

Recommendations for Solving the Problem of Low Teacher Retention for Houston

Independent School District in Houston, Texas

by

Jordyn Jarrett

An Applied Research Report Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

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APPROVED BY:

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Role of the Researcher.....	v
Permission to Conduct.....	vi
Ethical Considerations.....	vi
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	5
Chapter Three: Procedures.....	29
Chapter Four: Findings.....	45
Chapter Five: Recommendations.....	65
References.....	85
Appendices.....	105

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This makes the teacher retention rate for HISD the lowest among Houston-area school districts at only 75%. The rationale for the research was by improving the teacher retention rate, the area teacher shortage will decrease. Additionally, students in the district will be provided with qualified teachers and equitable learning opportunities. This may improve student achievement on state mandated testing. Furthermore, maintaining teachers within the district may help create coherence within colleagues and administration at the schools. The central research question was, how can the problem of low teacher retention rate for Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas, be solved? Three methods of data collection for this applied research included interviews, a focus group, and a quantitative survey. Qualitative data was analyzed by identifying common codes. Once coding was complete, overall themes were established. The quantitative survey was analyzed on a 5-point score question by question basis. Overall percentage scores for each question were calculated. Following data analysis, findings for the study and recommendations were established. Recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention at HISD include increasing levels of administrative support, reducing teacher workload, and improving school resources.

Keywords: retention, shortage, coherence

Role of the Researcher

Jordyn Jarrett currently teaches at an elementary campus for HISD. She is in her fourth year as a public-school teacher. Her education includes a bachelor's degree in multidisciplinary studies and a Master of Arts in elementary education from West Virginia University. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education degree from Liberty University. As a teacher in HISD, Jordyn is motivated to maintain the talented teachers within the district. She is part of the Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) on her campus where she has a voice in discussing school budgets, safety, and more. As an employee for the district, she recognizes there may be bias and assumptions within her research. One bias is Jordyn may know the participants as current or former colleagues because of her employment within a campus in the district. Another notable bias is that she believes teachers are leaving for better opportunities elsewhere as she has seen former teachers at her school leave for a different school district in the area. To maintain a study driven by ethics, biases need recognized and understood. Literature, data collection, and analysis will maintain an ethically driven study and help produce recommendations for the research.

Permission to Conduct Research

Permission to conduct the research was secured from Allison Matney, director of HISD's research and accountability department. Permission granted access to Jordyn Jarrett to make recommendations to solve the problem (see Appendix A).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken to ensure minimal risk. Participants were made aware of study details and their role to ensure there is no deception. Solicitation of participants, current and former teachers, was used through purposeful sampling to ensure all participants can inform the research question. All participants in this study signed a consent form before participation in the study. All interviews and focus group discussions took place off-campus to provide confidentiality for participants. In the final written report, pseudonyms were used in place of real names to protect the identities of participants. All data collection information was stored on a removable drive, stored in a locked cabinet and computer file password-protected when the researcher was not using it. Only the researcher was able to access the information. When the data is no longer needed, the dissemination process will ensure participant information cannot be accessed when it is not needed. Because this study is only be reported to HISD, IRB approval was not required.

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presents the Organizational Profile, an Introduction to the Problem, the Significance of the Problem, the Purpose Statement, Central Research Question, and Definitions for this research.

Organizational Profile

The educational site for this study was Houston Independent School District (HISD), a public school district in Houston, Texas. The school district's mission is to provide equitable education to the whole child with the goal that every student graduates with the tools needed to reach their fullest potential (Houston Independent School District [HISD], 2022). The goal of the district is for each child to have equitable opportunities and equal access to education to best fit them. The school district hopes to provide a safe and nurturing environment to all students with the hope they can be successful in a global society. 2021-2022 HISD facts and figures explain the district encompasses over 300 square miles in Houston, serving 195,000 students. 62% of students are of Hispanic/Latino descent, 22% African American, 9% White, 4% Asian, and the rest representing other or multiple ethnicities (HISD, 2022). Overseeing the large school district is one superintendent, six assistant superintendents, and 30 school-support officers. HISD serves the greatest number of teachers in the Houston area. Participant teachers were selected from various district schools whose principals' granted permission. Participants also included former teachers at HISD. These teachers have had different school administrators and worked at different campuses to create diversity among experiences and opinions.

Introduction to the Problem

The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from the Houston Independent School District (HISD) (Carpenter, 2019). The teacher retention rate for HISD is the lowest within the Houston-area school districts at only 75.4% (Carpenter, 2019). Teacher retention refers to keeping teachers in the profession of teaching (Kelchtermans, 2017). For this study, teacher retention refers to keeping teachers teaching within HISD. A survey distributed to HISD teachers showed 1/3 are considering leaving the district (Oberg & Refigie, 2022). The low teacher retention rate has caused teacher shortage and classes taught by uncertified teachers or substitutes. Oberg and Refigie's (2022) report further explained that at the beginning of 2022, over 800 classes were being taught by non-certified individuals leaving thousands of students in classes with uncertified teachers. In the past, HISD leadership attempted to retain teachers by rewarding excellence through incentive programs and providing opportunities for additional feedback and support. HISD's current superintendent released a multi-year plan that offers competitive pay and bonuses to retain teachers (Oberg & Refigie, 2022). Eligibility to receive the yearly retention bonus requires teachers to commit to three more years at the district. If a teacher decides to leave during the three-year commitment, they must return the bonus payments. The plan to increase pay could come at a cost that results in cutting teachers and closing schools. Even with such a large cost, results of the plan still may not provide a solution to the problem of teacher retention.

Significance of the Research

The benefits of improving teacher retention for HISD includes improvements at the individual and organizational level. For organizational stakeholders, including school and school district leaders, hiring new teachers every year can be costly for the district (Ford et al., 2019). Ford et al. (2019) further explains the time and resources spent to find teachers to fill the vacancies of replacing just one teacher can be at a minimum of \$9,000. For both school leaders and teachers, increasing teacher retention may lead to cohesion and building of trust within the schools (Amitai & Houtte, 2021). For students, the constant changing of teachers can be harmful to their achievement. Increasing retention allows students to receive instruction by more experienced teachers (Amitai & Houtte, 2021).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. This applied research study included both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. The first method was semi-structured interviews with five participants. Participants were all teachers in the district at various campuses. The second method was a focus group interview with five participants. Participants were all former teachers in HISD. The final method was a quantitative survey with at least 15 willing participants at approved campuses who were all district teachers. The survey was administered using the internet-based program Survey Monkey.

Central Research Question

How can the problem of low teacher retention for Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas, be solved?

Definitions

1. Attrition - Qualified teachers leaving the profession for reasons that do not include retirement, (Kelchtermans, 2017).
2. Cohesion - From a school perspective, coherence refers to the shared framework and alignment of curriculum, standards for student learning, and assessments for teachers and administration (Fiegener & Adams, 2022).
3. Demoralization - Demoralization occurs when teachers feel powerless to perform based on a disconnect of their beliefs of good teaching and what is being asked of them to do (Bain et al., 2022).
4. Retention - Refers to keeping teachers in the profession of teaching (Kelchtermans, 2017).
5. Shortage - The inability to fill staff vacancies at current wages with individuals who are qualified to teach in the fields needed (Garcia & Weiss, 2019).
6. Working Conditions - Refer to aspects of a school such as school leadership, administrative support, professional community, shared governance, work/school-related stressors, and resources for teaching and learning (Ford et al., 2019).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presented the Organizational Profile, an Introduction to the Problem, the Significance of the Problem, the Purpose Statement, Central Research Question, and Definitions for this research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of low teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presents the Narrative Review, Theoretical Framework, and Summary.

Narrative Review

In recent years, heightened following the global pandemic, one of the biggest struggles facing education is the national teacher shortage (Moser & Wei, 2021). Teacher shortage is the inability to fill staff vacancies at current wages with individuals who are qualified to teach in the fields needed (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). School districts across all fifty states have reported large vacancies (Natanson, 2022).

The national teacher shortage is happening for reasons that include teachers changing schools and districts, teachers leaving the profession entirely, and college students choosing not to enter the field of education (Moser & Wei, 2021). Changing schools and leaving the profession can be defined as teacher attrition and teacher retention, often combined, and referred to as teacher turnover. Teacher attrition is defined as teachers leaving the profession (Kelchtermans, 2017). These teachers are qualified and certified to teach yet are leaving the profession for reasons not including retirement. The United States teacher attrition rate was around 8% in 2017, a 3% increase from the 90's (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teacher retention is the act of keeping teachers qualified and certified in the profession (Kelchtermans, 2017). This includes teachers staying in the profession even if they switch schools or districts. When factoring in teacher retention to the attrition rate, it nearly doubles the percentage of teachers in the United

States who are leaving to go to a new school or district or are leaving the profession entirely (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

This study is in one of the largest of the fifty states, Texas, where schools are unsafe from teacher shortages. Governor Abbott recently spoke about the teacher shortage in Texas. In his speech, Abbott contributed the shortage to the pandemic with the shifting of mask requirements, reopening of schools, and cultural changes (Lopez, 2022). The governor shared results of a teacher survey that reported a 10% increase of teachers considering leaving the profession after the 2020 school year. Abbott brought attention to this study's district by sharing that HISD, the largest district in the state, had over 700 vacant positions as of summer 2021. In another report of HISD, midway through the 2021 school year over 800 classes that require a certified teacher were vacant and were being taught by non-certified individuals (Oberge & Rafique, 2022). This left over 21,000 students without a qualified teacher. HISD superintendent Millard House explained the district is working to find qualified teachers while doing everything to keep current employees (Oberge & Rafique, 2022). The district is attempting to do this by offering recruitment and retention stipends as incentives. Superintendent House continued to stress the district will explore strategies to recruit, retain, and compensate employees.

To decrease the teacher shortage, there must be an increase in the number of teachers retained each year. Kelchtermans (2017) described this as both a problem and challenge, the problem being the shortage combined with the challenge to keep valuable teachers. It becomes a problem-solving attempt to determine why the good teachers are leaving and how to get them to stay. There may not be one simple solution, but districts and schools can adjust to lower the turnover rate and minimize the problem of teacher retention (Amitai & Houtte, 2021). To understand how to solve the problem of teacher retention, previous studies of literature focused on why teachers

are leaving. According to previous studies, reasons teachers are leaving fall into two major categories, individual and contextual (Rasanen et al., 2020).

Individual Factors

Individual factors for teacher turnover revolve around the teacher as an individual. Characteristics such as experience in the profession, educational background, demographics, and internal motivation are considered individual factors (Rasanen et al., 2020). Rasanen et al. (2020) explains these are factors which cannot always be influenced by school organizations which make it more challenging for schools to prevent these teachers from leaving. This literature review will focus on individual factors such as: teacher experience, educational background, demographics, and motivation.

Teacher Experience

The first few years of teaching, called the novice years, are recognized as the most difficult as beginning teachers are expected to meet the same challenges and demands as experienced teachers (Glazer, 2018). This is often too stressful for novice teachers to do therefore schools see only 1/3 still teaching after their third year, and as high as 30% leaving within their first five years (Glazer, 2018; Wagner & Pearcey, 2022; Sparks, 2018). A worse scenario for districts is that over 5% of these new teachers leave during the middle of the school year (Redding & Henry, 2019). One study found the explanation for beginning teachers early exit is the difference between teacher education programs and the actual teaching practice (Jin et al., 2019). Novice teachers have reported experiences of practice shock, unpreparedness, and lack of support when entering the profession (Whalen et al., 2019).

Research studies suggest one way to increase the retention of new teachers is by utilizing novice-expert interactions (Jin et al., 2019). Jin et al. (2019) explains a novice-expert interaction is when veteran teachers mentor novice teachers to improve the novice-teacher's teaching. This

study also found this type of partnership assists in increasing novice teachers' professional identity of the job as experienced teachers can provide the support and suggestions while being encouraging to the mentees. Another study on these interactions found these partnerships can improve new teachers' feelings of depression and discouragement toward the profession (Whalen et al., 2019). However, while improvements in the teaching practice and student achievement were made, there was little correlation to rates of teacher retention (Long et al., 2022). Without evidence of improvements in teacher retention, these mentorship programs are not always mandatory or made a priority. This is further supported as there is a lack of incentives for mentor teachers (Whalen et al., 2019). Whalen et al. (2019) continues to explain that mentor teachers are doing these interactions out of their own passion, not because they get much, if anything, out of them.

Many novices who leave share dissatisfaction toward the lack of teamwork and collaboration with colleagues at their schools (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). Even if not a set partnership, novice teachers shared they would like opportunities to observe other teachers and would like other teachers to observe them (Whalen et al., 2019). Teachers in the Whalen (2019) study explain these observations would allow them to learn by watching how a lesson should be executed, the school's expectations of teachers, and learn some new teaching strategies. Furthermore, observational feedback from another teacher allows for guidance and hands-on teachable moments for novices. Some districts have an open-door policy that allows and encourages teachers, novice or experienced, to observe and learn from each other regularly (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). This type of policy could build trust and comfort between colleagues which may increase the novice teacher's experience in the profession. This feedback from others, especially when positive, is a way to develop a novice-teacher's early experiences in the profession (Jin et al., 2019). If the early experiences of teachers are a determining factor for their exit, schools should focus more closely on how to build new teachers' positive experiences.

If lack of support from colleagues is not enough to push novice teachers to leave, lack of support from administrators may do it. One study found novice teachers' perceived experiences were directly tied with their interactions with administration at their school (Early & Shagoury, 2010; Bettini & Park, 2021). While these teachers shared conflicting experiences; the experiences still impacted their teaching practice. Some novices reported positive interactions and shared regular communication and feelings of respect helped them build confidence, improve their teaching practice, and create a sense of commitment to their schools (Bettini & Park, 2021). On the other hand, other novice teachers reported feeling invisible due to lack of collaboration and communication. The feeling of invisibility could motivate teachers to look for a better experience elsewhere.

On the opposite end, teachers who make it past those early years and may even be close to retirement are the other largest portion of teachers leaving (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). There is not as much research on why these longer serving teachers are leaving. Some studies have referenced teachers going through a life crisis that promotes their early departure from teaching (Towers & Maguire, 2017). Said crisis is to be caused by loss of motivation, commitment, and even feeling alienated from the new practices employed at their school. Other studies have found these experienced teachers leave due to feelings of resistance and loss of sovereignty (Van Houtte, 2022; Glazer, 2018). Some researchers who have tried to determine the correlation between turnover rate and years of experience argue that it is not the level of experience that is the determining factor, rather than the actual age of teachers. Their results argue the young and the old that are leveling, regardless of years of experience in the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Furthermore, the school organization has little to do with these groups of teachers leaving.

Educational Background

Educational background, referring to the education a teacher has completed to be qualified, is an individual factor that impacts teacher turnover (Mitani & Hollingworth, 2022). When determining teachers' self-efficacy for the profession, research suggests that the certification type is a predictor of future retention (Guthery & Bailes, 2019). There are two ways to become a certified teacher: traditional certified program (TCP) and nontraditional certified program (non-TCP) (Mitani & Hollingworth, 2022). Mitani and Hollingworth (2022) explain traditional certified programs are programs at a four-year university where students are enrolled in an education program. They are completing coursework in education and receiving more preparation time in classrooms working with students. Nontraditional certification programs, sometimes called alternative certification programs are a fast-track to becoming a teacher (Mitani & Hollingworth, 2022). These candidates usually have a degree in another field besides education and choose education as a second profession. These teachers usually experience most of their training and experience in the classroom once they are already on the job (Redding & Smith, 2019).

With the national teacher shortage in full effect, some states have started to expand their teacher certification and preparation programs to increase the hiring pool. While this has allowed for a greater selection of hires, it has created another factor in teacher retention. Studies comparing traditional and alternative teacher programs have shown that the highest group of teachers retained are those who have the most regulated teacher certification (Guthery & Bailes, 2019). Alternative programs may help reduce the vacancies for schools but long term, this should not be considered a solution for districts as these teachers are responsible for high turnover rates (Brantlinger et al., 2020; Redding & Smith, 2016; Zumwalt et al., 2017).

If districts want to use these programs to recruit teachers and reduce vacancies, they should focus on retention strategies (Brantlinger, 2021). Some reasons for their fast departure in-

clude less commitment to the profession, lack of training, and low feelings of preparedness (Redding & Smith, 2019). Redding and Smith (2019) explain these teachers are usually used to fill vacancies at high-needs schools which have little opportunities for professional development, minimal access to resources, and lack of strong leadership. These teachers may also struggle with classroom management as their experiences in the classroom before employment was limited (Brantlinger, 2021).

Teachers who complete these nontraditional programs share that they have lack in knowledge with how to handle classroom management, student discipline, time management, stress of the job, and supporting the academic development of students (Rose & Sughrue, 2020). Strategies to increase the retention and improve the self-efficacy of alternatively certified teachers include training and tailored instruction to meet the needs of these teachers (Brantlinger, 2021). School administrators should create activities and programs that support these teachers (Mitani & Hollingworth, 2022). These supports can include mentorships, collaboration, and opportunities for professional development (Redding & Smith, 2019). It is important that professional development be differentiated to help these alternatively certified teachers and beneficial for their practice (Rose & Sughrue, 2020). Unfortunately for district leaders, there is little to no information on what this tailored, differentiated professional development and activities looks like.

Demographics

Gender and race bring another dynamic to the individual factors pushing teachers out of the profession (Olitsky, 2020). Studies of teacher turnover and gender show the attrition rate for males is over 25% higher than female counterparts (Hwang & Fitzpatrick, 2021). Hwang and Fitzpatrick (2021) explain this statistic is due to male teachers being more likely to switch schools

whereas their female teachers are more likely to quit the profession entirely. In another study examining gender and teacher turnover, it was found females have a higher retention rate than their male counterparts by over 15% (Topchyan & Woehler, 2021). Reasoning for the higher retention for females can be linked to job satisfaction (Toropova et al., 2020). One study reported males having an overall lower job satisfaction than women (Hwang & Fitzpatrick, 2021). Another study reported the exact opposite, with males being more satisfied in the profession than females (Topchyan, R., & Woehler, C., 2021). With job satisfaction playing an influential role in teacher well-being and retention, it is important district leaders can do what they need to ensure both genders have overall satisfaction with their job (Dicke et al., 2020).

The Hwang and Fitzpatrick (2021) study argues males have lower job satisfaction because male teachers are often given students who have severe behavioral problems. High teacher turnover is linked to high stress levels and overall lower satisfaction from student misbehavior (Bottiani et al., 2019). Therefore, we might assume that these males are leaving because they are more likely to be given more students with challenging behavior. Hwang and Fitzpatrick (2021) suggest that principals and administration consider the costs of assignment of students and work to create a more balanced approach between male and female teachers. Furthermore, the expectations of male and female teachers should be the same. While studies might agree that males are less satisfied with the profession, they contribute the high turnover rates of female teachers to the elevated levels of stress on their mental and physical wellbeing (Leo et al., 2022). Leo et al. (2022) explains these elevated levels of stress correlate to job dissatisfaction, teacher burnout, and eventual attrition from the workplace. To decrease the job-related stress for both genders, principals need to focus on creating a positive school climate and building a powerful sense of self-efficacy among teachers (Bottiani et al., 2019).

Continuing with the impact of demographics on teacher retention, teachers of color have the highest levels of turnover (Frank et al., 2021). Teachers of color are reported to leave the profession at a rate 25% above their white counterparts (Grooms et al., 2021). And the group with the highest reported turn since the 2000's is male teachers of color (Bristol, 2020). Yet, according to statistics of student population in American schools, children of color make up over 50% of the population with the expectation to rise (Grooms et al., 2021). Students of color and their families are often underserved in American schools (Khalifa, 2018). One way to increase the quality of education for students of color is to have teachers they can relate to (Stanley, 2021; Grooms et al., 2021; Olitsky, 2020; Salas et al., 2021). Teachers of color can bridge the gap that exists between teachers and students in many urban schools (Magaldi et al., 2016). But for that to happen, schools need to focus on retaining these teachers (Grooms et al., 2021).

To retain teachers of color, it needs to be determined why these teachers are leaving. One study of women of color teachers reported leaving for three main reasons. The reasons include lack of social justice efforts, relationships with admin, and not enough support for student discipline (Stanley, 2021). They report feeling devalued and seem as being less knowledgeable than other teachers (Grooms et al., 2021). Black male teachers have expressed the dislike that their race has imposed on who they should be as a teacher (Salas et al., 2021). These teachers feel because of the stereotype of the absent father figure in students of color lives these teachers are made to be the father first, then teacher second. They too want to be role models and educators, not just disciplinary figures (Salas et al., 2021). Even stronger emotions have been shared with male teachers of color feeling harassed, treated like a criminal, and not respected by colleagues (Bristol, 2020).

Teachers of color have suggestions on what school leaders can do to help increase the retention. One thing suggested to school leaders is to include different professional opportunities

that help address their current school contexts (Bristol, 2020). Another study also recommended increased professional development opportunities for the entire school that help address racism and privilege (Frank et al., 2021). Without knowing, white teachers and leaders may suppress conversations that involve racism equality, equity, and justice (Grooms et al., 2021). These professional developments can focus on building cultural informed relationships and cultural flexibility for all teachers (Stanley, 2021). Teachers of color encourage principals to be more aware of the interactions among colleagues, specifically how teachers of color are being treated (Bristol, 2020). Teachers in Bristol (2020) study suggest passing out separate surveys based on race and gender to see multiple perspectives of the organization. The goal for school leaders is to create a safe space with a sense of belonging for teachers of color (Grooms et al., 2021).

Motivation/Commitment to the Profession

The last individual factor influencing teachers' decision to stay, or leave is found inside the person as their levels of internal motivation and commitment for the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2016). There are three main kinds of motivation for individuals: intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic (Tonna & Calleja, 2021). Intrinsic motivation is motivation from one's inner personality and pleasure (Kauffman et al., 2011). This is usually why teachers choose to enter the profession as teachers feel they have the personality to teach children and find pleasure from doing so (Tonna & Calleja, 2021). Altruistic motivation is the desire to improve others, which is often why teachers choose the profession. They want to help improve the lives of children (Tomsic, 2016; Watt et al., 2013; Tonna & Calleja, 2021). Lastly, extrinsic motivations are external factors to receive some sort of award, praise, approval, or benefit. With teaching this could include the profession's benefits; income, holidays off, summers off, and prestige in society (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Tonna & Calleja, 2021).

Perryman and Calvert (2019) surveyed teachers and found the most common reasons individuals chose to enter the profession include wanting to make a difference, the drive to work with young people, and the love of a particular subject/content. Some of the other reasons included an intellectual challenge, inspiration from a former teacher, and to be creative. Perryman and Calvert (2019) also asked the teachers who were still teaching what was most enjoyable about their job and they reported their connection with colleagues, which was not a primary motivation to enter the profession.

Regardless of the initial motivation to enter the teaching profession, it is also the attitude of the teachers that predicts whether they will stay in the profession (Bas, 2021). Bas (2021) found that teachers who have a positive attitude to the profession and have a high self-efficacy for themselves as teachers, are more likely to stay in the profession over someone with low self-efficacy and have a negative attitude toward the profession. Teachers might feel a positive attitude toward the profession in the beginning and overtime changes due to experiences on the job (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). In a survey of teachers who left who originally showed positive feelings toward the profession explained that the overwhelming amount of workload, to improve the balance between work and life, and not feeling valued/lack of support (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). Their once positive attitude and motivation to teach dwindled after experiencing the job.

These teachers, even if they were highly motivated from the beginning, are still leaving. This is because motivation for the teaching profession changes over time (Tonna & Calleja, 2021). Perryman and Calvert (2019) believe this is due to a contradiction between the expectation and reality of the profession. Societal, school culture, policies influences, and pressure lead them to teachers feeling a lower attitude and feeling of satisfaction toward the profession which causes them to consider other career choices (Tonna & Calleja, 2021). The workload, lack of support,

and pressure of accountability is worse than teachers thought (Perryman & Calvert, 2019). A proposed solution includes reducing the workload for teachers by removing unnecessary tasks (Coughlan, 2018).

For those teachers who join the profession for extrinsic reasons such as salary or prestige in society, the social changes and stagnant salaries are diminishing teachers' identity (Sultana et al., 2019). Teachers who are leaving are searching for a profession that can improve this extrinsic motivation by providing them with higher social status, improved social status, and better working conditions (Tonna & Calleja, 2021). Therefore, Tonna and Calleja (2021) argue the main priority of administrators and school leaders need to be supporting teacher concerns and paying closer attention to their working conditions.

Contextual Factors

Contextual factors are the influence of the context on a situation. For the teaching profession that context would include the school and organization. Teachers leave for many contextual factors including salary and compensation, socio economics, administration and collegial support, job demand/resources, school resources, and job characteristics (Rasanen et al., 2020). These are factors that the school/organization may have a direct impact to influence. They are often called the school's working conditions. Working conditions include school leadership/support, mentoring, collegial environment, student behavior, mutual respect, school resources, salary, and compensation (Harris et al., 2019).

Compensation

Compensation of teachers is one of the main reasons for their departure (Fiegener & Adams, 2022). If it is not bad enough that teachers earn less than other college-educated professionals, they are often asked to do more than contracted hours for no compensation of the extra work time (Morgan, 2020; Granger et al., 2022). Workers consider pay to be equivalent to their work

quality and quantity therefore the disparity between what teachers make and what they feel like they should make for their work is what causes their shift in attitude toward the profession and eventual turnover (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Furthermore, this causes teachers to feel that they can make more money with less stress at a different job. Teachers in some states even went on strike to put pressure on districts and states to improve the pay and benefits of teachers (Garcia & Han, 2022). Higher levels of pay, satisfaction with pay, and appropriate compensation in school organizations are predictors to lower teacher turnover (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021).

One strategy a school organization can do to retain teachers is have salary increases (McHenry-Sorber & Campbell, 2019). One way to increase salaries is by increasing the base salary of teachers (Garcia & Han, 2022). At the state level most school employees get paid based on two things: teacher's education and their years of experience (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). This provides separation of employees, allowing those with more experience and higher degrees to earn a high salary. Some individual districts have additional money they can provide to their teachers, causing teacher candidates to often choose the school district where they will make more money for doing the same job (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Garcia and Han (2022) suggest that schools districts adopt public policies that allocate more resources to public education to help raise the teacher pay for all employees.

Incentives like performance pay is one way school districts can offer more money to teachers (Garcia & Han, 2022). Teachers can receive a monetary incentive based on how well they perform, and the performance of their students and those teachers considered highly effective would receive additional money toward their overall salary (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). One school district in North Carolina tried this approach. It was found that for teachers with a lower overall salary, the performance pay was an incentive for them to continue working at their school but those

teachers who had a higher overall salary had no incentive to stay and had an increase in their likelihood to leave their school (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Another study of California schools found that added salary incentives for performance pay does not help because the good teachers will be good teachers regardless (Hanushek, 2020). Rather, Hanushek (2020) suggests an overall increase in salary for all teachers will improve the attrition and retention rate by making the profession more attractive to a larger pool of candidates.

Changes in salary can help districts recruit higher quality teachers which statistically have a lower turnover rating improving teacher retention (Garcia & Han, 2022). Garcia and Han (2022) continue to explain that higher salaries can increase the potential of college students choosing to enter the teaching profession, thus increasing the teacher candidate pool. Higher salaries are most important to retaining the novice teachers and teachers in high-needs schools because it is a motivation for them to stay and work (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). However, there could also be a negative to offering higher pay to retain employees. Ryu and Jinnai (2021) explain that higher pay can be seen as higher quality and might contribute to other employers wanting to hire these professionals, causing them to leave and adding to the problem of teacher turnover.

Socioeconomics

Schools that struggle most with teacher retention are urban, high-needs schools (Wronowski, 2017). High-needs schools are schools with low-income, low socioeconomic status students, who often suffer from inadequate quality housing and/or exposure to violence in the neighborhood (Hoglund et al., 2015). High-needs schools have teacher turnover that doubles the rate of their suburban, affluent counterparts (Guthery & Bailes, 2019). Turnover rates in Texas show over 25% of the teachers leaving taught in the lowest achieving bracket of schools compared to less than 20% who taught in the highest achieving schools (Guthery & Bailes, 2019).

Many assume that the high turnover and low retention rate is due to the extremely difficult working conditions of these schools (Olitsky et al., 2019).

With high-needs schools having such a massive turnover rate, studies have focused on determining what makes teachers stay at these schools. The recruitment process of teachers for these schools may be the place to start. One study of high-needs teachers found that they stay because of their drive for social justice (Grill & Kier, 2021). These are teachers who are committed to only working in high-needs schools to build their experiences to provide and advocate for their students. Wronowski (2017) suggests principals focus on looking for individuals who recognize and understand their working situations, have experience working in these types of schools, and demonstrate perseverance for tough times. Principals should also look to hire teachers who match the majority race of their students and principal because a cultural match has a positive impact on teacher attrition and student experience (Nguyen, 2020). Lastly, because novices leave within the first five years, and at a faster rate if placed in high-needs schools, these principals might focus on hiring more experienced teachers to fit these more challenging roles (Bettini & Park, 2021).

In addition to the requirement process, principals at high-needs schools should focus on working to retain those teachers they currently have. Teachers are leaving these schools because of the challenging work conditions, low levels of collegial support, and lack of support from administrators (Kraft et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2020). Principals should look to make sure they are doing everything they can to create a collaborative school culture that listens to all teacher voices while ensuring there are high expectations for all students and support of decisions made by teachers (Jones, Bettini, & Brownell, 2016; Bettini & Park, 2021). Those teachers, even at high-needs schools, are less likely to turn over when they feel better supported by their administration (Nguyen, 2021).

Administrative Support

Teachers have psychological needs that must be met to achieve positive well-being, autonomy, competence, and overall job satisfaction (Ford et al., 2019; Fiegner & Adams, 2022). The school environment plays a role in supporting or diminishing teacher's psychological needs (Al-drup et al., 2017; Bartholomew et al., 2014; Eyal & Roth, 2011; Ford & Ware, 2018). Specifically, it is the school leaders who play the most crucial role in addressing these psychological needs (Ford et al., 2019).

Teachers who feel their psychological needs are met contribute their feelings of satisfaction to support from their school administration (Mack et al., 2019). On the opposite end, without support from school leaders, teachers experience higher levels of stress, exhaustion, and isolation even to the point where they feel overwhelmed with the profession (Jacobson et al., 2020). The lack of administrative support is one of the most significant reasons teachers decide to leave their current teaching post (Harris et al., 2019). To improve teacher retention, school leaders should focus on increasing their levels of support as there is a positive correlation between the school leader's actions and retention of teachers (Qadach et al., 2019).

The first way school administrators can help increase teachers' psychological needs and promote teacher retention is by creating a positive school climate that establishes a shared school vision (Qadach et al., 2019). Teachers would like open communication between teachers and school leaders that allow for opportunities to be included in the decision-making processes of their schools to establish a collaborative climate (Sulit, 2020; Stanley, 2021). This shared vision can include collaborative activities to build cohesiveness that includes establishing instructional framework and alignment of curricula across grade levels (Fiegner & Adams, 2022).

Multiple studies have suggested teachers want more administrative support when it comes to student discipline (Conley & You, 2018; Stanley, 2021). When there is a lack of support the teachers feel the extra burden of teaching while trying to handle the behavior problems (Stanley,

2021). Conley and You (2018) suggest two ways school leaders can support teachers with student discipline. First, school leaders can be more hands on and assist teachers with conflicts that arise in the classroom by helping enforce what the teacher has determined to be the discipline. Second, principals can set and hold high expectations of what they expect to see from student behavior.

Another way school leaders can ensure they are providing a supportive environment is by allowing and encouraging teachers to learn and grow as a teacher to help build their self-efficacy (Kulophas & Hallinger, 2020). Multiple studies have suggested principals prioritize and align professional development toward the school's mission and vision (Stanley, 2021; Fiegenger & Adams, 2022). Furthermore, teachers' psychological needs are met when given opportunities to participate in high-quality professional development (Ford & Ware, 2018).

Lastly, principals can support teachers by providing opportunities for meaningful feedback (Fiegenger & Adams 2022). Feedback is typically given to teachers after walkthroughs, observations, and evaluations done by school leaders (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Classroom observations can be used to help evaluate teacher performance and improve teachers' psychological needs by supporting them through instructional feedback when providing them with praise and opportunities to improve practice (Redding et al., 2019).

Collegial Support

Multiple studies have cited positive collegial relationships with increased feelings of satisfaction, self-value, and lowering the turnover rate (Thomas et al., 2020; Cormier, 2022; Chapman et al., 2021; Yada et al., 2019). Collegiality is defined as a cooperative relationship among colleagues in a workplace (McAllister et al., 2020). Cooperative relationships allow teachers to create common goals, develop shared values, and discuss expertise with one another (Mack et al., 2019). Novice teachers who receive multiple opportunities to work with and learn from colleagues are less likely to leave which can increase the retention rate of schools (Ronfeldt &

McQueen, 2017; Jacobson et al., 2020). While novice teachers benefit from collegial relationships it is just as beneficial to provide this to all teachers within a school to promote collaboration and encourage cohesion (Yada et al., 2019).

For teachers to form connections with colleagues, build trust, friendship, and support, they needed availability of other colleagues and an inviting staffroom (Thomas et al., 2020).

Weekly/biweekly meetings, social or team building events, and weekly informal lunches are opportunities for colleagues to work together in a productive and relaxed way (McAllister et al., 2020). It is important these informal activities, such as after-hours social events, create an environment of inclusion which may be done having teacher input on preferred activities (Cormier, 2022). Other activities administrators can provide to promote collegial relationships and support include mentor teacher partnerships, observations by and of the teacher, reflective meetings, study groups, professional training, and book studies (Jacobson et al., 2020). Administrators must ensure they are continuing to discuss with teachers on ways they can feel more supported among their colleagues (Cormier, 2022).

Job Demands and Resources

A few studies have explained another area of frustration for teachers is the job demands and resources (Schaack et al., 2021; Russell et al., 2020). Schaack et al (2021) explain the demands of a job are the mental and emotional requirements needed to complete the job while the resources are what is provided to employees to be able to meet those demands. Negative job demands for teachers such as additional working hours, excessive workloads, and elevated levels of overcommitment cause stress and burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Russell et al., 2020). When people feel they have too many demands that they are unable to complete they are more likely to leave the job or profession (Collie, 2020). The high job demands mixed with the lack of sufficient

job resources causes teachers to feel low satisfaction and high burnout, leading to the eventual turnover (Russell et al., 2020).

Job resources such as individualized feedback, collegial and administrative support, and task significance can help teachers meet the demands of their job (Russell et al., 2020). Principals can provide additional job resources by reducing the roles of teachers by assisting them in prioritizing responsibilities or stepping in to help reduce the responsibilities (Conley & You, 2018). Principals can also help support teachers with job demands by listening to the teacher's perspective then offering specific feedback and input for their situation (Collie et al., 2016; Collie, 2022). Regardless of which job demand or resource is the issue, teachers would like to be able to speak about the issues they have and feel like they can ask for more resources to do their job (Grant et al., 2019).

Job Characteristics

One final reason to push some teachers out of the profession or push young professionals who are considering a profession to choose something else are the job characteristics of teaching (Kelchtermans, 2017). The limited number of opportunities to work towards a higher position or receive a promotion leave teachers feeling stuck where they are (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). Teachers wanting promotion in their career have few choices, join school leadership, or become a principal, both of which contribute to the problem of teacher retention because these teachers are still leaving teaching (Kelchtermans, 2017). The limited opportunity for promotional gain is especially important for those mid-career teachers who may feel a plateau or stagnation with their career (Shin et al., 2021). Teachers do not necessarily want a major promotion, but an increase in roles and responsibilities in their current position (Kelchtermans, 2017). Multiple studies contribute teacher turnover to teachers seeking opportunities for personal growth and new challenges within their profession (Sin et al., 2021; Kelchtermans, 2017; Amitai & Houtte, 2021).

To improve teacher retention, school principals and districts need to focus on providing opportunities that encourage high quality teachers to stay (Granqvist, 2022). Examples of additional roles for teachers that can provide growth and challenges include having a voice in curriculum decisions, providing professional developments, and helping unify a new vision and mission for the school (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). Being a mentor teacher can be another opportunity for teacher leadership (Karathanos-Aguilar & Ervin-Kassab, 2022; Kuhn et al., 2022; Rakes et al., 2022). Mentor teachers are responsible for helping pre-service teachers introduce them to the classroom (Kuhn et al., 2022). Mentor-teacher relationships can be beneficial to both parties as the pre-service teacher can learn about being a teacher while the certified educator can learn about mentoring (Rakes et al., 2022). These mentor-teacher relationships give the certified teacher opportunities to develop and implement new curriculum, reflect on their role as a teacher, expand their professional role into a new area, and can even be a boost toward more positive self-efficacy and satisfaction for the profession (Karathanos-Aguilar & Ervin-Kassab, 2022). Mentor teachers are completing extra work with little to no compensation for their time and efforts therefore principals and school districts sometimes have a tough time finding them (Kuhn et al., 2022). There is little information on if compensated for the additional work, if teachers would be more inclined to take on their leadership role (Kuhn et al., 2022).

While teacher leadership is usually focused on those experienced teachers who have been at the practice a while, beginning teachers should not be left out of opportunities (Meirink et al., 2019). Novice teachers should be provided opportunities to slowly develop leadership skills by participating in initiatives and projects over time (Cheng & Szeto, 2016). Novice teachers who have experience in leadership roles can gradually begin to take on more as they become more experienced (Meirink et al., 2019). With opportunities for leadership at any teaching level, teachers may have recognition and appreciation, causing them to feel more satisfaction toward the job and

be less likely to leave (Amitai & Houtte, 2021). It would allow teachers to move past this idea of a flat career and have something to look forward to as they increase in experience (Kelchtermans, 2017).

While all factors may not be preventable for stakeholders to get teachers to stay, many factors, such as the contextual ones, can be. Research has shown that the schools with the highest retention rate are schools that provide adequate resources, have supportive administrators and colleagues, offer mentor/partnerships for professional development, and have high academic achievements among students (Whipp & Geronime, 2015). Dissatisfaction with any other factors may push a teacher to leave his/her school or the profession entirely.

Theoretical Framework

The theory that supports this research study is the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by Robert Lent, Steven Brown, and Gail Hackett. The SCCT, expanding from Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, was created in the late 1900's to explain aspects of the career development process. SCCT explores the interconnections of an individual's career development such as their interests, how their career choices develop, and academic pursuits/goals (Lent et al., 1994). They felt both internal and external factors play a role in individuals' career-decision making. The SCCT model has three main variables: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (OptimistMinds, 2022). Each variable has an influence on how a person's career path develops.

Beginning with the first variable self-efficacy, coined by Albert Bandura in 1977, defined self-efficacy as beliefs about oneself acquired and changed throughout a lifetime of experiences (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy for teaching refers to the teacher's ideas of his/her capabilities to accomplish job-related tasks and achieve professional teaching goals (Granziera & Perera, 2019). Capabilities of a teacher can be referring to their abilities to control classroom management, provide instructional strategies, and keep students engaged. Repeated positive experiences can raise

self-efficacy while built-up negativity can have adverse effects (Optimisminds, 2022). Higher self-efficacy can be attributed to job satisfaction, which has a positive correlation to teacher retention. Using self-efficacy as a guide, this research will determine if teachers in HISD have positive self-efficacy for their career. Through conversations, feelings of self-efficacy and ways to increase self-efficacy will be determined.

The second variable for SCCT is outcome expectations. Outcome expectations are not referring to one's personal capabilities to do something but focusing on the expected outcome (Optimisminds, 2022). With outcome expectations, a behavior's outcome can be positive or negative, with the employee receiving praise or consequences. When a person performs a behavior or completes an activity, the SCCT explains that they think about what the outcome will be to determine if they will engage or persist with the activity (IResearchNet, n.d.). Furthermore, people want to perform an activity or behave in a way that allows them to receive praise or positive rewards.

With the career of teaching, teachers who receive positivity from work-related tasks may have a more positive cognitive outlook on their work environment (Granziera & Perera, 2019). On the other hand, negative feedback can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction or disappointment in the workplace and lower their self-efficacy towards the teaching profession. This study looks to determine what outcomes teachers have had from their activities or behaviors. Furthermore, it will determine if teachers feel positivity from behaviors and activities they completed.

And finally, the last variable of SCCT is personal goals. This can be defined as the intention behind a person to pursue a particular career or obtain a certain degree of education/performance (IResearchNet, n.n.). More simply put, these are goals individuals have for themselves for their career and what they hope to achieve. connect both the other variables of SCCT. These personal goals are for individuals that hope to achieve without the need for reinforcement by external

factors (OptimistMinds, 2022). For this study, conversations with teachers look to determine personal goals. Furthermore, if teachers have personal goals that they want to achieve that may determine their need for turnover that does not include the external factor of the school or school organization.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presented the Narrative Review, Theoretical Framework, and Summary.

Chapter Three: Procedures

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presents the Interview Procedures, Focus Group Procedures, Quantitative Survey Procedures, and Summary.

Interview Procedures

The first data collection approach used in this study was semi-structured interviews. This semi-structured interview approach allowed the researcher to elicit information on participant's experiences through topic questions grounded in the literature (Claxton & Michael, 2021). Conducting an interview with a semi-structured method gave the researcher structure by using pre-set questions but allowed for opportunities to deviate with unstructured questions to seek more clarity or information. Purposeful sampling was used to gather participants best able to inform the research problem. Participants included any current teachers in the approved HISD campuses willing and able to participate. The researcher sought to find participants who presented a variety of demographics including age and experience, as well as different schools within the district, to provide multiple perspectives to inform the research topic. Interviews were conducted off-campus, in a face-to-face format. Interviews were scheduled based on participant availability within the data collection period. Locations of interviews varied. Interview protocol was utilized during the interviews (Claxton & Michael, 2021). With consent, interviews were recorded for data analysis purposes.

Data analysis for the interviews was completed immediately following the interviews. The researcher transcribed the interviews and reviewed them with participants. Once transcribing was

complete and reviewed, coding was completed to determine overlapping themes among participant responses. Coding involved identifying codes, which were keywords, phrases, and concepts common throughout many transcripts (Claxton & Michael, 2021). The codes were placed on a table where patterns emerged to show relationships and from that prominent themes were determined. These themes were determined to answer the central research question. All the data was collected from participants by following the semi-structured interview questions below (see Appendix B).

Interview Questions

1. Why are you an educator?

This question aimed to determine educators' purpose for the profession of teaching. Teacher retention factors on the individual level have been tied to internal motivation and self-efficacy. Teachers who remained in the profession had elevated levels of self-efficacy for their instruction abilities, student interaction capabilities, student engagement, and classroom management (Casely-Hayford et al., 2022). Understanding why the educators are in this profession helped the researcher understand his/her motivation and efficacy toward the teaching profession.

2. How would you describe your relationship with school leadership?

The purpose of this question was to determine teachers' perceptions of their relationship with the school leadership team. More effective principals lead to lower rates of teacher turnover (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). Furthermore, teachers were least likely to leave the higher they perceived their quality of school leadership (Whipp & Geronime, 2015).

3. How do you feel supported at your school?

This question sought to uncover the extent to which teachers feel they are being supported in their daily task of educating. Turnover can be determined by supervision and supportive leadership (Ryu & Jinnai, 2020). More than just support by administration is important, but also

teacher-parent relationships. To help prevent teacher burnout, which can often lead to turnover, good relationships with students' parents/guardians need to be established (Pedditzi et al., 2021).

4. How would you describe your relationship with colleagues?

This question sought to determine the environment of colleagues within the schools. A positive learning culture with teachers who have shared identities and feel supportive of one another creates excellent job satisfaction and student achievement (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2018).

5. What opportunities do you have to show leadership among colleagues on your campus?

This question aimed to understand how teachers are given opportunities to expand their abilities beyond the classroom. The lack of possibilities for growth or promotion in the career is a reason for teachers leaving the profession (Kelchtermans, 2017). It is suggested to create opportunities for teachers that can include more responsibilities besides the typical classroom work.

6. How would you describe your school's resources?

School resources refers to the physicality of the school and resources it has for the teachers and students. This can include school supplies, access to technology, and even heat/air. Experienced teachers have reported leaving schools due to the poor infrastructure including broken windows, no playground, lack of technology resources, and poor heating and air system (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). This question sought to determine if HISD schools have resources that could be improved to encourage teachers to stay.

7. How would you describe the level of autonomy you have when making classroom decisions?

This question aimed to determine if teachers in the district feel like they can make decisions about the way they run their own classroom. One of the prominent factors for teacher dissatisfaction and intent to leave is teacher autonomy (Fiegener & Adams, 2022). Teachers who feel they have less influence and decision-making over their work report lower satisfaction with teaching. Higher teacher autonomy has been linked to lower rates of teachers leaving.

8. What are the most stressful aspects of your job?

Teachers often leave for what is referred to as burnout. Teacher burnout is a response to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment typically from the place of work (Ford et al., 2019). This question sought to determine ways teachers may feel stress in the workplace. Finding the causes of the stress may help HISD focus on those areas to reduce stress and prevent burnout.

9. What would cause you to leave your employment with HISD?

This question sought to identify the top reasons current teachers would leave HISD. Intention to leave rates have multiple variables and can vary based on different ages and career points (Rasanen et al., 2019). Novice teachers and teachers close to retirement typically see the greatest turnover rates (Glazer, 2018). This could help add to the solutions on what HISD could do to ensure they keep these qualified teachers.

10. How would you solve the problem of teacher retention?

This question sought to determine how participants can best inform the research question by allowing them to provide their own recommendations to solve the problem through their first-hand experience.

Focus Group Procedures

The second data collection approach used in this study was a single-focus group. This single-focus group approach allowed the researcher to elicit information from multiple participants at one time through a conversational manner of topic questions that were grounded in literature (Claxton & Michael, 2021). Conducting a single-focus group provided the researcher with structure by using a series of pre-set questions but allowed for opportunities for participants to speak

and build off one another's thoughts. It allowed the researcher to gather multiple opinions quickly and efficiently and from a group of individuals. Purposeful and snowball sampling was used to gather participants that were best able to inform the research problem. Participants included five former HISD teachers who were willing and able to participate. The researcher sought to find participants who provided multiple perspectives on why they are a part of the population of teachers who left HISD. These participants helped solve the problem of what HISD can do to retain teachers.

The focus group was conducted off-campus, through face-to-face format. It was scheduled based on participant availability within the data collection period. A central location off any HISD campus was the spot of the focus group. Focus group protocol was utilized during the conversation (Claxton & Michael, 2021). With consent from all participants, the focus group was recorded for data analysis purposes.

Data analysis for the focus group was completed following the meeting. The conversation was transcribed, and the transcript was reviewed by the participants to ensure all voices were heard. Once transcribing was complete and reviewed, coding determined overlapping themes among participant responses. The codes were then placed on a table where patterns emerged to show relationships, and from that prominent themes were determined. These themes were determined to answer the central research question. All the data was collected from participants by following the pre-set, semi-structured focus group questions below (See Appendix C).

Focus Group Questions

1. What factors lead you to decide to leave HISD?

This question was to determine the varied factors among participants that lead to their exit from HISD. Teachers face different challenges throughout their career which can be attributed to their decision to leave (Glazer, 2018). Teachers leave the profession or place of employment for

either individual or contextual factors. Contextual reasons are those at the organizational level schools can improve to retain teachers. This question seeks to determine if teachers are leaving for individual or contextual reasons. Learning the varied reasons why teachers left can help determine what factors HISD should focus on improving to increase the retention rate.

2. What is your current role after leaving HISD?

This question sought to determine what the former teachers are doing after leaving HISD. It will determine the level of organizational factor in their turnover. If teachers are leaving to go teach at another school/district that means that the problem lies within HISD and not as much the individual factor of teacher retention (Fiegener & Adams, 2022).

3. How would you describe your relationships with former school leadership?

The purpose of this question was to determine teachers' perceptions of the relationship they had with their former school leadership team. More effective principals lead to lower rates of teacher turnover (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). Furthermore, teachers were least likely to leave the higher they perceived their quality of school leadership (Whipp & Geronime, 2015).

4. How would you describe your relationships with colleagues from your previous school(s) within HISD?

This question aimed at determining the relationship these former teachers had with their colleagues. A positive learning culture with teachers who have shared identities and feel supportive of one another creates excellent job satisfaction and student achievement (Karlberg & Bezina, 2018). If teachers have positive relationships with colleagues, the reasoning for leaving can be attributed to something else.

5. How could you have felt more supported as a teacher?

This question sought to learn about the specific ways former teachers felt like they could have been more supported in their profession. Literature cites administrative support as a determining factor on decisions to stay or leave a school (Fiegener & Adams, 2022). With greater feelings of support from administrative leaders, teachers have reported feeling heard and have decided to stay at their school.

6. How would you describe your former school's resources?

School resources refers to the physicality of the school and resources it has for the teachers and students. This can include school supplies, access to technology, and even heat/air. Experienced teachers have reported leaving schools due to the poor infrastructure including broken windows, no playground, lack of technology resources, and poor heating and air system (Amitai & Houtte, 2021). This question sought to determine if HISD schools have resources that could be improved to encourage teachers to stay.

7. How would you describe your overall level of job satisfaction while working in HISD?

Job satisfaction is an emotional state that results in a positive experience from one's job or job experiences (Pedditzi et al., 2021). It is a combination of an individual's needs and what they are receiving from their work. Literature found that when teachers have low job satisfaction, they are more likely to have a feeling of burnout, which may lead to leaving the school or profession. This question sought to determine if the former the teachers' feelings of satisfaction with HISD?

8. What were the most stressful aspects as a teacher within HISD?

Teachers often leave for what is referred to as burnout. Teacher burnout is a response to chronic stress, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment typically from the place of work (Ford et al., 2019). This question sought to determine ways teachers may feel stress in the workplace and if the stress was their primary reason for leaving the district and/or profession.

9. How would you solve the problem of teacher retention at HISD?

This question sought to determine how participants can best inform the research question by allowing them to provide their own recommendations to solve the problem through their first-hand experience.

10. Would you like to add any additional information?

Quantitative Survey Procedures

The third, and final, data collection approach used in this study was a quantitative survey. Surveys are used to generate information quickly and precisely (Claxton & Michael, 2021). They provide the researcher with data about the participant's beliefs, behaviors, practices, opinions, and attitudes. A Likert scale was used as the survey method. Likert scales asked the participant to indicate the level of degree to which he or she agrees or disagrees with the prompt (Claxton & Michael, 2021). Conducting a survey using a Likert scale was easy for the researcher to create and participants to respond to. The Likert scale was administered to participants electronically using the internet-based program Survey Monkey.

Purposeful sampling was used to gather participants that were best able to inform the research problem based on their place of employment. Participants included at least 15 teachers in HISD who were willing and able to participate. The participants received an email with instructions on how to complete the survey. The email included the link to the Survey Monkey, and implied consent to participate. Participants were given one month to complete the survey. Results were analyzed by calculating the frequency of each number reported on the Likert scale on a question-by-question basis (Claxton & Michael, 2021). The survey included six demographic questions and 12 prompts developed from a literature review on teacher retention. Participants responded using a five-point Likert scale (see Appendix D).

Demographic Questions

Instructions: Choose one response for each prompt below.

1. How many years have you been working as a teacher?
 - 1-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - 16-20
 - >20

2. How many years have you been working as a teacher in this school district?
 - 1-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-15
 - 16-20
 - >20

3. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Prefer not to say

4. What is your ethnicity?
 - White
 - African American
 - Asian
 - Native American or Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic or Latino

- Two or More Ethnicities

- Other

5. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- Bachelor's Degree
- In Grad School
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

6. What grade level do you teach?

- Elementary (K-5)
- Middle (6-9)
- High School (9-12)

Survey Questions

Instructions: Choose one response for each prompt below.

1. Teachers have an influence over curriculum decisions.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Occupational factors are one factor that causes teachers to not return to their classroom the following school year. Occupational factors often refer to organizational commitment, job involvement, job control, job support, school climate, and school problems. Job control includes the conditions to which teachers have control over the aspects in the classroom (Chambers Mack, et al., 2018). Higher feelings of control over his/her classroom have shown higher levels of commitment to the profession. This question sought to identify the level of control teachers feel they have over the curriculum decisions made for the school and their individual classroom.

2. Teachers influence instructional practices.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1.

This question was intended to build off the last but switch the focus from curriculum decisions to instructional practices to determine if teachers feel they have power to influence the instructional practices made at their school. Literature has shown teachers have reported leaving because they felt they could no longer be the teacher they wanted to be (Glazer, 2018). Furthermore, there was a misalignment from how they believe learning works and what practices they were being asked to follow in their classrooms.

3. Most of the school staff have a unified vision.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine the sense of cohesion participants feel towards their staff members. Teacher social cohesion is a sense of trust and collective responsibility toward the same goal (Fiegenger & Adams, 2022). When teachers feel a mutual connection with their colleagues and leadership, they have a positive sense of commitment to the job.

4. School facilities are well looked after and are up to safety standards.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Experienced teachers have reported leaving schools due to the poor infrastructure including broken windows, no playground, lack of technology resources, and poor heating and air system (Amitai & Houtte, 2021). This question sought to determine if HISD schools have facilities that could be improved to encourage teachers to stay.

5. I feel supported in my daily tasks as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine the level of support teachers feel in their workplace. Teachers leaving can be a result of a lack of supervision and support from leadership (Ryu & Jinai, 2020). Literature cites administrative support as a determining factor on decisions to stay or leave a school (Fiegener & Adams, 2022). With greater feelings of support from administrative leaders, teachers have reported feeling heard and have decided to stay at their school.

6. I trust my school administrators.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel like they can trust their school leaders. Trust is a factor of supportive conditions for teachers (Ford et al., 2019). Trust has been linked to feelings of burnout. When teachers feel like they can trust their administrators, their levels of self-efficacy are higher, and they are less likely to feel burned out and leave the profession.

7. I feel stressed to accomplish what is asked of me as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel stressed to complete the tasks of their job. Most teachers leave their profession or their school after feelings of burnout (Ford et al., 2019). Burnout comes from chronic stress and exhaustion from the workplace. Teachers often begin to feel demoralized in their job and have a lower feeling of personal accomplishment.

8. I feel recognized for my accomplishments as a teacher.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel like they are being recognized for their challenging work and achievements. The need for social recognition can be a crucial aspect for teachers to feel satisfied, proud, or motivated in the workplace (Kelchtermans, 2017). Feeling motivated and proud can increase feelings of well-being which can lead to teachers staying.

9. Compensation is a factor in my decision to work for HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers consider salary and compensation when deciding to stay or leave the district. There are many factors that push teachers to leave but also pull

factors that encourage teachers to stay. One pull factor teacher has reported is a better salary (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022).

10. I am provided opportunities for professional advancement in my career.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel they are limited in flexibility with the teaching profession. Teaching is often referred to as a flat career because even after years of service there are often few opportunities for growth and recognition (Amitai & Van Houtte, 2022). Teaching can be a horizontal career path where there are few opportunities for advancement.

11. I am provided with enough opportunities for professional development.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel they are given enough professional development to meet the needs of their job. Support from administration can include providing opportunities for professional development (Rasanen et al., 2020). This is not a major factor of teachers leaving; however, it could help reduce teacher stress or increase school cohesion which could help increase the retention rate.

12. Overall, I am satisfied with my role as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly Disagree

This question sought to determine if teachers feel satisfied with working in HISD.

Job satisfaction is an emotional state that results in a positive experience from one's job or job experiences (Pedditzi et al., 2021). It is a combination of an individual's needs and what they are receiving from their work. Literature found that when teachers have low job satisfaction, they are more likely to have a feeling of burnout, which may lead to leaving the school or profession.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for the Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presented the Interview Procedures, Focus Group Procedures, Quantitative Survey Procedures, and Summary.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter of the report presents the Interview Findings, Focus Group Findings, Quantitative Survey Findings, and Discussion of the Findings.

Interview Findings

The first approach used in this study was interviews. Semi-structured interviews consisting of ten questions were conducted with each participant on an individual basis. The purpose of these interviews was to focus on the factors that impacted teachers' levels of satisfaction toward teaching in the HISD to improve the low teacher retention rate. Interviews were conducted off-campus, at a local coffee shop. A total of five participants took part in the face-to-face interviews. The participant criteria for interviews were current teachers in HISD at approved campuses. Prior to beginning each interview, participants were provided with a brief summary of the purpose of the study to supplement the information they received when invited to participate. Each interview lasted 30 minutes and was recorded then transcribed immediately for data analysis. Transcriptions were reviewed with participants for accuracy.

Interview Descriptions of Participants

Participant One was a 50-year-old white male. He was a Louisiana native who holds a bachelor's degree in journalism. He was a tv photographer before settling down and getting married. Marriage and family prompted his move to Houston and change of careers. He completed an Alternative Certification Program (ACP) in Texas that allows those who hold a bachelor's degree

outside of education to become teachers. He has been employed with HISD for the last fifteen years. At the time of the interview, he was a fifth-grade math and social studies teacher.

Participant Two was a 55-year-old Hispanic female. She earned a bachelor's degree in public relations. She volunteered at a private all-girls school and fell in love with education. She completed an ACP to become a licensed teacher in Texas. Her teacher licenses include elementary education, gifted and talented populations, and special education. She has been teaching for 26 years, spending the last 17 in HISD.

Participant Three was a 44-year-old Black male. He earned a bachelor's degree in humanities and afterwards completed the Texas ACP. He earned certifications to teach special education and physical education for early childhood to twelfth grade. At the time of the interview, he was in his 19th year teaching, spending twelve of those with HISD. At his current campus he was the special education resource and life skills teacher for several years before transitioning to being a physical education coach.

Participant Four was a 25-year-old White female. At the time of the interview, she was in her third-year teaching, with HISD being her first place of employment. Her bachelor's degree in early childhood education allows her to teach grades K-6. At the time of the interview, she was a gifted and talented first grade teacher for HISD.

Participant Five was a thirty-year-old White female. She has been teaching for ten years, spending the last 5 in HISD. She earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and a Master of Arts in teaching reading. She has taught grades first-third in multiple states. At the time of the interview, she was teaching a self-contained first grade English as a second language (ESL) class.

Interview Results

Interviews were conducted with five teachers in HISD to find themes related to the low teacher retention rate for HISD. First, notes were made of common words or phrases throughout the interviews related to the study, and specific quotes were identified that supported the codes (Claxton & Michael, 2021). After transcripts were coded, the codes from each were combined and categorized into themes based on similarity. This process reduced the codes into smaller categories to be analyzed for themes. Various themes from the qualitative data were identified as reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Codes and Themes From Interview Data

Themes	Codes	Participants' Quotes
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Stress	<p data-bbox="618 199 841 233">Student behavior</p> <p data-bbox="618 661 751 695">Workload</p> <p data-bbox="618 1081 881 1115">Standardized testing</p>	<p data-bbox="1034 199 1414 338">“There isn’t any discipline or consequences for when they aren’t following directions or expectations.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 380 1414 443">“Students aren’t afraid of getting in trouble.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 485 1430 548">“I feel like I have a lack of control with them sometimes.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 621 1373 684">“Too much is asked of me with too little time.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 726 1414 789">“I feel like I can’t get everything accomplished in a day.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 831 1422 936">“I spend too much time on administrative tasks rather than actual teaching.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 1010 1422 1115">“Test scores should not be applicable to what kind of teacher you are.”</p> <p data-bbox="1034 1157 1398 1251">“We do too much testing instead of teaching the whole child. It’s not equitable.”</p>
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Resources	Curriculum	<p>“The curriculum is way out-dated. We are at least two years behind other schools.”</p> <p>“We are constantly changing curriculum that by the time teachers are used to it, we have to learn something else.”</p> <p>“Curriculum choices should be campus based. Many of the resources we have don’t apply to our student population.”</p>
	Materials	<p>“We have the essentials but could use an upgrade.”</p> <p>“It takes a long time to get things. We often have limited licensures.”</p>
	Technology	<p>“We don’t have any one-to-one technology. It’s impossible to share among students.”</p>

Themes were identified and a word search was conducted. The results of the word search can be found in the Themes and Frequency Codes Across Interview Data as reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes and Frequency Codes From Interview Data

Themes	Codes	Occurrences Across Data
Support	Administration	12
	Colleagues	5
	Parents	5

Stress	Student behavior	8
	Workload	5
	Standardized testing	6
Resources	Curriculum	9
	Materials	8
	Technology	2

Focus Group Findings

The second approach used to collect data in this study was a single focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to solve the problem of low teacher retention for HISD. This approach allowed for a series of pre-set focus group questions to be presented synchronously. The semi-structured approach allowed for participants to respond to the questions, but in a conversational manner that included any other things they wanted to share. The focus group was conducted in a face-to-face format at a secluded location not on school district grounds. With consent, the focus group was recorded for further analysis. The focus group lasted 46 minutes. It was recorded and transcribed following the meeting for data analysis. Transcription was reviewed by participants for accuracy. Participants included five former teachers of HISD who worked at various campuses making them an appropriate choice to inform the problem for this study.

Focus Group Description of Participants

Participant One was a Houston-native former teacher in HISD, teaching first grade English as a Second Language (ESL) for five years. At the time of the interview, she was in her second-year teaching first grade self-contained for a Houston-area private school. As a self-contained classroom at both campuses, she was the teacher of record for all core subjects that include, reading, writing, math, science, and social studies.

Participant Two was a 4th grade teacher for HISD. She completed her student teaching in HISD before being hired as a permanent teacher. She taught in HISD for three years before moving to teach elsewhere. At the time of the interview, she was working in another Houston-area school district teaching 4th grade math and science.

Participant Three was hired as a first-grade teacher in HISD. This was her first teaching experience. She taught in that role for two years, adapting through covid protocol, and earning the title Beginning Teacher of the Year at her campus. At the time of the interview, she was teaching first grade at a Houston-area private school.

Participant Four taught for ten years, getting her start teaching 2nd grade in HISD. She taught for five years in HISD before moving to a nonprofit organization and running an after-school program. At the time of the interview, she was teaching 2nd grade at a private school in the Houston-area.

Participant Five went through an alternative teacher certification program in Texas. This program licensed her to teach all core subjects grades K-6. Participant Five taught for two years in the Houston area before joining HISD. While in HISD, she taught for seven years teaching both third and fourth grade classes. At the time of the interview, she was teaching 4th grade reading, writing, and social studies for another Houston-area school district.

Focus Group Results

A focus group was conducted with five former teachers for HISD to find codes and themes related to the low teacher retention rate for the district. First, notes were made of words or phrases throughout the focus group related to the study, identifying specific quotes that support those codes (Claxton & Michael, 2021). When the transcript was coded, the codes from the transcript were combined and categorized into themes based on similarity, reducing the codes into a smaller number of categories to be analyzed. Major themes and codes are reported in Table 3.

Table 3*Themes and Codes From Focus Group Data*

Themes	Codes	Participants' Quotes
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<p>Workload</p>	<p>Planning</p> <p>Lack of time</p> <p>Testing</p>	<p>“Most of the time during my planning period I would have required meetings, so I always had to stay after work hours to actually plan.”</p> <p>“I never have enough hours to accomplish everything that’s asked of me.”</p> <p>“I spent so much time doing paperwork for the district that shouldn’t have even been my job to do.”</p> <p>“Most of the teaching I was doing was teaching the state required test because if my students did poorly it reflected me and my school. We’d get frowned upon when students wouldn’t pass state testing.”</p> <p>“We spent so much time doing required district mandated tests that I couldn’t even teach my students all the information they should be learning.”</p>
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Resources	Curriculum	<p>“The curriculum is severely outdated and doesn’t even align current Texas state standards.”</p> <p>“We are told the curriculum that should be used but have no training on it.”</p> <p>“Half the time the district requirements don’t even align with the curriculum we are given.”</p> <p>“Once we get use to a curriculum, it changes.”</p>
	Materials	<p>“We never have enough materials. I’ve went months where students had to share a math book because the school didn’t get enough.”</p> <p>“The materials aren’t fit for the school. Some things are way too easy for our school population.”</p> <p>“We spend money on the wrong things. We don’t purchase any hands-on activities.”</p>
	Technology	<p>“We don’t have one-to-one technology like some of the other schools.”</p>

A word search was conducted to identify codes and themes. The results of the word search can be found in the Frequency Cords Across Focus Group Data reported in Table 4.

Table 4*Frequency Codes From Focus Group Data*

Themes	Codes	Occurrences Across Data
Support	Administration	14
	Colleagues	4
	Parents	2
	Counselors	1
Workload	Planning	9
	Lack of time	5
	Testing	3
Resources	Curriculum	6
	Materials	8
	Technology	2

Survey Findings

The third and final data collection approach used to collect data in this study was a quantitative survey. This approach investigated how current HISD employees would solve the problem of low teacher retention. To collect data, a closed-ended Likert-scale survey was administered electronically using the internet-based program Survey Monkey. The survey included six demographic questions and 12 Likert scale questions developed from a literature review on teacher retention (see Appendix D). The scale consisted of five possible answers from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The survey was sent via email and administered via Survey Monkey. Participants included 43 current teachers at various HISD campuses. The participants received an email that

included the link to Survey Monkey, consent to participate, and instructions on how to complete the survey. The participants were given three weeks to complete the survey. All surveys were returned within the allotted timeframe.

Survey Description of Participants

Participants included 43 teachers in HISD. Fourteen of the participants have been teaching for 6-10 years, 11 for more than 20 years, 1-5 years and 11-15 years each had seven teachers, and four teachers have been teaching for 16-20 years. The numbers changed when asked how long they have been teaching in HISD. Twenty teachers reported teaching 1-5 years in the district, seven teachers responded 6-10 and more than 20 years, five teachers responded 11-15, and the last 4 have been teaching in HISD for 16-20 years. Forty of the 43 were females. Thirty-five participants were White, four were Hispanic/Latino, two were Black, one was Asian, and one was Two or More Ethnicities. 25 participants earned a bachelor's degree, 15 earned a master's degree, two were enrolled in graduate school, and one earned a doctorate degree. All 43 of the participants taught at the Elementary level (K-5).

Survey Results

The survey was conducted with 43 participants, who were all HISD teachers, to solve the problem of low teacher retention. First, the survey was accessed on Survey Monkey for data analysis purposes. Then, a frequency and mean table was created to display the frequencies and means of the Likert scale responses.

Table 5

Frequency and Average of Survey Responses

Statements	Frequency					Mean
	5	4	3	2	1	

1. Teachers have an influence over curriculum decisions.	2	15	10	12	4	2.98
2. Teachers have an influence on instructional practices.	9	21	7	3	3	3.70
3. Most of the school staff have a unified vision.	1	14	14	10	4	2.95
4. School facilities are well looked after and are up to safety standards.	3	15	13	10	2	3.16
5. I feel supported in my daily tasks as a teacher in HISD.	1	17	13	9	3	3.09
6. I trust my school administrators.	7	20	7	6	3	3.51
7. I feel stressed to accomplish what is asked of me as a teacher in HISD.	16	9	11	5	1	3.81
8. I feel recognized for my accomplishments as a teacher.	1	10	11	13	8	2.60
9. Compensation is a factor in my decision to work for HISD.	3	14	11	11	4	3.02
10. I am provided opportunities for professional advancement in my career.	3	12	9	13	6	2.84
11. I am provided with enough opportunities for professional development.	3	11	14	13	2	3.00
12. Overall, I am satisfied with my role as a teacher in HISD.	1	19	11	10	2	3.16

Discussion of the Findings

Three overarching themes developed from the interviews. The first was support, the second was stress, and the third was resources. The Discussion of the Findings section will compare

the data collection and analysis results from this research. Additionally, a comparison of the findings in relation to scholarly literature will be presented.

The first theme revealed in the interviews was support. This is consistent with the scholarly literature on why teachers leave. Teachers leave schools because of low levels of collegial and administrative support (Kraft et al., 2016; Nguyen, 2020). The teachers who were interviewed spoke of multiple variations of support including administrative, collegial, and parental. All five teachers shared feelings of high levels of support from colleagues but low levels of support from administrators. Administrative support was mentioned 12 times (see Table 2 above) throughout the course of the interviews. One participant shared, “I feel like they don’t take the problems seriously, not even the small ones. There are things that could be fixed easily, even when I offer up solutions, nothing happens.” Another participant shared, “I think sometimes they want to help, but they just don’t know how.” Without support from school leaders, teachers experience higher levels of stress, exhaustion, and isolation even to the point where they feel overwhelmed with the profession (Jacobson et al., 2020). Interviewed teachers reported feeling supported by colleagues and parents. Four of the five participants shared they collaborate daily with colleagues, which makes planning much easier. One participant shared that she was “extremely thankful” for her relationship with her team. Regarding parental support, one participant shared, “The parents provide monetary help for anything I need for my classroom. They are always present for their children.”

The second theme revealed in the interviews was stress. Interviewed teachers reported student behavior, workload, and standardized testing contributing to daily stresses. Out of the three factors, student behavior was mentioned most among interview participants (see Table 2). All five teachers mentioned they struggle with how to deal with student behavior and do not feel they receive any support with handling it. One participant revealed he has a “lack of control” over the students. Another participant shared, “I have no support with student behavior. I usually don’t call

the administrator because they give them a lollipop and send them back to class. There's no actual discipline or fixing the problem." Scholarly literature showed that when there is a lack of support the teachers feel the extra burden of teaching while trying to handle behavior problems (Stanley, 2021). In addition to student behavior, participants feel stress from workload and testing. One participant shared, "There's too much testing at an early age. I'd rather focus on meeting the child's other needs." Similarly, an interview participant shared, "We do too many administrative tasks, too many things for the district that get in the way of actual teaching. I never have enough time to do everything that's asked of me." The Literature explains that excessive workloads can cause stress and burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Russell et al., 2020). When people feel they have too many demands that they are unable to complete they are more likely to leave the job or profession (Collie, 2020).

The third theme revealed in the interviews was resources. A review of the literature confirmed a common area of frustration for teachers is the job demands and resources (Schaack et al., 2021; Russell et al., 2020). The interview participants expressed their frustrations with their schools' resources including curriculum, materials, and technology. Resources were mentioned 19 times throughout the interviews (see Table 2 above). Participants were most concerned about the district's curriculum and materials out of all the job resources mentioned. One participant shared curriculum could be enough to cause her to leave. "The district uses a one size fits all curriculum. We are at least 3-7 years behind other school districts. And by the time we finally get used to the chosen curriculum, it changes, and we start over again." Similarly, another interviewed participant shared, "The curriculum and materials don't align. Our textbooks are from the 2000s and don't even match the curriculum we are supposed to teach. I supplement a lot." Interviewed participants shared equal frustrations of the district requiring so much, but not providing adequate resources for them to be able to reach expectations.

Three themes emerged from the focus group data. The first was support, the second was workload, and the third was resources. There was a lot of overlap between themes among interview and focus group themes. Focus group participants included five former teachers for HISD. All the participants left HISD for various reasons and at the time of the interview were teaching for another school district.

The first theme revealed in the focus group interview was support. When asked why participants left their role at HISD, all five participants mentioned administration as being one of the factors. Participants mentioned lack of support from administration 14 times (see Table 4 above). The problem with administration was more than lack of support, they were at times disrespectful. One participant referred to her administration as being “toxic” and the relationship being “severely unhealthy.” Another participant shared experiences of being belittled by her administration in front of other teachers. Another participant felt her administration liked her but didn’t value her as a teacher. Her feelings and ideas were “ignored.” Literature shows that without support from school leaders, teachers experience higher levels of stress, exhaustion, and isolation even to the point where they feel overwhelmed with the profession (Jacobson et al., 2020). The lack of administrative support is one of the most significant reasons teachers decide to leave their current teaching post (Harris et al., 2019). This aligns with what was seen in the focus group interview.

The second theme revealed in the focus group interview was workload. The overarching workload theme included codes such as planning, lack of time, and testing (see Tables 3 or 4 above). Their complaints about workload were associated with the demands of the teaching profession. When people feel they have too many demands that they are unable to complete they are more likely to leave the job or profession (Collie, 2020). Four of the five participants felt like they couldn’t keep up with the workload of the district. One participant shared, “I didn’t have a clear planning time. Every day when I was supposed to plan, I had some sort of meeting I had to attend.

I ended up always working extra hours with no extra compensation of course.” Another participant agreed and included, “There was never enough time. I was always doing fifty jobs at once. I was the teacher, diagnostician, nurse, and parent.” All participants agreed the workload stress was a factor in their decision to leave HISD.

The third theme revealed in the focus group interview was resources. Resources included curriculum, materials, and technology, with materials being mentioned the most at eight times (see table 4 above). One participant shared, “We never had enough materials. Some of my students were missing textbooks.” Another participant complained about materials being “outdated” and “not useable.” One participant suggested HISD spends money on hands-on materials such as manipulatives rather than outdated workbooks. Scholarly literature confirmed that the high job demands mixed with the lack of sufficient job resources causes teachers to feel low satisfaction and high burnout, leading to the eventual turnover (Russell et al., 2020).

The survey revealed themes related to the theoretical theory that supported this research study. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explains that both internal and external factors play a role in individuals’ career-decision making (Lent et al., 1994). These can include three main variables: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals (OptimistMinds, 2022). Questions five, seven, and eight asked participants to share feelings related to these variables during their position for HISD. Question five received a score of 3.09, which indicated that participants were neutral regarding their feelings of support in their position. Eighteen of the forty-three participants agreed they felt supported, while thirteen were neutral, and 10 disagreed. When asked on question seven if participants felt stressed to accomplish all that’s asked of them, 16 participants strongly agreed giving it the highest rating of 3.81. Lastly, results showed a low 2.60 rating for question eight which asked participants if they feel recognized in their role for HISD. Participants revealed they have high levels of stress, with moderate feelings of support, and low levels

of recognition. Feelings of job-related burnout are developed when employees feel chronic stress and exhaustion combined with feelings of demoralization and accomplishment (Ford et al., 2019). This is significant for stakeholders as burnout often leads to low satisfaction and leaving the profession. Boosting feelings of support increases a teacher's self-efficacy to accomplish job-related tasks (Granziera & Perera, 2019). Literature explains repeated positive experiences can raise self-efficacy while built-up negativity can have adverse effects (Optimisminds, 2022).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter presented the Findings for three data collections methods that included interviews, a focus group, and a quantitative survey.

Chapter Five: Recommendations

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter presents Recommendations, Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders, Resources Needed, Timeline, and Summary.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The central research question for this study was, how can the problem of low teacher retention for Houston Independent School District in Houston, Texas be solved? Based on a review of the scholarly literature and data collection and analysis, three possible solutions are recommended to answer the central research question. The three recommendations are:

1. Increase administrative support
2. Reduce teacher workload
3. Improve school resources

Recommendations for Administrative Support

The first component of the solution is to increase levels of support from school administration. Administrators play a major part in addressing teachers' needs within schools (Ford et al., 2019). A supportive administrator and positive school climate are the key to retaining teachers (Redding et al., 2019).

Teachers expressed frustration with their administration's lack of support across all data collection methods, as well as a desire for more support from their administration. Some teachers

shared that while they liked their administrator on a personal level, they did not feel administrators did enough to help them with job demands. One teacher, in an interview, suggested that she thinks her administrator wants to help but “doesn’t know how.” Focus group participants shared that they left their positions as teachers in HISD due to criticism and belittling from their administrators. They explained they were “being put down instead of lifted up.” A few interview participants suggested that if they were to leave the district, it would be due to a lack of support from the administration. The strong emotions from all participants regarding administrative support led to the recommendation of increasing levels of administrative support for teachers.

Administrative support can include providing teachers with extra resources, ensuring teachers that they are valued, limiting the workload teachers are required to do, and limiting the pressure they feel with the job (Pressley & Ha, 2021). Each participant interviewed expressed a desire for support in different areas. For example, one interview participant wanted support managing her classroom, while another wanted support finding appropriate classroom resources. Administrators must ensure all teachers are given an equal voice to express their individual concerns (Ford et al., 2019). This should include collecting data from teachers about their needs (Pressley & Ha, 2021). Ways to collect data and encourage teacher voice could include a survey or faculty meeting (Richter et al., 2021). It is up to the discretion of the individual school to decide how they will collect this data. It is expected that data collection remains ongoing throughout the entirety of the school year as teachers’ needs may vary.

Supporting Student Behavior

The most common source of concern among all participants was student behavior. Several participants expressed the need for more hands-on support with students. In an interview, one participant said she does not bother asking administration for support with student behavior because

there are no consequences. For this reason, it is recommended the one area of support all administrators provide for teachers is student behavior.

HISD schools need to implement a School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS) program. A school-wide positive behavior support program targets school culture at the organizational level to improve student behaviors (Wienen et al., 2018). Elements of SWPBS include clear expectations for all students, explicit teaching of expected behaviors, opportunities for all to practice expectations, positive behavior reinforcement, clear consequences for problem behavior, school expectations tied to classroom expectations, and collection and analyzation of program data as it is implemented to make improvements (Horner et al., 2010). Scholarly studies have reported schools who implement SWPBS have less disciplinary problems than other schools and those behaviors are less severe (Gage et al., 2020). Each school in the district has a different mission, vision, and culture therefore it is up to the discretion of each campus to decide on a behavior program that seems fit for that campus. However, because current and former teachers expressed such strong concerns about needing support with student behavior, it is recommended teachers be included in the school's behavior program planning. School behavior programs need to be established before the start of the school year during teacher training so all teachers can know expectations for their classroom and the school.

The implications of increasing administrative support for HISD teachers is an increase in job satisfaction. Teachers contribute feelings of satisfaction to support from their school administration and without support from administration, they feel overwhelmed with the profession (Mack et al., 2019; Jacobson et al., 2020). High job satisfaction is positively correlated to retention of teachers (Qadach et al., 2019). By increasing administrative support, HISD will increase teacher satisfaction, which will lead to an increased retention rate.

Recommendations for Teacher Workload

Based on the literature, survey, and interviews, the second recommendation to solve the problem of low teacher retention rate for HISD is to reduce teacher workload. Workload is defined as the amount of work one must do in an allotted amount of time (Collie & Mansfield, 2021). Research conducted by Collie (2020) found that when people feel they have too large of a workload, it creates higher feelings of stress, making them likely to leave the job or profession. Three of the five focus group participants shared high workload played a role in their decision to leave HISD. These findings support the reduction of teacher workload as a recommendation for improving retention for HISD.

Many interviewed teachers stated feelings of stress related to everything HISD expects them to accomplish. Prior research has confirmed that higher levels of stress are correlated with greater burnout and increased intentions to quit (Collie & Mansfield, 2021). Complaints of interviewees were that HISD has too much standardized testing that holds teachers accountable. Because of all the testing, one participant shared he did not feel like he could teach all the state mandated standards. One participant even admitted, "Something must give. Either I teach them to be good humans, I teach them how to test, or I teach them content. But I can't do all three." Three focus group participants complained the administrative tasks and paperwork they had to complete had strict deadlines with not enough notice. Four of the five participants interviewed complained they do not have enough planning time and therefore have to stay after hours to complete planning and grading.

School-wide policies and practices determine the workload placed on teachers (Collie & Mansfield, 2021). State and district-wide standards have reduced the flexibility of teachers and increased the way teachers' time and methods are managed (McCarthy, 2019). All of which, McCarthy (2019) explains, can reduce teacher's job satisfaction. If HISD reduces the workload for teachers, there will be an increase in levels of teacher satisfaction. With the biggest overall

complaint from current and former teachers including too much testing, it is recommended that HISD leaders limit testing not mandated by the state of Texas across all grade levels. Additionally, students who meet benchmark state standards may be exempt from additional testing throughout the year.

HISD must put policies in place that reduce teacher workload at the school-level. Interviewed teachers complained about having meetings and training during their planning time, causing them to stay after work hours to complete job-related tasks. It is recommended that HISD district leaders require all campuses to hold training and meetings outside the teacher's allotted planning time. Furthermore, HISD campus principals need to establish a weekly team meeting that allows and encourages team collaboration. Based on interviews, some campuses presently conduct weekly Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings where each grade level meets during their planning time to discuss lesson plans, activities, and assessments. PLCs can help reduce teacher workload because teachers, especially new ones, aren't having to do everything on their own (Collie & Mansfield, 2021).

The implications of decreasing standardized testing, unrestricted planning times, and collaborative team meetings are ways district leaders can reduce the workload for teachers and alleviate stress. With less stress, teachers will experience increased job satisfaction and be inclined to stay working for the district (Collie, 2020).

Recommendations for School Resources

Participant feedback and scholarly literature have led to the final recommendation. To improve the low teacher retention rate for HISD, the district must improve school resources. The themes from data collection revealed the resources in which teachers experienced frustration with included curriculum, materials, and technology. Russell et al. (2020) explain high job demands

mixed with lack of sufficient job resources cause teachers to feel low satisfaction and high burn-out, leading to the eventual turnover.

Although not prominent in scholarly literature as a reason teachers leave, interview participants had several complaints regarding HISD curriculum that caused them high levels of frustration and stress. Three interview participants explained the curriculum they are expected to teach is out of date. “The earliest edition of our social studies curriculum is from 2002. So, when teaching the present, we are really teaching the past.” One participant who has taught in different districts shared HISD curriculum is way behind other schools in the city. “We are teaching using curriculum that other districts implemented years ago,” she explained. Two participants mentioned that the chosen curriculum changes way too often. “Once we get used to a math curriculum, it changes, and we start over again. It’s impossible to keep up with.”

In addition to the frustration with curriculum, both interview and focus group participants shared frustrations with lack of resources. One teacher who left HISD explained she went months without having enough textbooks for all the students in her class, forcing her to either print digital copies or have students share a book. Two interview participants complained about the lack of technology on their campuses. One stressed the difficulty of taking technology-based assessments in a given time frame when a single laptop cart must be shared among an entire grade level (about 200 students).

Due to the high frustrations, it is recommended HISD improve school resources. To do this, district leaders must explore all possible curriculum options that have proven results of academic success among students and teachers (Partelow & Shapire, 2018). Partelow and Shapire (2018) also suggest district leaders make sure they are adopting high-quality, up to date curriculum materials that are aligned directly to state standards or college readiness. Participant teachers for HISD are frustrated that they have no say in the chosen curriculum and that district curriculum

is a one size fits all plan. For this reason, district leaders need to include teachers in curriculum decision making. Literature confirms stakeholders who should be involved in curriculum making decision for schools include district leaders, school principals, curriculum specialists, and teachers (Mkandawire et al., 2018). This would help reduce the one size fits all problems by allowing principals to choose different materials that fit their school population. The curriculum chosen would be more effective for all, making less of a need for curriculum changes (Mkandawire et al., 2018).

Survey and interview participants were frustrated with the lack of equality of resources at various campuses. One interview participant explained, “Our school’s parent-teacher organization (PTO) provides the funding for our school resources like textbooks and Smart Boards. We don’t get anything from the district because we aren’t a Title 1 school.” Another participant teacher shared that her campus doesn’t have one-to-one technology which makes research projects and online testing incredibly difficult. She explained that she has friends at other HISD campuses who receive extra funding for technology resources. This problem created the recommendation that HISD leaders ensure that all HISD schools are provided with equivalent resources.

The implications of improving school resources in HISD is that teachers will be confident that they have the appropriate curriculum and materials to teach what is asked of them. Choosing materials wisely can be not only cost-effective in the future but improve student academic achievements (Partelow & Shapiro, 2018). Therefore, the implications of improving school resources are not only beneficial to teachers, but students as well.

Increasing administrative support, reducing teacher workload, and improving school resources are designed to increase teacher job satisfaction to improve the low retention rate for HISD. Studies have shown schools with high retention are schools that provide adequate resources and have supportive administrators, which leads to overall higher levels of teacher satisfaction (Whipp & Geronime, 2015).

Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

The roles and responsibilities of stakeholders need to be disclosed to solve the problem for this research study. It is important to provide a plan for how the recommendations will be implemented and who will be responsible for which tasks. The roles and responsibilities for increasing administrative support, reducing teacher workload, and improving school resources are described in this section.

Administrative Support

To solve the problem of low teacher retention rate for HISD, it is recommended there is an increase in administrative support for teachers. Defining the roles and responsibilities of those involved is important to ensure success.

Administrators

According to teacher input, support from administrators is one way to increase their overall job satisfaction. Support can include letting teachers know they are valued, seen, and heard which might limit the pressure they feel with the job (Pressley & Ha, 2021; Ford et al., 2019). An overarching need from teachers in all data collection methods included support with student behavior. Recommendations for administrators include:

1. Establish a school-wide behavior support program that establishes behavior expectations and consequences for all students.
2. Give all teachers an equal voice to express their individual concerns.

Administrators set guidelines for school-wide student behavior expectations and consequences to reduce the stress teachers feel trying to control student behavior. Administrators will be responsible for following through with selected consequences and adjusting the program based on teacher feedback. Additionally, administrators will need to be flexible and offer support to each

individual teacher based on his/her needs. They need to accept all requests for support to build feelings of support from teachers.

Teachers

The role of teachers in increasing levels of administrative support should be limited, but not invisible. Teachers should be tasked with the job of being honest with their wants and needs. During any school or individual meeting, teachers need to express their concerns directly so administrators know what they can do to help. During any data collection method distributed by school leaders, teachers need to be transparent about the problems they are having and what administrators can do to help. Transparency will allow administrators to determine a plan of action to support each teacher individually.

Teacher Workload

To solve the problem of the low teacher retention rate for HISD, it is recommended there is a reduction in the workload for teachers. Defining the roles and responsibilities of those involved is important to ensure success.

District Leaders

Workload is the amount of work one must do in an allotted amount of time (Collie and Mansfield, 2021). School-wide policies and practices determine the workload placed on teachers (Collie & Mansfield, 2021). State and district-wide standards have also reduced flexibility of teachers and increased the way teachers time and methods are managed (McCarthy, 2019). The state of Texas requires testing for grades 3-12 and no more than five exams a year, all which account for no more than 20 testing hours (Testing in Texas, 2023). Districts often administer their own benchmark and diagnostic testing in addition to the state requirements (Testing in Texas, 2023). Participants from all data collection methods complained HISD requires too much testing throughout the school year. Teachers felt they were spending so much time administering tests, as

opposed to teaching content. Participants also complained they were staying after hours to do job-related tasks due to their planning time being occupied for meetings. Therefore, recommendations for district leaders includes:

1. Reduce district standardized testing.
2. Disregard accountability measures for test scores.
3. Increase notice and expand deadlines for all testing and paperwork.
4. Require meetings to take place outside the teacher's allotted planning period.

Administrators

The interviewed teachers complained about having meetings and training during their planning time, which caused them to stay after work hours to complete job-related tasks. Even if district policies are not in place to prevent this, principals at HISD campuses should schedule all teacher meetings outside the teacher's planning time. Based on interviews, it was learned some campuses conduct weekly team meetings known as Professional Learning Committees (PLCs). These committees are structured to improve teaching practices and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, they encourage collaboration among teachers to discuss lesson plans, activities, assessments, and much more. Professional learning committees help reduce teacher workload because teachers, especially new ones, do not have to do everything on their own (Collie & Mansfield, 2021). It is recommended all campuses administrators conduct PLC meetings once a month to encourage collaboration among teachers to reduce the individual workload.

School Resources

To solve the problem of low teacher retention rate for HISD, it is recommended there is an improvement in school resources. Defining the roles and responsibilities of those involved is important to ensure success.

District Leaders

Interview and focus group participants shared extreme frustrations with district curriculum choices and lack of materials. Their complaints included constant changes in curriculum, outdated curriculum and materials, and lack of materials. Recommendations for district leaders to improve school resources include:

1. Include all stakeholders in district-adopted curriculum choices.
2. Allow school leaders to purchase curriculum that fits their school population.
3. Limit the amount curriculum is changed over the course of a year.
4. Provide equal materials to all HISD schools.

Providing equal materials for all schools would relieve the stress behind lack of resources (Russell et al., 2020). For all changes in curriculum, HISD needs to provide professional development opportunities to keep the teachers informed regarding how to use the new materials and resources (Partelow & Shapiro, 2018). Professional development would increase the teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, alleviating stress behind receiving new materials (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Resources Needed

The resources needed to solve the problem of low teacher retention for HISD must be considered. It is important to provide a plan for how the funds of the recommendations will be secured. The resources needed are described in this section.

Administrative Support

Recommendations for increasing administrative support included administrators establishing a school-wide behavior support program and giving teachers an equal voice to express con-

cerns. The main resource needed to improve administrative support for teachers is time. Administrators need to set aside time to determine a behavior support program they want to implement. This should include time researching programs and determining what fits best for their campus. It should occur over the summer and training in August, prior to the 2023/24 school year. The time for determining a behavior support plan can be done during administrative meetings with other campuses. It would include taking professional development courses to learn ways to support student behavior concerns. Principals should delegate different professional development courses or tasks to assistant principals to lessen the workload and responsibilities. To save time, administrators can split which courses they take and compare major findings. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has a list of recommended behavior intervention plans that administrators should take time researching (TEA, 2021). Once administrators determine a school-wide behavior program, they need to create an outline of the plan to be presented to teachers during the beginning of the year training.

The resource of time will be needed to collect data from teachers regarding preferred areas of support. Administrators need to determine a set way to collect data from teachers in areas they need support. If they chose to administer a survey, someone needs to take the time to create it. It could be a Google form repeated throughout the school year so that time spent on the creation of the survey is only done once. Another way to collect data is through one-on-one meetings with teachers. While this would take longer than a survey, administrators could complete them simultaneously with the required HISD teacher appraisal system meetings to save time. Data collection should be done throughout the school year as teachers' needs change. Administrators need to set time aside to review the data and determine a plan of action. Lastly, administrators need to create time to provide hands-on support when a teacher asks for it. While time is a limited resource, the

time to provide support needs to take precedence above all. This was the greatest frustration among all participants.

Teacher Workload

The main resource needed for reducing HISD teachers' workload is time. Time needs to be set aside to determine a plan of action for district standardized testing. Complaints of substantial amounts of standardized testing between all participants influenced the recommendation. District leaders need to consolidate the tests to reduce the number of exams throughout a school year or determine which tests can be disregarded. Participant teachers are frustrated with the incentives and accountability regarding standardized testing. District leaders need to set aside time to determine a plan for getting rid of accountability measures, such as paid bonuses, as most teachers see them as additional stress and unfair to their abilities (Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). The district will save money by not rewarding testing incentives for performance.

In addition to setting aside time to determine a plan of action for district standardized testing, time needs to be allocated to determining a plan to extend deadlines and increase notices for all paperwork and testing required of teachers. Interview and focus group teachers request extended deadlines for the mandated testing and required paperwork. A plan of action to expand deadlines lets teachers teach what they need and prepare for the test without having to rush everything.

Lastly, district leaders need to create a policy shared with all school principals that requires meetings to take place outside a teacher's allotted planning period. HISD teachers interviewed were overwhelmed with the amount of paperwork, lesson planning, and grading they have to do with little time to complete these tasks. Several participants complained that their planning time was taken for ARD, IEP, or administration meetings. These teachers are staying after hours to complete job-related tasks, leading to their frustration and burnout.

School Resources

Improving school resources will be the costliest recommendation to improve the low teacher retention rate for HISD (Bowden & Davis, 2020). Complaints from participants regarding HISD resources included outdated curriculum, constantly changing curriculum, and lack of materials. First, the district needs to be accurate on the number of materials purchased. In the writer's experience, some adopted curriculums have included too many textbooks, while other subjects have not had enough. HISD needs to ensure that enough textbooks are purchased for every student in the district in the chosen curriculum, without purchasing more than necessary. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) allots a certain amount of money for each district to purchase curriculum and materials (Mitchell, 2022). If this is not enough to cover physical textbook materials, it is recommended that HISD purchase digital textbook licenses. Digital resources can be nearly 50% cheaper than physical textbooks (Staff Writers, 2022). Digital textbooks, unlike physical textbooks, are modified regularly, keeping them up to date after time has passed (Dani, 2023).

Second, to improve school resources and limit teachers' feelings of frustrations, it is suggested HISD limit the number of yearly changes in purchasing new curriculum. In the four years the writer has been an HISD teacher, the reading curriculum has changed three times. Once a curriculum is adopted, new materials need to be purchased for all HISD schools. Teachers must spend time attending professional development courses to learn the new curriculum. Before purchasing a new curriculum, district leaders need to meet with school leaders and other stakeholders. Data collection determined some campuses do not use the district-adopted curriculum but instead rely on supplemental materials that better fit their population. If schools would like different curriculums and materials, the district should allow campus leaders to decide what curriculums are purchased for their individual school. This would ensure that each school gets appropriate resources for their respective populations.

Lastly, funds need to be allocated to provide equal materials to all HISD schools. Teachers interviewed complained about the lack of technology on their campuses. One participant explained that a lack of technology at her campus is because not all schools in the district receive the same funding. The writer, who has served on a HISD budget committee for her campus, observed Title 1 and Magnet schools receive additional federal funding, while neighborhood schools receive none. Without additional funding at neighborhood schools, there is not money to provide adequate resources for all students. In the state of Texas, school boards and personnel make most of the decisions regarding budget for Texas schools (Chen, 2022). Therefore, HISD leaders need to spend time constructing a plan that provides additional funding to schools that do not receive additional federal funding. This would provide equal resources to all campuses in HISD.

Timeline

A plan for implementation of recommendations is needed to help solve the problem of low teacher retention rate for HISD. The timeline for increasing administrative support, reducing teacher workload, and improving school resources is explained in this section.

Administrative Support

Implementation of increasing administrative support will take approximately one calendar year to complete and is expected to be ongoing with each consecutive school year. See Table 6 for the timeline of administrative support implementation timeline.

Table 6

Timeline of Administrative Support Implementation

Date	Action Item
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June 5-30, 2023	Administrators research behavior support programs through engaging in professional development courses, collaborative meetings with other school leaders, reading books and/or internet articles.
July 1-28, 2023	Campus administrators decide on and develop a behavior support program for their campus. They determine student expectations, consequences, and the roles of staff members.
July 31, 2023	Administrators develop a presentation on the new behavior support program that will be implemented for the 2023-2024 school year. It will be shared with teachers during back-to-school training.
August 14, 2023	Administrators share the behavior program with teachers.
August 14-28, 2023	Administrators determine a way they will collect data from teachers regarding support they will need for the school year. This may include creating a Google form, survey, or scheduled one-on-one meetings.
August 28, 2023	Administrators share the behavior program with students.
September 2023- June 2024	Administrators collaborate with teachers regularly to support their needs throughout the school year. They listen to all feedback from teachers and adjust accordingly.
June 6, 2024	Administrators conduct a faculty meeting to discuss pros/cons of the behavior support program that was implemented.
Summer 2024	Administrators will determine changes to the behavior support program moving forward for to the next school year.

Teacher Workload

Reducing teacher workload implementation will take approximately three months to complete. See Table 7 for the timeline of reducing teacher workload implementation timeline.

Table 7

Timeline of Reducing Teacher Workload Implementation

Date	Action Items
June 5, 2023	District leaders review the current standardized testing schedule for each grade level.
June 6, 2023	District leaders determine a plan of action to reduce the amount of district testing for each grade.
June 7, 2023	District leaders create a policy that disregards any incentives and accountabilities regarding district and state standardized testing.
July 3, 2023	District leaders determine ways to expand deadlines for testing and paperwork for teachers during the 2023-2024 school year.
August 1, 2023	District leaders create a policy that requires all school meetings to take place outside a teacher's allotted planning period.
August 14, 2023	District leaders share new testing schedules, deadline expectations, and updated policies with school principals and teachers.

School Resources

Improving school resources will take approximately three months and be ongoing every school year. See the timeline in Table 8 for increasing school resources.

Table 8*Timeline of Improving School Resources Implementation*

Date	Action Items
June 5, 2023	District leaders meet with school principals and other stakeholders, such as teachers, to determine which curriculum will be used for the 2023-2024 school year.
June 12, 2023	District leaders, with feedback from school principals, purchase new or supplemental curriculum for the 2023-2024 and future school years, purchasing digital copies if able.
July 3, 2023	District leaders begin to develop or purchase professional development courses to support teachers with implementation of new or current curriculum.
July 3, 2023	District leaders meet with school principals to determine what resources each school needs and ways to allocate supplemental funding.
August 14, 2023	Based on enrollment, district leaders need to ensure enough textbooks are ordered for each student at all campuses.
August 14, 2023	School leadership determine fundraisers to purchase supplemental resources for their campus.
2023-2024 school year	Schools hold fundraisers to acquire additional school resources.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations to solve the problem of teacher retention for Houston Independent School District (HISD) in Houston, Texas. The problem was that 25% of teachers resigned from HISD (Carpenter, 2019). This chapter presented the Recommendations, the Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders, Resources Needed, Timeline, and Summary. Three recommendations were made, including increasing administrative support, reducing teacher workload, and improving school-wide resources.

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Appendices

Appendix A



HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center
4400 West 18th Street • Houston, Texas 77092-8501

Millard House II
Superintendent of Schools

www.HoustonISD.org
www.twitter.com/HoustonISD

Allison E. Matney, Ed.D.
Executive Officer
Research and Accountability Department
Tel: 713-556-6700 • Fax: 713-556-6730

July 7, 2022

Jordyn Jarrett
2630 Bissonnet St, Apt 3110
Houston, Texas 77005

Dear Ms. Jarrett:

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is pleased to approve the research titled "Recommendations for Solving the Problem of Low Teacher Retention for Houston Independent School District." The purpose of this study is to explore ways to increase the teacher retention rate in HISD. This study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of doctoral degree requirements at Liberty University. The projected date of completion is May 31, 2024.


Approval to conduct the study in HISD is contingent on your meeting the following conditions:

- The targeted study population is five to ten teachers at West University Elementary, Twain Elementary, Pershing Middle School, and/or Sharpstown High School. It is at the principal's discretion to participate in the study.
- Principals will be asked to grant permission for the researcher to attend a staff meeting or an event to recruit teacher study participants.
- Study participants will be asked to engage in interviews and focus groups off campus. The interviews and focus groups will consist of approximately 10 questions that explore reasons for choosing teaching, satisfaction of the profession, and workplace satisfaction. The sessions will last no more than one hour.
- Voluntary consent is required of all study participants.
- The researcher is responsible for data collection. A fee may be assessed if the HISD Department of Research and Accountability assists in the data collection process.
- This research study does not interfere with the district's instructional/testing program.
- The researcher must follow the guidelines of HISD and Liberty University regarding the protection of human subjects and confidentiality of data.
- Data will only be reported in statistical summaries that preclude the identification of the district or any school, student, or staff member participating in the study. The school(s) and district will not be named in published documents.
- The HISD Department of Research and Accountability will monitor this study to ensure compliance with ethical conduct guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) as well as the disclosure of student records outlined in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- To eliminate potential risks to study participants, the reporting of proposed changes in research activities must be promptly submitted to the HISD Department of Research and Accountability for approval prior to implementing changes. Non-compliance to this guideline could affect the approval of future research studies in HISD.
- The final report must be submitted to the HISD Department of Research and Accountability within 30 days of completion.
- Non-compliance with these conditions could affect the approval of future research studies in HISD.

Any other changes or modifications to the current proposal must be submitted to the Department of Research and Accountability for approval. Should you need additional information or have any questions concerning the process, please call (713) 556-6700.

Sincerely,


Allison Matney, Ed.D.
Executive Officer
Research and Accountability Department

AM: vh

cc: Shawn Bird, Ed.D.
Denise Watts, Ed.D.
Shana Perry, Ed.D.
Yolanda Rodriguez
Geovanny Ponce, Ed.D.
Cesar Martinez
Scott Disch
Michele Rawson
Steven Shetzer, Ed.D.
Dan De Leon

Appendix B
Interview Questions

1. Why are you an educator?
2. How would you describe your relationship with school leadership?
3. How do you feel supported at your school?
4. How would you describe your relationship with colleagues?
5. What opportunities do you have to show leadership among colleagues at your campus?
6. How would you describe your school's resources?
7. How would you describe the level of autonomy you have making classroom decisions?
8. What are the most stressful aspects of your job?
9. What would cause you to leave your employment with HISD?
10. How would you solve the problem of teacher retention?

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

1. What factors lead you to decide to leave HISD?
2. What is your current role after leaving HISD?
3. How would you describe your relationship with former school leadership?
4. How would you describe your relationships with colleagues from your previous school(s) within HISD?
5. How could you have felt more supported as a teacher?
6. How would you describe your former school's resources?
7. How would you describe your overall level of job satisfaction while working in HISD?
8. What were the most stressful aspects as a teacher within HISD?
9. How would you solve the problem of teacher retention at HISD?
10. Would you like to add any additional information?

Appendix D

Demographics Survey

Instructions: Choose one response for each prompt below.

1. How many years have you been working as a teacher?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- >20

2. How many years have you been working as a teacher in this school district?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- >20

3. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

4. What is your ethnicity?

- White
- African American

- Asian
- Native American or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino
- Two or More Ethnicities
- Other

5. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- In Grad School
- Doctoral Degree

6. What grade level do you teach?

- Elementary (K-5)
- Middle (6-8)
- High School (9-12)

Survey Questions

Instructions: Choose one response for each prompt below.

1. Teachers have an influence over curriculum decisions.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Teachers have an influence on instructional practices.

5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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3. Most of the school staff have a unified vision.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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4. School facilities are well looked after and are up to safety standards.

5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. I feel supported in my daily tasks as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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6. I trust my school administrators.

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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7. I feel stressed to accomplish what is asked of me as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. I feel recognized for my accomplishments as a teacher.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Compensation is a factor in my decision to work for HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. I am provided opportunities for professional advancement in my career.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I am provided with enough opportunities for professional development.

5	4	3	2	1
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Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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12. Overall, I am satisfied with my role as a teacher in HISD.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree