so my parents could get their life together and things were tough. And but no like, nobody at work really knows that because, you know, you don't want to share too much, but I think it's that determination that I was able to succeed and come out of poverty, come out of stressful situations and connect in a different way. And then, you know, if someone's not

really able to they don't understand where these kids come from. They feel sometimes

frustrated, overwhelmed. And they want it, it's almost like they want to fix the kid rather

than help them with solutions and, and I'm more like I want to give them solutions. And

help them with solutions because that's what gave me the strength and the power to be

where I'm at today, you know, having those opportunities.

Religious calling was the next theme to emerge and was present in both institutions with

and without a religious mission. This theme referred to comments in which participants

described a common theme of being led to or called to this work through a specific religious

purpose. For example, Erin reported that in this section, "I really do think that the Lord led me

there" and Jessica exclaimed, "I feel like that job is my ministry". Other responses that supported

this subcategory included, "I feel that's where the Lord wants me. Yeah, I don't think he wants

me anywhere else. And I've asked him several times, Lord, let me retire" and "So, in hindsight,

you know, I'm glad that that God waited and prepared me a little for my job before I took it or

not have had the staying power".

Autonomy was the next theme that emerged in this category as one of the intrinsic

motivators for working in the program. Several participants reported that this was one of their

favorite aspects of the job. For some this meant having greater flexibility in the curriculum and

pace of instructions while for others it meant that they could spend more one on one time with

the students or spend more time teaching appropriate behaviors. Others reported that they

enjoyed being able to share about their faith with the students. As Erin reports, "But we talk

about the, about Jesus. A lot. We let the girls listen to contemporary Christian, you know music

in the classroom will turn it on." Others, like Kendra, reported they felt that they could spend

more one on one time with students, "I feel like I couldn't do the in depth quality time in a

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residential level that that I could in public school the same way, you know, because really, in the residential setting you get that more one to one more one to one, then you get you're able to in a public school"

Still others liked the flexibility that they had in the curriculum and instruction in their classrooms as Mike describes, "Honestly, I like the freedom from law I get from it. I don't have a whole lot of people looking over my shoulder all the time telling me, Oh, do it this way. Oh, do it that way. I get a lot of freedom in how I provide instructions. Also as effective. It doesn't seem to impact folks, or I'm able to do a lot of the things that helped me to connect with kids in ways that you could probably do."

The largest theme in this section was *student progress/making a difference*. As the name implies, this theme was compiled with remarks about the rewards participants felt by making a difference in the lives of students both academically and behaviorally. There was a strong theme in these statements of participants deriving their motivation and staying power from the successes of their students in their academic and personal accomplishments. For example, Jackie reported, "to like see a kid that thinks I'm never gonna graduate or I'm never gonna pass and then to actually do it is like so rewarding." Her comments reflect the intrinsic reward of seeing a student accomplish an academic task they felt was impossible. Angela reported in this section, "You know, to help them with whatever it is, whether it's education or just in life in general. So, it's a good feeling to know that you've impacted people out there and young girls like that." Her comments reflect the overall life changing difference that these educators are able to make in this type of a setting. Heather reported this theme in the following way, "Being able to feel like I make a difference is the biggest thing that's kept me there. And I don't mind some struggles".

Jessica reported, "Watching kids grow. I get to watch them grow in every way, emotionally, socially, academically I mean, it's like I get to do so much more than just teach them, you know, reading, writing, and arithmetic." One final example comes from Angela, "the rewards definitely outweigh the negatives with this job, and you have that one kid that calls you and says, thank you. It makes it all worthwhile."

Other participants reported that their internal motivation was driven by a *passion for teaching*. Many in this theme recalled wanting to be a teacher from a young age. Participants spoke of a genuine desire and calling to teach others. Donna reported in this section, "I've always wanted to be a teacher. I've always enjoyed helping others, and I really looked up to a few, quite a few teachers that I had when I was a student. So just yeah. Just, just a passion wanting to help others." Melanie reported a similar lifelong passion for teaching, "I've always wanted to be a teacher, since I was four years old."

Mike reported a love for the subject material that brought him into teaching, "Basically just a love for English. That's my first love and I was really undecided as to what I wanted to do, but I had a really, really inspiring English professor at Tennessee Tech and that really got me going, so I wanted to teach literature. So American literature is my love."

Internal belief structure was the final theme in this category. Remarks in this theme were very similar to some of the remarks in the seeing student progress/making a difference theme but reflected more of a philosophy of how the participants approached their life and work rather than student specific examples. For example, Brett reported, "the number one would be the thing I've already touched on, you have, you must have an underlying philosophy to see people as, as valid and worthy." His comments reflect his philosophy to approaching students and what he perceived as helping him to be effective in this field for so long. Angela related her philosophy

and calling to the job to her maternal instincts, "I think a lot of it just being a strong female. I mean, I think that, that helps me more than anything, because I see that and then having a daughter. And, you know, bringing those maternal instincts into it because, you know, a lot of times you do have to treat these kids like they're your kids." A final example provided by Jessica discusses having an underlying reason to stay in residential, "But I think the staying power is you have to be there has to be a reason you're there, other than just education."

Support Systems

The next category that emerged from the coding was *support systems*. Within this category, the themes that emerged were *teacher comradery, administration support, education being valued in residential, and culture and climate*. *Teacher comradery* was the first theme that emerged. The largest finding in this area was a trend in positive teacher comradery. The teachers perceived that they had great support among their peers and utilized their peers frequently to brainstorm ideas and for emotional support. This was evidenced by the use of words like "family" and "team" to describe how close they were to their fellow teachers.

Donna described the family atmosphere in her interview, "I like the team aspect in terms of it, it was just a close-knit family." Brett describes the team atmosphere in the following way, "We basically every day we, we sit down and have lunch together. And, you know, we will share ideas, you know if anybody, if one of us needs something from one of the other teachers, they're there, they're very willing to grant it. You know, the cooperation level here is pretty high." Erin described the supportive environment of her coworkers in the following way, "I know that every staff that's there, we've got each other's back so to speak. Like if we if we hear another classroom having a disruption or anything. One member from our class, either the teacher or the assistant, will go run immediately." One final example of the support provided by other teachers comes

from Jackie, "it's good to have that support system and teachers are really good for that too. You know, like if I'm having a lot of trouble with a particular student, I can count on them to back me up. And I think that's huge to feel like you've got support."

Administration support was the next theme to emerge from the coding. In this theme participants spoke about their perceived support from the administrations. Comments included both the school's administration and the administration of the facility as a whole. In several cases, the administrator for the program as a whole was the same administrator for the school. Comments included both negative and positive perceptions of the administrators support. Perceived administrative support varied from participant to participant. Several participants exclaimed that they did not have enough resources in their classrooms and school, while others felt supported. Several participants also reported that the turnover in the head administrative position was extremely high. Several teachers reported they had a different lead administrator for every year they were there.

Nancy offers a positive perception with her comment, "my vice principal was my mentor…she was a teacher there for several years before, and so, I mean, honest to goodness, just a godsend!" Another participant reported the following when asked about the leadership in the program, "They made me feel valued, they made me employee of the month after I'd been there about month"

Others had negative perceptions, often tied around the fact that the administrators were changed frequently. Mike describes, "We go through a lot of transitions on the administrative side. Over the time I've been here I've been under six different people. We average about a year, year and a half is a person's stay." Another participant commented, "This is the 30th CEO I've seen in 32 years."

Education being valued in residential was the next theme that emerged from the coding of this category. Comments in this area discussed communication issues where education was not involved in discussion regarding key issues and as a result caused undue stress in the school. All of the programs represented in the study have multiple departments that interact with the students. There was typically an administrative office, a nursing department, a clinical department, an education department, and a daily living department. Participants described that when these departments do not communicate with each other it resulted in unwarranted stress.

For example, Betsy described a time when the clinical department was not properly communicating with the school. As a result, students would come back from highly emotional therapy sessions and enter the classroom distraught. The teacher would be left to figure out what was going on with the student, what they needed, and how to help them cope. This seemed to lead to much discontent in the interviews. In addition, many of the participants felt like school was not a valued team member in the facility. They perceived the administration of the program placing an importance on the clinical programs and daily living programs and that the teacher's contributions were seen as inferior. This led to some discontent with several of the participants.

In another example, Dawn describes this undervalued concept in the following way:

> Well, I wish that the, um, the corporation could see how important the school is because we do keep the kids busy for six and a half hours a day. So, we see the kids more than the therapists. We see the kids almost as much as the youth care workers. And so we wish that the, the school was not a secondary thing, we're like the redheaded stepchild, they only have school because they're legally required to provide it because it's a residential facility and the kids aren't allowed to leave so they need to.

Breakdowns in communication was evident in this statement by Betsy, "Well, the clinical are not as consistent about telling us when there's a particular problem." Melanie provides a final account of the disconnect that can occur:

Once you don't put education as a priority. Yes, being part of the residential treatment center there are times that treatment needs to come first, because we can't teach a child if we can't get them into the classroom due to their behaviors and their trauma. So, there are times that treatment has to come first. But there is also a case that there are times that education needs to be the forefront of what is going on in that child's life. And you just have to be able to balance that and you had some administrators who believe that their degree was the end all be all and who said that their master's degree was better than my master's degree because it was in the therapy end of it. Whereas, mine is in education, of course, whereas I believe that the two are codependent upon each other in that setting.

Culture and Climate emerged as another theme in this broader category and referred to the overall feeling and mission that the participants perceived as being part of the organization. Comments in this area were not complimentary of the organization. There was a trend of participants perceiving the culture as being financially oriented instead of student oriented. As Phil describes, "the company now is more focused on the bottom line and getting kids in." Brett had a similar assessment of the culture, "It is first and foremost a corporate culture. Around the corporate concerns always come first." Melanie discussed her time at the program in the following manner, "Towards the end it was, how can we make money you, how can we make more money you need to fill census, whether or not you have the staff to fill it or whether the facility is safe."

Strategies and Advice for Success

The final broad category was *strategies and advice for success*. This area did not have any themes. General comments made by the participants on advice they had for others being successful and keys to lasting more than five years in residential were included in this section. The advice in this section focused around starting each day as a new one. A good example of this type of advice comes from Betsy:

Just remember that tomorrow is a new day. And it's true every single day. So, if you've had a rotten one, don't just think you've done everything wrong. Just keep plugging at what you think is going to be the best thing. Because sometimes, nothing works, and then other times, things go along very smoothly. So just to be flexible and not to give up. And not to get discouraged, even though you do sometimes, but not stay that way. It's great.

Kendra shared similar advice about each day being a new start:

I would tell them to keep a journal. You know, have good and bad days and because there will be a lot of bad days, but there will also be a lot of good days. And I would say build relationships with your direct care because a lot of facilities do have direct care that come in and out of classroom. Develop that relationship because those are the people that if you're in a situation and you don't want to be the one to be in the restraint, they'll more likely support you and help you with the behaviors and, and usually those therapist. So, build a relationship with the therapist because they've helped me a lot like I said with the boys understanding them and, and really having the support outside of the, outside of the job. Making sure that you have a lot of self-care and activities for yourself after work, you know, leave your work at work.

Donna provides more advice that helps to reiterate the theme of starting each day anew:

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I would say do your best every single day as I don't think that there is a day in residential

that you can just half-heartedly be there. You've kind of got to give it everything you've

got and, and it can be emotionally draining. But it's so important that you do try and give

it everything you've got because the kids definitely feed off that energy that you have. So,

depending on how much energy you bring in, into that classroom and into work that day.

That's how, that's what how the kids are going to act. That's how they definitely feed off

your energy and then I would say take time out for yourself to do things that you enjoy

doing like different types of hobbies and, and then try and disconnect from work and you

know if that just switching off the phone or, you know, just having that off period and

being able to spend it at home or with the people that you love and, you know, just to de-

stress and then try and bring it. Everything that you have the next day. Get enough sleep,

Summary of Data Analysis

Fifteen interviews were conducted with teachers who had been teaching in a secure

residential setting for five years or more. These interviews occurred during the months of June,

July, and August 2020 and were recorded and transcribed using the Zoom platform. From there,

the transcripts were first coded by highlighting key statements and describing them in the

margins. These statements were then organized by seven broad categories. The statements were

then analyzed again and broken down into themes within those seven broad categories. Most

broad categories ended up with three to five themes..

The seven categories that emerged in the initial coding of the interviews were *training,*

experience, extrinsic motivators, stress and challenges of the job, intrinsic motivators, support

systems, and strategies and advice for success. Below is a summary of the themes that emerged in each of the broad categories.

Training

- *formal education*

- *formal training for working in residential*

- *professional development.*

Experience

- *years of experience*

- *negative public-school experiences*

- *external experiences*

Extrinsic motivators

- *pay*

- *time off/schedule*

- *convenience*

Stress and challenges of the job

- *transient nature of youth and variety of student levels*

- *behaviors*

- *staff issues*

- *coping skills*

- *additional duties*

Intrinsic motivators

- *personal experience/connection to the work*

- *religious calling*

- *autonomy*

- *student progress/making a difference*

- *passion for teaching*

- *internal belief structure*

Support systems

- *teacher comradery*

- *administration support*

- *education being valued in residential*

- *culture and climate*

Strategies and advice for success

These themes provided key insights into why individuals stayed in residential settings and what factors they felt like could be improved upon to encourage others to stay in the field longer

Chapter 5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to identify the factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. This was guided by three central questions. In Chapters 1, 2, and 3 the researcher introduced the topic and the research question, provided a literature review on the topic, and described the phenomenological methodology the researcher would be using to conduct the study. Chapter 4 analyzed the results of the study and the categories and common themes that emerged from the coded interview. In this chapter, chapter 5, the researcher will present the study findings, conclusions, implications, and suggestions for further research.

The results from this study are supported by the findings in the literature review. Formal training, professional development, the stress of working with a transient group of students, compensation, education not being valued in a secure residential setting, and an intrinsic motivators were all common themes that emerged in the research and had strong roots in the literature review. Administration support was the only area that did not appear to have a strong correlation.

Formal training was identified in the literature review as being needed to support educators in secure residential settings. Geurin and Lou Dentin (1999) report teacher preparation programs rarely provide the training and resources that are needed for educators working in alternative educational programs. The literature review showed that there are few, if any, formal education programs that prepare educators for working in a secure residential setting. This

finding was supported in the research with all but one educator reporting that they did not have any formal coursework that prepared them to work in a secure residential setting.

Developing a strong professional development curriculum within a secure residential setting is mentioned in the literature review as a strong practice for supporting teacher development. Weaver (2017) concludes that with a lack of teacher preparation programs exposing upcoming teachers to this environment and a lack of professional development offerings at the district and state level, much of the professional development responsibilities may fall to the administrators in the facility. During the interviews this concept was supported as the majority of participants discussed internal professional development as being relevant and meaningful as opposed to external professional development. Participants often cited their crisis management training in TCI or HWC.

Stressors associated with working with a transient group of students was the next theme that emerged that was strongly supported in the literature. Multiple teachers made comments about the stress of planning and teaching to a constantly moving target. This aligns with Koyama (2012) findings which found that although behavioral concerns are evident in a JDC classroom, the larger concern was the transient nature of the students. Although teachers mentioned student behaviors in the interviews, these never seemed to be critical points for them. Teachers discussed student behaviors in a factual manner that seemed to imply that was just part of the job and to be expected.

Compensation was a common theme in the interviews that was also supported in the literature review. In particular, the majority of responses in this area were not asking for more compensation than their peers in a public school but just to be paid on an equal level, factoring in

the extra days they work over the summer and break times. This connects to Wofords (2002) research where he found detention centers in Alabama that were able to compensate their teachers based on a 235-day contract as opposed to the typical 182-day contract in public schools. This increase in compensation led to greater retention in the facility as they reported that they had not experienced issues with teacher turnover.

The disconnect between the entire facility and the education program was prominent in both the literature review and the interview responses as well as struggles with the entire residential setting being the primary stressor. Participants made multiple comments about education not being valued in the residential setting and the staffing issues they faced with their front-line staff. This mirrors the literature review finding in the Journal of Correctional Education (2010) that found teachers in juvenile detention centers had significant issues with the overall system they were working in rather than the students they were working with.

Intrinsic motivators were also supported in the literature. There were a number of comments made by the participants describing the reward they felt from helping the students succeed both academically and personally. In addition, many of the participants described being able to relate and empathize with the students. This notion of a personal mission is best captured in the literature review when Martin (2014) shares findings that teachers in high poverty middle schools often stayed because of their own internal belief system and the intrinsic reward they received from students demonstrating progress

Administrative support was the only theme that did not seem to fully correlate with the between the participants responses and the literature review. The participant's responses discussed both positive and negative examples of administrative leadership, but there were only

two accounts that attributed the leadership of their administration as being a reason why they stayed in the program. Most participants seemed to thrive despite their administration's support and reported having a new administrator every year or a sense of apathy from the administration towards the education department at the facility. Their ability to thrive in an educational environment that is not led by a dynamic leader seems to contradict the many findings in the literature review that point to strong administrative support as a key element to the success of the teacher. For example, Holmes (2019) and Hughes (2012) both found in their research that principals are vital to increasing teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools, but this study found a common theme of teachers thriving despite that lack of support.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors associated with job retention among teachers in secure residential treatment centers in Tennessee. There were three central research questions that drove this study. From the interviews with participants and subsequent coding, the researcher was able to better understand the perceptions of teachers in secure residential settings that led to greater teacher retention. Findings from this study will benefit future efforts to retain quality teachers in secure residential settings. Below, the conclusions for each of the three research questions are provided.

Research Question 1: How do residential teachers perceive they are supported in their position?

Participants described their perceived support in one of two ways. They described how they were supported by their administration and how they were supported by their colleagues in the program. Administrative support had both positive and negative answers and, as described in

the previous section, was not a significant factor in determining if a teacher stayed in residential for more than five years. Many of the teachers described leadership that turned over every year and several participants described a leadership that was apathetic towards the educational program.

Support provided by the teacher's colleagues was a significant factor in the teacher's decision to stay with the program. All but one teacher reported having strong relationships with the other teachers and staff in the program. Even in programs where the teacher was operating a one room schoolhouse and was the only teacher on staff, they reported that they had close relationships with the other support staff at the program. Many of the participants used terms like "family" and "team" or phrases like "we look after each other" or "we have each other's" back to describe how they felt about their colleagues and how they supported one another.

Research Question 2: What are the residential teacher perceptions of the work culture in the secure residential setting?

The teachers' perceptions of the work culture in the residential setting was a challenging and complex perception to collect and understand for several reasons. First, many of the teachers reported that the culture of the organization changed over time and they described frequent changes in the culture from negative to positive. This can be attributed to the high turnover rate among the administrators. Other teacher described a culture that was more of a corporate culture and used phrases like "heads in beds" and "greed" to describe how they perceived the culture of the organization. Most of the participants described feeling safe, despite the fact that they are working with students with significant behavioral challenges and reporting incidences of violence from the students.

The researcher concluded that there is a subculture in the facility that supported the teacher's length of stay rather than the overall culture of the organization. Almost all of the teachers reported having very strong comradery with their colleagues. There is an immediate support group for the teacher that creates a positive subculture that allowed them to stay. In many cases, this was the education department itself. The teachers in the education program were able to create a subculture that was independent of the culture of the entire organization and independent of the administration. With the high turnover rate in the facilities leadership and front-line staff, this was born out of necessity.

Research Question 3: What factors are associated with teacher retention in secure residential centers?

There were two main factors that were associated with teacher retention. The first was an internal belief system and a value of students succeeding and the second was the comradery among the teacher's peer group. First, having a strong internal belief system and internal desire to see students succeed and make a difference in the lives of children was the number one factor behind a teacher's success and retention in the field of residential. Residential environments have a host of variables that can make it unstable, from a new group of students to a new administrative staff, to high front line staff turnover. Teachers that were able to focus on the work they were doing with the students and the difference they were making in the lives of students had the best chance of staying in residential for five years or more. This calling can come from a religious calling, a personal belief structure, or from having similar experiences to the students they are serving. Whatever the reason, as long as the individual truly feels a sense of

reward from helping to change the lives of others, they are able to succeed longer than their peers.

The second key perception to teacher retention in a secure residential setting was the comradery they felt with their peer group. Almost all participants reported having very strong support from their fellow teachers and staff that they worked with. They expressed in the interviews that they felt accepted by their peers and that they could rely on them to vent after a long, hard day, that they could brainstorm ideas with them, and they could rely on them for emotional support. This comradery that is formed helped them put a bad day into perspective and give them the strength to carry on. To summarize, the key to retention was the teacher believing they made a difference and having a peer group to support them.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations to increase teacher retention in secure residential settings are taken from participant's interviews and subsequent coding. The perceptions and beliefs of educators that have worked in a residential setting for more than five years offer valuable insight into how to keep and retain educators in this environment. Five recommendations are offered in this section:

- Create a structure that intentionally celebrates and highlights student and staff successes.
- Create a workplace culture that values the educational division.
- Foster teacher and staff comradery.
- Provide administrative support to assist with collecting student records and additional paperwork placed on teachers.

- Provide higher compensation or restructure the school calendar to allow for more time off.

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the coding of the interviews was the intrinsic reasons for working in residential. Teachers tended to stay because they truly held a strong desire and belief system that they could make a difference in the lives of students. Administrators in facilities should intentionally celebrate this by creating routine celebrations for student success. Holding weekly ceremonies for students that have made progress that week, holding graduation ceremonies for a student who is getting ready to discharge from a program, inviting students back to speak at the campus after they have discharged, and publishing success stories in an internal newsletter are all ways to honor the work of the students and teachers and help to reinforce the reasons these educators are in the field.

Administrators in secure residential facilities are also recommended to create a workplace culture that values the educational division. Many of the educators interviewed perceived education as being overlooked in the facility and not valued. They reported feeling second to the clinical or daily living department and seen more as a required component of the residential system rather than a valued team member. By placing more of a value on the contributions of this department administrators can increase the job satisfaction of teachers in the school. When educators feel valued in their roles and feel like they are part of the team, they will be more likely to stay in their current job.

Fostering teacher and staff comradery is another recommendation that may create greater teacher retention in secure residential facilities. Teacher and staff comradery were a common theme among almost all participants interviewed. These connections appeared to happen

organically in most cases with the teachers forging these relationships informally. If administrators assisted with this process by providing structured events such as holiday get togethers, birthday celebrations, group dinners, and team building activities they could build upon a strength of the group and create an even more cohesive group of educators.

A common stressor that multiple participants shared was the transient nature of the youth they serve and the amount of paperwork they were required to complete. Providing administrative support to assist with collecting student records and additional paperwork placed on teachers is a great way to relieve stress on the teachers and allow them to focus their attention on what is most important, teaching the students. Although the transient nature of the students is an inherent staple of the residential program, having a dedicated person that can assist with transitioning students into life at the program and collecting their student records would help educators to know where to start with the student's education. This would not only free up time for teachers but would also have the benefit of relieving any undue frustration on the student while they await placement in their courses.

A final recommendation is to provide higher compensation or restructure the school calendar to allow for more time off. The majority of the educators believed that their compensation was less than that of their peers in the public-school setting, especially when summer break, fall break, winter break, and spring break were factored in. Teachers perceived that they were working these days but not receiving compensation for them. If administrators are able to increase teacher pay to compensate for these additional days, it will increase teacher satisfaction and help with retention. In the event that the facility is unable to raise teacher pay, they should consider restructuring their school calendar so that it more closely aligns with that of the public

school. Although most facilities represented in this study were required to provide summer school, they should still be able to allow for the traditional fall, winter, and summer breaks. If coverage is needed for the students during this time they should consider hiring additional front-line staff for those breaks.

Summer school is typically required in a residential setting, but administrators may be able to look at shortening the length of the school day during the summer, providing a week off in the middle of summer school, or rotating teacher time off so that each teacher is able to take additional time off during the summer months. These breaks would not only help to bring the teachers schedule in line with that of their peers, but would also have the added benefit of providing teachers with a chance to decompress and spend some time away from their work, which could help to prevent burnout.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is the recommendation of the principal investigator that further research continue in the area of teacher retention in secure residential setting. Specifically, further research should be conducted in the area of for profit vs. non-profit programs, program size, teacher compensation, administrator training and turnover in residential programs, and characteristics of effective teacher groups in residential settings. By completing further research in these three areas, researchers can gain a more specific understanding of the underlying factors that support teacher retention in secure residential settings.

It is recommended that research be conducted examining the difference in teacher retention at for profit versus non-profit residential facilities to see if there is a significant

difference in teacher retention. The facilities examined in this research were comprised of both types of programs, but there was not a systematic approach to determine if teacher retention was greater at one type of program over the other. A quantitative analysis examining years of experience in each type of program may prove to be beneficial in learning key insights into teacher retention in this area.

Program size is another area that could provide some key insights into teacher retention. The participants in this study came from a variety of different programs, some serving fewer than fifteen students and some serving over a hundred. A systematic approach to interviewing teachers from an equal number of small, medium, and large programs may provide insight into which one fosters the best chance of having teachers that stay in the field for five years or more.

A quantitative analysis of teacher compensation may prove beneficial in learning more about teacher retention in residential settings. It is recommended that research be done examining teacher pay across all residential facilities and comparing that with teacher retention rates. This will provide useful information in determining how significantly teacher compensation plays into a teacher's decision to stay in residential and to determine if there is a specific salary range that increases teacher retention.

Teacher retention, despite a lack of administrative support was a key finding presented in this study. Participants discussed the lack of consistent leadership in the programs that they worked in and the high turnover rate of facility administrators. Future studies should explore the factors behind the high turn-over in facility administration. If quality and consistent administration can be put into place to support educators in secure, residential settings it is reasonable to conclude that this would result in greater teacher retention. Additionally, studies

should explore the leadership training facility administrators are equipped with prior to taking on the role of chief administrator at the program. The administrators in this study did not seem to have a significant impact on the educators and so it will be interesting to examine the leadership preparation they received.

Teacher comradery was a significant factor explored in this study and identified as one of the key factors for teacher retention in a secure residential setting. Future research should explore the specific factors associated with these strong teacher groups. Identifying the key characteristics that comprise an effective teacher group could prove beneficial in developing similar groups in residential programs that are struggling with teacher retention.

Students in secure residential facilities are an at-risk group of students who are often times behind in school academically. This group of students deserves a high-quality education from an experienced educator. By furthering the research in this area, we can gain insight into best practices for retaining high quality educators and ensure that these students receive the best education possible.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Facility Survey to Identify Teachers with Five or more Years of Experience

- How many teachers do you have in your school?

- How many teachers have been employed in your school for five years or more?

- How many of your teachers have been working in secure residential settings for five years or more, even if it was with another facility?

- Do you have any teachers that have taught in the program for five years or more that have left the program within the past four years? If so, how many?

Interview Protocol

Hello. My name is Daniel Froemel, I am a graduate student at ETSU, pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. I am here to learn about the perceptions and beliefs of educators who have worked in a secure residential setting for five years or more. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. The purpose of this interview is to learn about the various perceptions, beliefs and factors that have enabled you to successfully teach in this environment for a substantial period of time. There are no right or wrong answers, or desirable or undesirable answers. I would like you to feel comfortable saying what you really think and how you really feel. If it's okay with you, I will be recording our conversation since it is hard for me to write down everything while simultaneously carrying on an attentive conversation with you. (Recording using Zoom for remote interviews and a voice recorder for in-person interviews). Everything you say will remain confidential, meaning that only I and members on my dissertation committee will be aware of your answers-the purpose of that is only so we know whom to contact should we have further follow-up questions after this interview.

Interview protocol adapted from Spradley's interview protocol (1979, p. 6)

Rapport Building/Background

Before we get into the official research questions, I would like to learn a little more about you and your educational journey. I would like to explore your academic and career history to lend better context to the actual research questions.

Background Questions:

1. Tell me a little about your academic background. Where did you attend undergraduate school and what was your major? Graduate school?

2. Tell me a little bit about the teacher preparation program in which you were enrolled?

3. What drove you to pursue a degree in education and to become a teacher?

4. Tell me about your career in education.

   a. What was your first teaching assignment?

   b. How many years have you been a teacher?

   c. How many years have you worked at this facility?

5. What were the factors that brought you to teach at a residential program?

6. What types of students do you serve and what is the primary mission of the program?

7. What are your career aspirations and goals? How have these changed since you began your career as a teacher?

Questions

1. What is it that you enjoy most about teaching in a residential setting?

2. What is the most challenging aspect of teaching in a residential setting?

3. How does your administration support you in your role?

4. How do your fellow teachers support you in your role?

5. Describe any coursework or training you had in preparing you for working in this type of setting.

6. What are some of the professional development opportunities you have had that have been most beneficial in preparing you to work in this type of setting?

7. Did you have a mentor in education in this particular settin? If so, who was it and how did he/she influence you?

8. Do you think you have a calling for this work? If so, where do you believe that calling comes from?

9. Why do you think you have been able to succeed in this field for so long while others turn over in a short amount of time? What factors are behind your commitment to this field?

10. Please describe the culture of the organization you work in?

11. How would you describe the safety of the organization you work in? Does this contribute or detract from your overall job satisfaction?

12. How do you manage stress in your professional life?

13. Describe what you believe to be the characteristics needed to be an effective educator in this environment?.

14. Are you employed by an LEA, a government agency or a private company?

15. How does your pay and benefits (retirement, health insurance) compare to educators in the public schools in your district?

Reflection

1. You said earlier that you felt you had a calling for this work. How do you sustain that calling and keep it at the forefront of your work?

2. You said earlier, that ___, was the most enjoyable part of your job. How do you try and incorporate that into your daily or weekly activities?

3. In thinking about the stress associated with your job, are there additional duties that you perform at the facility that could lead to an increase in stress?

4. When talking about managing stress, what helps you to gain perspective when you have an especially rough day of teaching?

5. Earlier, you discussed the leadership in the program. What supports do you find most helpful from leadership or do you with were present in your organization?

6. What advice would you have for a new teacher that was just starting out in a residential program?

Wrap Up/Conclusion

I want to thank you for your time today and thoroughness in answering these questions. Your responses are extremely helpful in allowing us the perceptions and beliefs that enable a teacher to work as an effective educator in this field for a substantial period of time. Before we conclude, I wanted to ask if you have any other final thoughts you would like to share. Do you have any questions for me about this interview or about the process that I can clarify at this time? Thank you again for your time and if you have any questions in the future please do not hesitate to contact me.

VITA

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