

## ABSTRACT

### Influencing New Teacher Retention: A Qualitative Single Case Study on K–12 Teachers' Experiences in Their First Five Years of Teaching

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The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. The problem this study addressed was the high attrition rates among early-career teachers, which have detrimental effects on the stability and quality of the education system. Understanding the perceived influences contributing to teacher retention is essential for developing effective strategies to support and retain teachers.

Following a qualitative approach, I collected saturated details of the experiences of new teachers using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework guided the alignment of the problem, purpose, and data collection protocols and procedures. By utilizing this framework, I explored personal correlates, such as teachers' backgrounds and job satisfaction; school correlates, including school leadership, and a supportive environment; external correlates,

such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample included four teachers who shared their experiences and perspectives on teacher retention.

The findings revealed several important insights. First, teachers' educational backgrounds and qualifications significantly impacted their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. Then, a supportive school environment and positive relationships with colleagues and administrators influenced teacher retention, including collaboration among teachers and fostering positive student relationships. Last, external correlates such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, curriculum expectations, and union membership also influenced teacher retention.

These findings have important implications for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. Ongoing professional development opportunities and recognition of their contributions are essential in supporting teachers. School administrators should focus on fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, valuing, and appreciating teachers' work. Policymakers should consider the impact of external influences on teacher retention while supporting teacher unions and addressing workload expectations. By addressing these correlates, educational systems can create an environment that supports and retains highly skilled and committed teachers.

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Influencing New Teacher Retention: A Qualitative Single Case Study on  
K–12 Teachers’ Experiences in Their  
First Five Years of Teaching

by

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A Dissertation

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## DEDICATION

To my mother, who always saw my potential.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Background and Needs Assessment

#### *Introduction*

Employee turnover occurs for various reasons, including dissatisfaction with working conditions, better opportunities, personal life changes, or excessive workloads (Smith & Johnson, 2020). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021a), two to three million Americans leave their jobs every month (Skopovi et al., 2021). In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, resignations began skyrocketing in the spring of 2021; the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022a) determined that more than four million Americans—almost 3% of the workforce—left their job. By July 2021, the United States had more than 10 million open positions (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022a). Historically high attrition rates led Texas A&M University psychology professor Anthony Klotz to coin the term “Great Resignation” to describe American employees’ mass exodus (Cohen, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic impacted all industries differently, with the fields of technology, healthcare, and education experiencing the sharpest increase in turnover rates (Klein & Smith, 2021).

Even before the pandemic’s onset, the education field had long struggled with high turnover rates, especially among new teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Ingersoll et al. (2018) highlighted that within the first five years of their new career, 44% of teachers leave their positions. High education turnover rates have only worsened since the “Great Resignation” phenomenon (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). As education grapples with

the “Great Resignation” and the increasingly uncertain landscape for K–12 teachers, educational institutions must seek to understand better what influences new teacher retention. This single case study aimed to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Despite high attrition rates, COVID-19 has exacerbated turnover in many industries (Peakon, 2021). Resignations began to skyrocket in the spring of 2021. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost 3% of the nation’s workforce had quit by July 2022. More than 10 million job openings existed in the United States by July 2021 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022b). Mid-age employees (30–45) exhibited a 20% increase in resignation rates from the previous year (Cook, 2021). In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, the fields of healthcare, technology, and education had the highest resignation rates due to significantly increased demand (Cook, 2021). Employees leave positions for a variety of reasons: burnout, extreme workloads, refocusing on what matters in their lives, more flexible scheduling, or to find rewards and recognition in their work (Cook, 2021; Skopovi et al., 2021; Peakon, 2021). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, attrition rates have amplified across industries, and unique challenges and circumstances have created a surge in resignations.

Teacher turnover reflects this broader turnover problem in the United States (Brown & Schainker, 2008; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). One-third of all American employees leave their jobs within the first six months of starting, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2021b) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey.

Turnover rates in education represent 8% of teachers leaving the profession every year, equating to approximately 810,000 teachers leaving yearly (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The high teacher turnover rates in the United States illustrate a widespread problem in various ways and underscore the need for targeted interventions to address this persistent issue and ensure the stability of the education industry.

High attrition rates among new teachers deprive schools and students of the benefits experienced educators provide and hinder the overall effectiveness of the education system (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). According to Ingersoll et al. (2018), almost half of all new teachers leave the profession before their fifth year. Studies completed across the past two decades demonstrate that experienced educators are more effective teachers (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ladd & Sorensen, 2017). For example, students of experienced teachers score higher on standardized tests and attend school more frequently, according to a report by the Learning Policy Institute (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Furthermore, Kini and Podolsky (2016) found that teachers with more experience teaching the same grade and subject within a single school district positively impact staff morale. Experienced teachers not only benefit students, but they also have a significant positive influence on their fellow teachers, providing valuable guidance, support, and fostering a positive work environment (Hanushek et al., 2004; Kini & Podolsky, 2016; Ladd & Sorensen, 2017).

High turnover rates among new teachers can have serious and lasting consequences for school districts. School districts face several challenges when their teacher attrition rates are high, including financial (Glazer, 2018; Levy et al., 2012; Sorenson & Ladd, 2020; Synar & Maiden, 2012), low staff morale (Hall, 2019; Setiawan

et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012), and low levels of student achievement (Boyd et al., 2005; DeFeo et al., 2017). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) found that teacher turnover negatively impacts teacher labor markets and wage gaps.

Currently, Maryland aligns with national trends in teacher retention, as its diverse counties face challenges in retaining new educators (Janulis, 2017; Register et al., 2020). According to the Learning Policy Institute (2018), Maryland achieved a 2.13 out of 5 on the teacher attractiveness scale, assessing influences that affect teacher supply, turnover, and school equity. The National Education Statistics measured how desirable a teaching career is in each state, with one being the least desirable and five being the most desirable. The results of this study showed that more than 10% of surveyed teachers planned to leave teaching (Learning Policy Institute, 2018); Maryland ranked 46th in the country, tied with Mississippi and New Mexico (Learning Policy Institute, 2018). According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE, 2020), Maryland has a teacher turnover rate of 7%, slightly below the national average of 8%. According to MSDE (2020), approximately 40% of the total turnover occurs among teachers within their first five years of teaching. As with national trends, Maryland schools report high levels of teacher turnover in specific content areas, such as English as a second language, science, mathematics, and special education (MSDE, 2020). Considering these findings, Maryland must address teacher retention challenges to maintain a high-quality education system and align with the national call to attract and retain teachers.

For that reason, teachers in their first five years were especially vulnerable to the Great Resignation phenomenon (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). Forty-eight percent of teachers nationwide are considering a career change because of additional stress from the

COVID-19 pandemic and many school districts' switch to remote learning (Lieberman, 2021). Teacher shortages became especially evident as school districts began transitioning back to in-person instruction (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). Experts warned that burnout and turnover rates would continue to increase due to the additional workloads for remaining teachers (Carver-Thomas et al., 2021). Teachers in their first five years of teaching face a significant risk from the Great Resignation.

As if teacher retention challenges were not enough, the state of Maryland saw a significant drop in teacher hiring in the years immediately following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (January, 2022). As a result of the growing turnover crisis across the state, counties worked endlessly to address COVID-19-related problems such as staff shortages, helping teachers transition between instructional models and other unexpected, continuous challenges that occurred throughout the pandemic (Atelsek, 2021; January, 2021). As schools returned in-person, they faced new challenges, including social distancing and contact tracing (Atelsek, 2021).

Thus, COVID-19 outbreaks strained teachers across a large district in northern Maryland, with more than 1,000 students in quarantine weekly because of the pandemic throughout the 2020–2021 school year (Atelsek, 2021). Despite daily announcements of outbreaks, teachers had to continue planning curricula to meet the needs of students in class and those absent. In February 2021, the school district implemented a hybrid model that involved teachers instructing half the class through Zoom while simultaneously teaching the other half in person, necessitating the enforcement of social distancing measures (Pusatory, 2021). In addition, teachers had to monitor classroom contact tracing, maintain an ongoing list of the students' interactions with one another, and

modify everyday activities that engaged students, such as group projects, partner work, and community circles (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). As such, I designed this study to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching.

### *Literature Review*

After the COVID-19 pandemic, industries nationwide continued experiencing high attrition rates (Peakon, 2021). Because education has historically experienced high turnover rates (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Johnson et al., 2012), I explored the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). The following literature review argues that education has an ongoing problem with new employee retention rates despite recent efforts to address the issue.

Seven sections and a synthesis of literature comprise this literature review. The first section provides an overview of employee retention across all industries nationwide, followed by literature on employee retention since the COVID-19 pandemic. The second section focuses on the study’s specific lens of education retention nationally and provides an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic has specifically affected education retention rates. The third section reviews the consequences of attrition, such as economic costs and low staff morale. The fourth provides insight into the additional consequences for school districts with high attritions, such as student opportunity gaps. Because the field of education frames the study, the fifth section offers teachers’ reasons for leaving and moving positions by utilizing the categories outlined in Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher



Attrition and Retention framework: personal correlates, school correlates, and external correlates. The sixth section focuses on the literature surrounding districts' efforts to reduce attrition, followed by the closing section, narrowing the focus to reducing teacher attrition. The review ends with a synthesis of the literature and an analysis of how the literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the study.

### *Nationwide Employee Retention Rates*

Industries nationwide need help to retain employees (Block, 2016). The average employee turnover rate was 40% before the COVID-19 pandemic (Mahan et al., 2019). Turnover rates in hospitality, construction, and retail exceeded 50% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021a). Every year, on average, U.S. companies lose 18% of the workforce due to turnover, around 12% of which is voluntary, the rest being involuntary forms of turnover, such as terminations and layoffs (Akinyooye & Nezamis, 2021; Mahan et al., 2019). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021a) reported that the number of people leaving their positions had trended upward for 10 consecutive years.

In addition, after a global shutdown, the loss of many lives, and two years of restrictions, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the nation's workforce (Akinyooye & Nezamis, 2021; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020) and the American economy, with more than 28 million new unemployment benefit claims submitted in March and April 2020 alone (Barrero et al., 2020; U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). In addition, the United States economy shrank by 4.8% from February to April 2020 (Barrero et al., 2020), leaving businesses to make the tough economic decisions of reducing salaries, laying off employees, or even closing their doors for good (Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020). Across the nation, the number of separations, including layoffs, quits, and

discharges, increased by 20% between December 2019 and December 2020 (Akinyooye & Nezamis, 2021). The profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's workforce and economy resulted in widespread unemployment, economic contraction, and challenging decisions for businesses (Akinyooye & Nezamis, 2021; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020).

### *Retention Rates in the Field of Education*

Although retention is a pervasive issue regardless of industry, the field of education has a substantial retention problem (Brown & Schainker, 2008; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; 2019). According to Brown and Schainker (2008):

Teacher retention is a national crisis... as birth rates increase, immigration flourishes, class sizes increase, and retirements loom (i.e., 37% of teachers are over the age of 50), many school districts in the United States are struggling to find qualified applicants to teach in their classrooms. (p. 13)

Eight percent of educators leave the field of public education each year, while an additional 8% transfer to different schools, meaning that 16% of teachers change positions annually (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Schools hired nine out of 10 new teachers as replacements for those who left voluntarily, with two-thirds of those departures being resignations rather than retirements (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic has left many teachers experiencing higher levels of stress and burnout (Diliberti et al., 2021). Beginning in the spring of 2020, school closures nationwide forced teachers to adapt to different conditions and unexpected changes. Throughout the school year, schools attempted to reopen by utilizing virtual, in-person, and hybrid learning models (Diliberti et al., 2021; Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). A RAND survey completed by Steiner and Woo (2021) found that

during the 2020–2021 school year, one in four teachers considered leaving their current position. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on teachers, leading to heightened stress levels and burnout. The abrupt shift to remote and hybrid learning models, coupled with the challenges of school closures, has necessitated significant adaptability from educators. The surveys reflect the impact of COVID-19, indicating that approximately one in four teachers contemplated leaving their current positions during the 2020–2021 school year. Addressing teachers’ well-being and support needs has become an urgent priority to ensure their resilience and retention in the education system.

Emerging studies on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic consistently indicate higher turnover rates among early-career teachers, those with fewer than three years of experience, compared to their more experienced counterparts (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021; Zamarro et al., 2021). These findings align with pre-COVID-19 research that also demonstrated the elevated risk of attrition among new teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Moulthrop et al., 2006; Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). In a recent comparison of research conducted in 2020 and 2021, Zamarro et al. (2021) found that of the 40% of teachers who considered leaving the profession during the pandemic, a significant portion ultimately decided to exit the field of education altogether. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted early-career teachers, exacerbated turnover rates, and intensified the risk of leaving the education sector entirely (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Moulthrop et al., 2006; Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021).

### *Consequences of Attrition*

The negative consequences of employee attrition extend beyond companies and impact the greater business landscape. Research conducted by Brown et al. (2015), Frye et al. (2020), and Setiawan et al. (2020) highlighted the detrimental impact of high turnover rates, such as inferior customer service, low productivity, and increased labor costs. These performance problems hinder organizational success and result in financial burdens and decreased staff morale (Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). Therefore, reducing employee attrition is essential for the well-being of individual companies and the overall health and competitiveness of the business landscape.

The first consequence seen in addition to high attrition is high economic costs (Marsden, 2016; Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). Employee turnover costs businesses an average of \$15,000 per U.S. worker (Mahan et al., 2019). Hall (2019) reported similar findings, stating that employee attrition costs a company 33% of an average employee's annual salary. These expenses derive from hiring costs, recruiting, advertising for positions, and training for new employees (Mahan et al., 2019). Additionally, new employees do not produce the same quality or quantity of work as experienced employees within the first three months of hiring (Hall, 2019). The public is most affected by the financial impact of employee turnover (Marsden, 2016).

The second consequence of high attrition is low staff morale (Hall, 2019; Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). When an employee leaves a position, the employees left behind are the ones who must make up the work (Hall, 2019). As these experienced employees work to complete the additional tasks, they must train incoming employees, leaving those veteran employees resentful and frustrated in their position (Hall, 2019). Employee turnover is associated with job satisfaction and

expected overtime (Setiawan et al., 2020). Companies stretched thin by turnover struggle with manageable workloads as larger workloads lead employees to experience increased stress and burnout (Hall, 2019; Subramony & Holtom, 2012).

### *Consequences Specifically Within Education*

Just as employee attrition is costly for companies, teacher attrition creates many issues for school districts. Decades of data show the burdens on districts due to high teacher turnover rates, such as economic costs (Glazer, 2018; Greenberg et al., 2016; Levy et al., 2012; Sorenson & Ladd, 2020; Sauve, 2017; Synar & Maiden, 2012), low staff morale (Hall, 2019; Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012), and opportunity gaps for students (Boyd et al., 2005; Loeb et al., 2005; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Understanding the effects of teacher attrition is crucial to explaining why the education field needs higher retention rates.

In addition, teacher attrition creates a massive cost for school districts (Glazer, 2018; Levy et al., 2012; Sorenson & Ladd, 2020; Synar & Maiden, 2012). Learning Policy Institute (2017b) found that the average cost of filling a teacher position is \$20,000, with the national cost ranging from two billion to seven billion annually (Glazer, 2018). Synar and Maiden (2012) developed a model to estimate the financial costs of teacher turnover. Researchers organized teacher turnover costs into three main areas: “costs of a departing teacher, hiring and training costs of a new teacher, and the development of performance productivity in a new teacher” (Synar & Maiden, 2012, p. 130). DeFeo et al. (2017) found that costs associated with teacher turnover included providing a substitute for the classes the teacher leaves behind, recruiting, and hiring new teachers, and training the new teachers. Districts then spend most of their funding

dedicated to professional development on recruitment (Levy et al., 2012; Sorenson & Ladd, 2020; Synar & Maiden, 2012).

As a result of high turnover, when districts must spend more on recruiting costs, they are less able to dedicate money to retention solutions such as additional staff resources or professional development for important topics such as stress relief or social-emotional programs (Greenberg et al., 2016). As reviewed in industrywide consequences, staff who experience burnout and high stress lead to higher turnover (Hall, 2019; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). When teachers experience more social-emotional and mindfulness programming, positive outcomes include reduced stress, lower teacher burnout, and lower teacher turnover (Collie et al., 2012; Greenberg et al., 2016; Sauve, 2017).

In addition, as demonstrated in other industries, teacher attrition negatively influences school and staff morale (Hall, 2019; Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). High-turnover schools often fill vacant positions with substitutes or uncertified teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Sorenson & Ladd, 2020). Another measure taken by administrators is to combine classes, overloading already large class sizes and adding to the burdens experienced by veteran teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). As such, Greenberg et al. (2016) found that schools with the highest teacher turnover rates experienced the most negative schoolwide correlations.

Lastly, the impact of teacher attrition extends beyond the individual classrooms and has significant implications for student achievement. Even when a teacher who quits is not directly responsible for their instruction, turnover affects all students within the

same grade level (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). When teachers leave their positions, they not only leave behind vacant classrooms but also take with them valuable experience and knowledge (Synar & Martin, 2012). Numerous studies have explored the correlation between student achievement and replacing experienced teachers with less-experienced ones (Boyd et al., 2005; Loeb et al., 2005; Sutchter et al., 2016). Students who have experienced teacher turnover tend to exhibit average standardized test scores that are 10% lower (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). In addition, research suggests that teacher turnover has a particularly detrimental effect on students whose families have low incomes and those from majority-minority backgrounds (Boyd et al., 2005; Loeb et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). These findings underscore the importance of addressing teacher attrition to mitigate its detrimental effects on student learning outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations.

### *Correlates that Influence Teacher Attrition*

Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework highlights three main correlates—personal, school, and external—to categorize why teachers leave and change positions (p. 12). This framework aligns with other research in the field, such as the study conducted by Ingersoll and Smith (2003), which emphasizes the significance of working conditions and job satisfaction in teacher turnover. By investigating these correlates and incorporating insights from multiple sources, this literature review illuminates the complex relationships between various influences and teacher attrition. Understanding these influences helps identify why teachers leave their positions and provides valuable insights into developing strategies that can potentially enhance teacher retention.

*Personal correlates.* Teacher characteristics such as age, race, employment status, and satisfaction with education as a career are significant predictors of teacher attrition (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Perera et al., 2019; Sass et al., 2012; Smith, 2007). Older teachers are less likely to leave education (Sass et al., 2012). When considering teachers leaving education, retirement only accounts for 38% of the teachers that leave the education profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015). White teachers are at the most significant attrition risk compared to teachers of color (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015; Sass et al., 2012). Part-time teachers are more likely to move to a different school and leave the education profession than full-time teachers (Jones et al., 2011; Smith, 2007). Last, as stated by Perera et al. (2019), “teachers become dissatisfied with teaching, leading to increased absenteeism, illness, and ultimately attrition” (p. 186). Teachers who are satisfied with their profession are less likely to leave their teaching position (Goldhaber et al., 2011; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Perera et al., 2019).

Teacher qualifications, such as certifications, years of experience, and academic ability, also function as a personal correlation that influences teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Inexperienced and younger teachers are more likely to leave than veteran teachers (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011). Certified teachers are more likely to stay in education than those without certification (Billingsley, 2004; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Additionally, teachers with higher academic ability, such as those who score higher on standardized tests including the SAT or National Teacher Exam, are more



likely to leave the profession than those with lower scores (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011).

*School correlates.* School organizational characteristics influence teacher attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Yada et al., 2019). Among the defining characteristics that leadership can cultivate is the encouragement of collaboration amongst staff (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Yada et al., 2019), implementing mentorship programs (Kardos & Johnson, 2010; Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), and providing general support to teacher and staff (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011; Thibodeaux et al., 2015). The last school organizational characteristic that influences teacher attrition is the overall school environment (Boyd et al., 2011; de la Torre et al., 2014; Feng, 2009; Grant et al., 2020; Naslund & Ponomariov, 2019; Sass et al., 2012).

Teacher collaboration, or the lack thereof, influences teacher attrition. Schools with higher levels of teacher collaboration are less likely to experience attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Yada et al. (2019) continued researching the correlation between teacher attrition and collaboration. They found that encouraging collaboration amongst teachers and giving teachers more opportunities to interact within the building limits attrition.

Equally important, teacher mentorship programs that allow new teachers to collaborate with experienced teachers influence teacher attrition (Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Using data from a Schools and Staffing Survey, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that when teachers receive mentors in the same subject and participate in induction activities, they are less likely to leave their position. New teachers

experiencing induction and mentoring are more likely to stay in education (Mihaly et al., 2015). However, Kardos and Johnson (2010) determined that schools should consider subject fields, beliefs about education, and the level of support needed when mentor-matching.

In addition, the support received from a school's administration impacts teachers' retention. Teachers are less likely to leave education with a robust and supportive administration (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011). As a result of dissatisfaction with their school's administration, 21% of teachers left education (Learning Policy Institute, 2017a). Thibodeaux et al. (2015) investigated teachers' intention to leave based on the principal's behaviors when surveying teachers across five school districts. Lack of administrative support was a significant reason for teachers leaving the profession.

The overall school environment also influences teacher attrition. Research shows that schools with higher student disciplinary incidents in the classroom are more likely to experience high teacher attrition rates (Boyd et al., 2011; Feng, 2009; 2010; Naslund & Ponomariov, 2019; Sass et al., 2012). Autonomy in the classroom influences whether teachers stay in the profession (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020). de la Torre et al. (2014) found that the relationship between autonomy and teacher attrition may depend on the years of experience teachers have in the classroom. New teachers experience isolation with too much independence in the school (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020).

Another influence categorized as a school correlate is the relationship between teacher attrition and school resources. Gritz and Theobald (1996) studied the effects of

school district spending in correlation with attrition. Their findings show that teachers stay longer when provided adequate teaching materials and better-resourced facilities, with no difference in attrition rates when schools provide classroom aides or smaller classroom sizes for teachers (Gritz & Theobald, 1996). Continued research agreed with these findings (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004; Loeb et al., 2005). Loeb et al. (2005) found that only large class sizes of 33 or more influence attrition. Marchand and Weber (2020) investigated a rise in public funding among school districts and found correlations between revenue growth, higher student achievement, and lower teacher attrition rates.

Likewise, student body characteristics influence teacher retention, including the presence of students of color (Boyd et al., 2005; Feng, 2009; Grooms et al., 2021), students with disabilities (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020), and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Feng, 2009; Fulbeck, 2014). Schools with students of color have higher attrition rates (Boyd et al., 2005; Feng, 2009; Hanushek et al., 2004; Loeb et al., 2005). The relationship between teacher attrition and student body characteristics, particularly students of color, students with disabilities, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, underscores the need for targeted efforts to address the disparities and challenges faced by these student populations in order to reduce attrition rates and promote equitable educational outcomes (Boyd et al., 2005; Feng, 2009; Fulbeck, 2014; Gilmour & Wehby, 2020; Hanushek et al., 2004; Loeb et al., 2005).

Furthermore, schools with high populations of students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds and students of color have a 50% greater risk of experiencing high teacher attrition rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). However, other

research suggests that many new teachers enter the profession in schools with students of color and leave not because of the students themselves but because they experience cultural mismatch (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Bettini & Park, 2021). In addition to a school culture that fosters low expectations and focuses on controlling students, teachers face the requirement of teaching curricula that have little relevance to students' lives (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006, 2011; Bettini & Park, 2021; Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008; Grooms et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2015). Additionally, Title I schools have a 70% greater risk of experiencing high teacher attrition rates among science and mathematics teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). The complex interplay between student demographics, cultural mismatch, low expectations, curriculum misalignment, and the hiring of Title I science and mathematics teachers underscores the need for comprehensive reforms that address these correlates to mitigate the high rates of teacher attrition in schools serving students from low SES backgrounds and students of color (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006, 2011; Bettini & Park, 2021; Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008; Grooms et al., 2021; Rodriguez, 2015).

Furthermore, some studies suggest a correlation between general education classrooms with more students with disabilities and higher teacher attrition rates (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Gilmour & Wehby, 2020). Gilmour and Wehby (2020) investigated using a qualitative approach to determine if the number of students with disabilities in a general education classroom influences public education and special education teacher attrition rates. The researchers found increased general education teacher attrition when classes consisted of students with disabilities (Gilmour & Wehby, 2020). However, the study found no correlation between special education teachers and

higher attrition rates, suggesting that the attrition may be due to a lack of training or proper resources (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Gilmour & Wehby, 2020). Other studies found little association between teacher attrition and working with students with disabilities (Djonko-Moore, 2016; Feng, 2010).

High teacher attrition rates often occur in schools where the students come from homes with a low SES (Feng, 2009; Fulbeck, 2014; Hanushek et al., 2004; Loeb et al., 2005). Schools in low-SES areas can experience attrition rates as high as 80% for teachers within their first three years (Zhai et al., 2020). Fulbeck (2014) studied the association between financial incentives and teacher mobility in schools with low SES status and found a significant decrease in teachers who left the school when given monetary bonuses.

Recent developments have shown that relational demography, such as race and gender congruency amongst schools, plays a role in teacher attrition (Feng, 2009; Grissom et al., 2012; Grissom et al., 2016; Grooms et al., 2021). Teachers are less likely to leave their position when they are of the same race as their principal or most of their student body (Feng, 2009; Grissom et al., 2012; Grissom et al., 2016). Additional research has explored the correlation between gender congruency among teachers and principals, finding that teachers are less likely to leave their position when they are of the same gender as their principals (Grissom et al., 2012; Grissom et al., 2016).

*External correlates.* The initial external correlate teachers confront is navigating heightened levels of accountability, encompassing the myriad expectations imposed upon them by governmental entities and society. Public schools in the United States have been subject to government mandates for accountability through standardized testing (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017). Consequently, the pressure to meet these goals has reduced teacher autonomy and increased accountability measures in curriculum and assessments. Research has shown a correlation between high-stakes accountability, teacher stress, and attrition (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). Furthermore, social pressure and declining respect for the teaching profession have also contributed to higher attrition rates (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Walker, 2022).

The government has required public schools to be accountable through standardized testing. Since 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) has mandated that every student receive access to education in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). There have been efforts to rework the ESEA, including a 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, the signing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2002, and most recently, The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. The last update included requiring schools to meet yearly progress goals (AYP) to receive federal funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

The pressure to meet the AYP goals has led to less teacher autonomy and higher levels of accountability measures on curriculum and assessments (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020; Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). Ryan et al. (2017) investigated the correlation between high-stakes accountability and teacher stress and found high correlations. Ryan et al. (2017) state that “test-based accountability indirectly affects teacher attrition by raising test stress and burnout overall, influencing attrition” (p. 9). Agreeing with Ryan et al. (2017), Podolsky et al. (2019) found that the third-most listed reason for leaving the teaching profession was the effect of accountability measures on teachers’ curriculum and teaching. Experienced teachers are more likely to leave their

jobs when schools create strict curriculum standards for testing accountability (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020; Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017).

Another perceived influence impacting higher attrition rates is the social pressures surrounding the teaching profession (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Walker, 2022). Dinham and Scott (2000) determined that the social pressures teachers experience affect their lives and careers. Matveev (2021) indicated that there had been a decline in status and respect given to the field of education. A 2022 National Education Association (NEA) survey found that 90% of teachers are experiencing burnout and additional stress since the COVID-19 pandemic (Walker, 2022). Upon returning to in-person school environments, the public exerted pressure on teachers, leading to feelings of demoralization and heightened stress levels (Walker, 2022). Ultimately, the social pressures surrounding the teaching profession, coupled with the decline in status and respect given to educators, have contributed to higher attrition rates, as evidenced by the widespread burnout and increased stress reported by teachers, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Walker, 2022).

Compensation is another external correlate affecting teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004; Milkovich & Newman, 2008; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Ryu and Jinnai's (2021) longitudinal analysis revealed a u-shaped correlation between salary and attrition. Agreeing with previous research (Feng, 2009; 2010; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Milkovich & Newman, 2008), Ryu and Jinnai's (2021) findings show that underpaid teachers feel unfairly treated, leading them to leave the profession. In 2015, the average teacher earned 11% less than the average worker with a college degree (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016). Yet, teachers receiving high pay will be more qualified and leave the profession for better

opportunities (Billingsley, 2004; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Additionally, Podolsky et al. (2019) determined that one-time bonuses do not affect retention unless paired with other incentives. Compensation is an external correlate influencing teacher attrition rate (Billingsley, 2004; Milkovich & Newman, 2008; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). On the other hand, well-compensated teachers may be more inclined to seek better opportunities elsewhere (Billingsley, 2004; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Despite the u-shape pattern of the relationship between salary and attrition, ensuring fair and competitive compensation, along with comprehensive incentives, is crucial for addressing the issue of teacher attrition and retaining highly qualified educators.

Last, another external correlate that influences teacher attrition includes participation in a union (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016). Kelly and Northrop (2015) analyzed the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey, focusing on the first three years to determine correlations between higher rates of attrition and college graduates. In their study of alternative certification programs, Redding and Smith (2016) found that more organizational support would reduce teacher attrition. Both studies conducted by Kelly and Northrop (2015) and Redding and Smith (2016) consistently demonstrate that teachers with union membership exhibit a significantly lower likelihood of leaving the teaching profession. Moreover, Jabber et al. (2020) discovered that schools affiliated with unions positively impact teacher retention and positively influence student outcomes.

### *Efforts to Reduce Attrition*

Organizations and employers across industries are designing ways to reduce attrition (Barry et al., 2008). Employers that report higher retention rates offer work



environments that include a positive work culture, value their frontline employees, and provide opportunities for growth, appropriate compensation, and equality within the work environment (Frye et al., 2020; Lam et al., 2001; Nei et al., 2015; Walsh & Taylor, 2007).

One measure to reduce attrition is for organizations to improve and support their work culture (Nei et al., 2015; Revesencio, 2015; Stamolampros et al., 2019). In their study, Brown et al. (2015) found that employees who see their jobs as exciting and face frequent challenges will exhibit higher levels of investment in their company and are less likely to leave. Revesencio (2015) found that happy employees are more in their work. Companies that invest in the right hire are more likely to maintain satisfied employees and a positive work environment (Auer et al., 2021).

Another effort to reduce attrition is to ensure organizational leaders value frontline employees (Stamolampros et al., 2019). The relationship between employees and their supervisors influences employee attrition (Gerstner & Day, 1997; Nei et al., 2015; Stamolampros et al., 2019), and employers who have worked to repair relationships have succeeded in reducing employee attrition (Nei et al., 2015; Stamolampros et al., 2019). Employees are challenging traditional leadership styles, and findings suggest that inclusive leaders who give value to their employees report higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity (Nei et al., 2015).

The third effort to reduce attrition works by focusing on increasing employee growth opportunities within the company (Al Balushi et al., 2022; Spencer et al., 2016; Stamolampros et al., 2019). When employees are stagnant in their work environment, they feel more isolated and begin to lack commitment to their position (Al Balushi et al., 2022). There are two ways organizations have successfully reduced attrition (Al Balushi

et al., 2022; Spencer et al., 2016; Stamolampros et al., 2019). First, companies may create a streamlined way for employees to become managers through in-house career development training programs (Al Balushi et al., 2022). Then, organizations may aid in helping employees grow professionally by offering tuition reimbursements or collaborating with local colleges or universities to allow employees to take classes at a more affordable price (Spencer et al., 2016).

Another effort to reduce attrition is to offer appropriate compensation. A positive relationship exists between a company offering competitive compensation and the company's ability to retain good employees (Horwitz, 2008; Kude et al., 2017; Ohunakin & Olugbade, 2022). Auer et al. (2021) found that employees' pay and the increases in pay overtime can influence their decision to stay with a company. Research shows a positive correlation between companies offering employee benefits and an employee's commitment to the organization (Jaworski et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2015). Some companies have offered unique benefits to newly hired employees to balance lower compensation, such as better insurance, flexible hours, work-from-home opportunities, or more paid time off (Jones, 2017).

Another strategy to reduce attrition is to focus on equality within the work environment. Researchers have investigated the influence of employees' perception of an organization's fairness and levels of attrition, defining fairness as when employees feel there is organizational justice in their workplace and when there is equality in the workload between leaders and employees (Fang et al., 2019; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010; Stamolampros et al., 2019). Some organizations are working to foster increased equality

in the workplace by offering diversity and social-emotional training and have seen reduced intent to leave employees as a result (Fang et al., 2019; Meisler, 2013).

### *Efforts to Reduce Teacher Attrition*

School districts have tried several measures to achieve lower teacher attrition rates. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) reported that the districts focusing on teacher compensation, teacher preparation, new teacher support, and overall teaching conditions experience less attrition. Mindfulness interventions may reduce teacher attrition rates by reducing stress and burnout (Jennings et al., 2017; Zarate et al., 2019).

The first effort to reduce the attrition that some districts have worked to implement is increasing teachers' compensation. Podolsky et al. (2019) explained that "increasing teachers' salaries and compensation can increase the quality and quantity of individuals preparing to be teachers, as well as reduce the likelihood that they will leave the classroom after they enter the profession" (p. 28). Teachers' salaries affect their willingness to stay in their current positions (Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Milkovich & Newman, 2008; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Another example of district efforts to increase compensation is offering housing subsidies or general assistance with housing-related expenses (Podolsky et al., 2019).

The second effort to reduce the attrition that some districts have worked to implement is teacher preparation and new teacher support. Green and Muñoz (2016) highlighted the challenges teachers face in their first year, including traditional teaching challenges, academic internships, credit requirements, and new teacher training. Podolsky et al. (2019) emphasized that feeling prepared and supported during this stressful period increases the likelihood of teachers staying in the profession. The more prepared and

supported a teacher feels in their position, the higher their sense of self-efficacy (DeAngelis et al., 2013). Districts that continue creating pathways to recruit teachers and provide them with a strong teaching foundation will reduce attrition, enhance teachers' effectiveness, and improve student performance (Green & Muñoz, 2016; Podolsky et al., 2019).

Additionally, districts implementing new teacher support have reduced teacher attrition (Jensen et al., 2012; Mihaly et al., 2015; Podolsky et al., 2019). Wenger-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner (2014) explained that new members within a community of practice derive their sense of competence from the surrounding community. As discussed earlier in the literature review, districts with a mentor program are less likely to experience turnover (Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). New teachers who experience strong support from administration and colleagues are more likely to stay in their current position (Podolsky et al., 2019).

Improving the overall teaching conditions, defined as teachers' learning and teaching resources, is the third effort to reduce attrition. According to Borman and Dowling (2008), schools with sufficient instructional materials, supplies, access to support staff, safe and clean facilities, and reasonable student-to-teacher ratios will experience less teacher attrition. Borman and Dowling (2008) also found that schools that have actively improved classroom technology, reworked district resources, and approached teacher development through leadership programs experienced less turnover (Bryk, 2010; de la Torre et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2017). Additional research shows that the benefits are not just staff-related; Sun et al. (2017) found positive effects for schools that

are improving in these categories, such as higher levels of student achievement, reduced unexcused absences, and higher retention levels among teachers.

The last strategy to reduce attrition is for districts to refocus on reducing stress and burnout among teachers. Organizations that strive to improve work-life balance and reduce work-related stressors have higher retention rates (Mahadi et al., 2020). Jennings et al. (2017) analyzed attrition reduction by implementing a mindfulness professional development program that improved classroom effectiveness. Participants in the study initially indicated high stress levels. After participating in the study, the teachers reported lower stress levels, implying that less burnout among teachers might lead to lower attrition rates (Jennings et al., 2017). Merriam and Bierema (2014) explained the importance of incorporating spirituality into one's learning, explaining that adults who exercise spirituality practice experience positive impacts such as "enhancement of cognitive and academic performance, the management of academic-related stress, and the development of the 'whole person'" (p. 138). Zarate et al. (2019) studied educators who used mindfulness interventions and found teachers who practiced mindfulness had decreased stress and anxiety. Some districts have realized the importance of understanding how their staff feels, with more than 18 states requiring an annual teacher survey on the school's environment and ways to improve the district (New Teacher Center, 2016). Despite the teacher surveys, many ideas never become a reality, and schools rarely implement the survey results (Podolsky et al., 2019).

### *Synthesis of Literature*

The literature review highlighted the challenges industries face in retaining employees (Block, 2016) and the specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on

employee retention rates, particularly for new hires (Mahan et al., 2019). Mahan et al. (2019) determined that more than one-third of new hires quit within their first year. Furthermore, the pandemic has affected education (Rosenberg & Anderson, 2021). The literature sheds light on the consequences of unaddressed attrition, emphasizing the financial burdens and low staff morale that arise (Setiawan et al., 2020; Subramony & Holtom, 2012). Within the context of education, these consequences manifest as opportunity gaps for students within school districts (Synar & Martin, 2012).

Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework encompasses the three main correlates of why teachers leave and switch positions: personal, school, and external correlates. Significant predictors of teacher attrition include teacher characteristics such as age, race, employment status, and satisfaction with education as a career (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Perera et al., 2019; Sass et al., 2012; Smith, 2007). Teacher qualifications, including certifications, years of experience, and academic ability, also affect teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016).

The literature shows school organizational characteristics significantly influence teacher attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004, Yada et al., 2019). Encouraging collaboration among staff and implementing mentorship programs are crucial influences that school leadership can cultivate to mitigate attrition (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Mihaly et al., 2015). Schools with higher levels of teacher collaboration are less likely to experience attrition, and promoting collaboration and interaction among teachers within the school can limit attrition. Mentorship programs, especially those that pair new teachers with experienced teachers in the same subject, reduce attrition rates

(Kardos & Johnson, 2010). The support the school administration provides is also critical, as teachers are less likely to leave when they have a supportive administration. Additionally, the overall school environment, including student disciplinary incidents and autonomy in the classroom, impacts attrition rates (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020).

Additionally, the literature indicates teachers face external challenges related to accountability, societal pressures, compensation, and union participation contributing to teacher attrition. The government's emphasis on standardized testing has reduced teacher autonomy and increased accountability measures in curriculum and assessments (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). Research has linked high-stakes accountability, teacher stress, and attrition (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). Social pressures and the declining respect for the teaching profession have also contributed to higher attrition rates (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Walker, 2022). Compensation also plays a significant role, with underpaid teachers feeling undervalued and more likely to leave, while well-compensated teachers may seek better opportunities (Billingsley, 2004; Milkovich & Newman, 2008; Ryu & Jinnai, 2021). Union membership can decrease attrition rates and improve student outcomes (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016). Addressing these external correlates, such as ensuring fair compensation and providing comprehensive incentives, organizational support, and union participation, is crucial for reducing teacher attrition and retaining highly qualified educators.

The literature highlights how different industries are actively working to reduce attrition rates by improving work culture, valuing frontline employees, providing growth

opportunities, ensuring appropriate compensation, and promoting equality within the work environment (Frye et al., 2020; Lam et al., 2001; Nei et al., 2015; Walsh & Taylor, 2007). By focusing on these efforts, organizations can effectively decrease attrition. Studies have shown that organizations with positive work cultures and challenging job environments have higher employee investment and lower turnover rates. By focusing on these efforts, organizations can effectively decrease attrition. The literature showed that organizations with positive work cultures and challenging job environments have higher employee investment and lower turnover rates.

Subsequently, the literature reveals how different industries are actively working to reduce attrition rates and narrowing the focus to just school districts' efforts. Strategies include teacher compensation, teacher preparation, new teacher support, and overall teaching conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, the literature explains that reducing teacher stress and burnout through mindfulness interventions and work-life balance improvements can positively impact attrition rates (Jennings et al., 2017; Mahadi et al., 2020; Zarate et al., 2019).

Addressing teachers' well-being and support needs has become an urgent priority to ensure their resilience and retention in the education system. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted teachers. As such, exploring the perceived personal, school, and external correlates influencing new teachers and their decisions to remain in the field is critical. In the next section, I provide a review of Nguyen's (2018) theoretical framework on Teacher Attrition and Retention.



### *Theoretical Framework*

Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework provided a comprehensive lens for this single case study. Nguyen (2018) built upon the foundational research of Guarino et al. (2006) on the economic labor market theory of supply and demand and the research on teacher retention and attrition developed by Borman and Dowling (2008). Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework encompasses three primary dimensions: personal correlates, school correlates, and external correlates. By exploring these dimensions, the framework offers valuable insights into the complex web of correlates that influence new teacher retention.

Nguyen (2018) developed three main categories that influence teacher attrition and retention: personal correlates, school correlates, and external correlates. Several smaller categories comprise the three main correlates. Nguyen et al. (2020) described the correlates as:

Personal correlates are teacher characteristics and teacher qualifications. The category, school correlate, includes school organizational characteristics, school resources, student body characteristics, and relational demography. External correlates include accountability, school improvement, and workforce (p. 13).

Personal correlates refer to individual considerations influencing new teacher retention, such as job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, and personal motivations (Nguyen, 2018). School correlates encompass elements within the school context that affect teacher retention, including school leadership, school culture, working conditions, and support systems (Nguyen, 2018). External correlates refer to influences outside the school environment that impact teacher retention, such as societal perceptions of the teaching profession, external job opportunities, and economic correlates (Nguyen,

2018). These key terms provide a conceptual foundation for understanding the different dimensions of the framework and the correlates that influence new teacher retention.

Numerous studies have provided substantial evidence supporting the relevance and significance of Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework. Research conducted by Galea (2020), Larkin et al. (2022), and McCluskey (2021) have demonstrated the influence of personal, school, and external correlates on new teacher retention. These studies have consistently found that influences such as job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, supportive leadership, positive school culture, working conditions, societal perceptions of the teaching profession, and external job opportunities significantly impact teacher retention Galea (2020), Larkin et al. (2022), and McCluskey (2021). The synthesis of these studies supports and validates the theoretical framework proposed by Nguyen (2018) in comprehensively exploring the correlates of new teacher retention.

While Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework provided a valuable lens for exploring the perceived personal, school, and external correlates influencing new teacher retention, it is important to address potential philosophical or conceptual debates associated with the framework. One ongoing debate revolves around the relative importance of each correlate and the interplay between them. Some scholars argue that personal correlates may dominate teacher retention, emphasizing the significance of individual motivations, job satisfaction, and career development (Nguyen, 2018). On the other hand, proponents of the school and external correlates argue that the organizational and external context exert greater influence on teacher retention, highlighting the impact of school leadership, working conditions, and

societal perceptions of the teaching profession (Nguyen, 2018). Recognizing and investigating these debates within Nguyen's framework is essential for understanding the perceived influences on new teacher retention and guiding future research and interventions in addressing teacher attrition in K–12 education.

*Conclusion: Purpose of the Study and Research Questions*

The purpose of this single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. The motivation of teachers to leave the profession is well-researched, but this study seeks to understand why they remain. I collected data for this study using a districtwide questionnaire administered to currently employed teachers and conducting interviews specifically with new teachers within a large district in northern Maryland. I identified common correlates influencing long-term retention and encouraging motivation to continue teaching. Teacher retention is the number of teachers who persist in the same position across subsequent school years. Three research questions guided the research design and methodology of this study:

1. What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
2. What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
3. What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

The findings of this study inform both school boards and school administrators of the perceived influences that affect teacher retention. Additionally, the school district that was the site for the study will have a more thorough understanding of the experiences that the new teachers face. Furthermore, school administrators can better prepare new teachers when entering the field of education, dedicating time and effort to the specific influences determined by the study. Chapter Two details the methodology for this single case study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Methodology

#### *Introduction: Research Questions*

New employee retention poses a challenge across various industries (Block, 2016), particularly in the field of education in the Great Resignation (Klein & Smith, 2021). Previous research has highlighted the difficulty of retaining newly hired teachers at national, state, and county levels, emphasizing the consequences of attrition within the K–12 public education sector (Akinyooye & Nezamis, 2021; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll et al., 2018; Skopovi et al., 2021). Using Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Retention and Attrition theoretical framework, I explored the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching.

Through this qualitative single case study, I explored how personal, school, and external correlates outlined in the Teacher Attrition and Retention framework influence new teachers’ retention. Three research questions guided the research design and methodology of this study:

1. What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
2. What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

3. What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

The following chapter provides an overview of the study's methodology, starting with my positionality, the theoretical framework application, and explaining the research design and rationale. The chapter continues by providing the study's details on the site, participants, data collection, and procedural data analysis. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations and the study's limitations and delimitations.

### *Researcher Perspective and Positionality*

As the primary researcher, I must consider the positionality, professional experiences, and assumptions I bring to the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that every researcher carries their personal values into a study, but qualitative researchers openly disclose their values within the study. The entirety of my K–12 education was in public schools. Teachers and educational staff have influenced me throughout my life. According to my parents, it was important to earn a college degree in a traditional post-high school period, get good grades, and respect teachers. At the time of the study, I was pursuing the next step in my education at Baylor University. I was working towards my third degree—a Doctor of Education—having previously completed a bachelor's degree in art administration and a master's degree in education. Due to my positive experiences with many skilled K–12 public education teachers throughout my school career, I am curious about what motivates teachers to continue. I do not want others to unnecessarily abandon the goals they could otherwise achieve by receiving the support of skilled educators.

My professional career has also informed the purpose of this study. At the outset of my professional career, I did not see myself in education—I planned to work in theater. After realizing that I enjoyed working with younger people, I pursued a master’s degree in education. My career in education started as a mathematics teacher in a juvenile delinquency school, but by my third year in the position, I realized that it was not a good fit for me. Taking time away from education and working in the hospitality industry, I witnessed the high turnover amongst service industry workers. I realized the need to help companies combat the revolving door phenomenon. Following my layoff from my hospitality job caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I returned to education.

As a public school educator, I often witness attrition issues among new employees who need more resources and experience. Throughout my career transition from hospitality to education, I experienced many hardships as a new employee, such as isolation and the necessity of adapting to remote learning platforms I knew nothing about. As a researcher, I am aware of my bias that new employees need more tools to succeed in their new position, which I worked to mitigate so that it would not influence the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

After experiencing the high turnover within the hospitality industry, I adopted a constructivist point of view. A constructivist, as Creswell and Poth stated (2018), seeks an “understanding of the world in which they live and work” (p. 7). When I entered the field of K–12 public education, I sought to understand what motivates educators to remain in their current positions, or, in other words, what positive correlation motivates new teachers to persist in their current roles despite the statistics against them. As a

current public education teacher in Maryland, I am particularly interested in learning about the participants and understanding their experiences within my community.

### *Theoretical Framework Application*

The theoretical framework guiding this single case study was Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework, which identified three main correlates contributing to teacher attrition: personal, school, and external correlates. This framework aligned with the focus of the study, which explored the perceived influences on new teacher retention among K–12 educators. Using this framework, I could shape three straightforward research questions centered on these three correlates, providing a structured and systematic approach to understanding new teachers' decisions to stay in their current positions.

Nguyen's (2018) framework informed the formulation of the three research questions by providing a specific lens through which to explore the phenomenon of teacher retention. The three correlates—personal, school, and external—served as the basis for each research question. For instance, the first research question aligned with the categories in the personal correlates. It asked, "What perceived personal factors influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?" This question encompasses all the themes relevant to a teacher's qualifications and characteristics. This approach ensured that the research questions directly aligned with the theoretical underpinnings, offering a clear rationale for the study's focus on exploring the perceived influences impacting new teacher retention.

Moreover, the theoretical framework played a crucial role in shaping the approach to data collection. I utilized two data sources for my study: a districtwide questionnaire



and semi-structured interviews. I structured the questionnaire by categorizing the questions based on the specific correlates identified within the framework (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The questionnaire included three sections, each corresponding to the correlates to provide more detailed insights into the perceived influences that contribute to teacher attrition and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For example, question nine asked, “What current certifications do you hold?” This question’s purpose was to ask about a teacher’s qualifications, relating to their personal influences and experiences. Additionally, question 14 asked, “What pressures have you experienced as a teacher?” relating directly to the external influences that a teacher experiences. These questionnaire items then served as a foundation for developing the interview questions, enabling the semi-structured interviews to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the influences contributing to new teachers leaving the education profession.

Furthermore, I employed an a priori framework based on Nguyen’s (2018) correlates during the data analysis. I used the predetermined codes corresponding to the three main categories of personal, school, and external correlates. These predetermined codes provided a structured approach for analyzing the data, enabling the identification of distinct categories, and facilitating the exploration of emerging themes (Saldaña, 2015). By applying the framework to the data analysis, I maintained consistency and alignment with the theoretical underpinnings, ensuring the findings directly addressed the research questions and contributed to a deeper understanding of the perceived influences contributing to new teacher retention in the K–12 educational setting.

In summary, Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework provided the rationale for each aspect of this study, from shaping the research questions

to guiding the data collection and analysis processes. By structuring the study around this theoretical framework, the research gained clarity, depth, and theoretical grounding, contributing valuable insights into the perceived influences impacting new teacher retention.

### *Research Design and Rationale*

I employed a qualitative single case study approach to understand the perceived influences on new employee retention among K–12 teachers. Guided by a constructivist worldview, my study was designed to understand the perceived influences on teachers' work and life within a Maryland district (Mertens, 2015). It encourages researchers to actively engage with participants and co-construct meaning through dialogue and reflection, thus capturing the richness and diversity of new teachers' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A constructivist worldview is well-suited for employing a case study paradigm to comprehensively understand new teachers' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In my research, I employed a qualitative case study paradigm to understand better new teachers' experiences from the participants' perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Simultaneously, I acknowledge the time and location constraints accompanying this approach, ensuring a participant-centered perspective (Yin, 2018).

A case study was an appropriate methodology for my study. Creswell and Poth (2018) define case studies as bounded studies of a particular circumstance. The researchers recommend using a case study design if the findings will further the understanding of the bounded case. A “bounded” case is a set of limits to the study, such as times, places, or physical boundaries (Yin, 2018). The current study is bounded by the studied school district, with teachers in their fifth year of teaching, having started

teaching in 2018. Furthermore, the bounded nature of case studies aligned with this single case study's purpose, which was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers.

A single case study design best illustrates a detailed description when analyzing new employee retention. I implemented various data collection methods with a single case, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the influences on new teacher retention from multiple perspectives (Yin, 2018). By focusing on a single case, I explored the perceived influences currently contributing to employee retention (Stake, 1995). I deliberately designed the study to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. Additionally, by exploring the experiences of these teachers, I gained valuable insights and depth, as emphasized by Stake (1995).

#### *Site Selection and Participant Sampling*

I used purposeful sampling to select participants and the site for this study to promote a better understanding of the problem and research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Choosing the appropriate participants ensured additional credibility for the study (Yin, 2018). A large district in northern Maryland bounded the site. To provide an understanding of the correlates affecting retention amongst new teachers, I selected participants employed as teachers in their fifth year of teaching, having started their teaching career in 2018.

### *Site*

Maryland needs help with teacher retention (Learning Policy Institute, 2018), and through a purposefully selected site, I gained a deeper understanding of the problem and the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The site for this study was a large school district in Maryland, serving a population of approximately 256,000, with a median age of 39 and a median household income of \$98,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The school district employs more than 6,243 staff, with approximately 3,000 certified teachers (District Data, 2021). According to a U.S. News (2018) report, 84% of teachers within this school district have been employed by the district for more than three years, meaning that approximately 500 teachers currently qualify as new teachers. I began this study by choosing participants from various schools within one district. The study participants teach at different schools throughout the district but share their personal lived experiences as teachers in their fifth year as teachers (Van Manen, 2014).

### *Participants*

After gaining permission from the school district, I selected participants using purposive sampling to “inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158). The participants consisted of teachers with less than five years of teaching experience. I recruited participants by reaching out to all teachers who worked within the same district at the time of the research. I also recruited participants with five or fewer years of teaching experience to complete a questionnaire for my study. Fifty-five teachers fit the criteria and moved forward as questionnaire participants.

Before completing the questionnaire, I gave the participants information detailing the study’s purpose, what the research entails, and obtaining their consent; 54 new teachers accepted the permission (see Appendix D). After obtaining written consent, participants received an open-ended questionnaire about their position within the county via a Google Form. Based on the questionnaire responses, I determined that 48% of the teachers hold a master’s degree, with two having a doctorate. Additionally, 81% of the participants are part of the teacher union. From the questionnaires, 13 teachers fit the criteria, submitted the questionnaire, and answered yes to the interview.

From the pool of 13 respondents who completed the open-ended questionnaire, I used a critical case sampling procedure to maximize variation to select participants for the semi-structured interviews. This procedure allowed me to choose participants who could offer specific and valuable insights into the perceived influences contributing to teacher retention rates (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To maximize the variation among new teachers, I selected one teacher from elementary school, middle school, high school, and special education teacher. After obtaining written consent, I conducted interviews with four teachers, ensuring a diverse representation within the study sample. Table 1 provides descriptive details about the study participants.

Table 1

*Participant Characteristics*

Participant Pseudonym	Current Grade/Subject	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Education Level
Richard	Middle School History	33	Male	White	Bachelor’s
Melinda	High School Mathematics	52	Female	White	Master’s
Susan	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	35	Female	White	Bachelor’s
Karen	High School Special Education	24	Female	White	Bachelor’s

### *Data Collection*

The study collected data through open-ended questionnaire questions and semi-structured interviews to develop a rich understanding of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Before collecting data, I created a timeline with dates for the questionnaire to be sent out, sent reminders, and scheduled the interviews after coordinating with the interviewees (see Table 2). The data collection began in March 2023 and concluded by June 2023. Additionally, the data collected for the study complies with the guidelines set by the district's Institutional Review Board.

Table 2

#### *Summary of the Research Plan*

Time Frame	Action
August 2022	Obtained IRB determination for research and research sites. and research sites Received a non-human subjects research determination
February 2023	Obtained permission from the district's Institutional Review Board Reached out to School Administrators Recruited questionnaire participants. Obtained Participants' Consent.
March 2023	Conducted initial qualitative online open-ended questionnaire
April 1, 2023	A reminder was sent to the participants.
March–May 2023	Conducted qualitative new teacher interviews
May–June 2023	Conducted and interpreted each embedded analysis
June–July 2023	Interpreted findings and wrote the results and discussion.

#### *Data Collection Procedures*

Before beginning the data collection process, I submitted an application to the Baylor University Office of Research Compliance for review and received a non-human

subjects research determination from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Baylor University. I also received authorization to complete the study from the school district by having the study reviewed through the research review board. Additionally, I received authorization to complete the study from the district's Human Resources office and the school principals where participants worked. I obtained informed consent before participants completed the questionnaire (see Appendix D) and before the interviews (see Appendix E).

The first data source for the study was a districtwide questionnaire with open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Participants completed the questionnaire first, providing me with information about their background and demographics and allowing participants to provide information about their perspectives as new teachers within the district. At the end of the questionnaire, I asked participants if they would interview for the study, allowing me to gain a more saturated understanding.

The second data source for the study was semi-structured one-on-one interviews with four participants. Interviewing four new teachers who participated in the questionnaire allowed me to gain a better, more in-depth understanding of the participants and their perspectives. Before conducting each interview, I provided the participants with a copy of the interview questions to review. The interviews took place at the teachers' school of employment, classrooms, or in separate conference room spaces. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes and focused on enhancing the participants' engagement, leading to more accurate and valuable data (Yin, 2018). Due to the limited time, the interviews were open-ended but followed closely with the interview

protocol (see Appendix B). After receiving the teachers' permission, I recorded the interview audio with a cell phone.

*Data Collection Protocols*

I collected data from teachers using an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. I used both data sources to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experience within their first five years of teaching. The questionnaire and semi-structured interviews aligned with the Teacher Attrition and Retention framework (see Tables 3 and 4). I described each data protocol in the following sections.

*Open-ended questionnaire protocol.* Participants completed an online questionnaire with 19 questions (see Appendix A). The first five questions asked them to confirm participation criteria and whether they would participate in an interview. I organized the other 14 questions from the questionnaire into three sections based on the Teacher Attrition and Retention framework (see Table 3).

Table 3

*Theoretical Framework Alignment with Questionnaire Items*

Theoretical Framework Category	Questionnaire Items
Personal Correlates	6–11
School Correlates	12–15
External Correlates	16–19

*Semi-structured interview protocol.* I interviewed the participants using the protocol that included 12 questions (see Appendix B). Developing an interview protocol gave me a deeper insight into being a new teacher and what perceived influences they experience from the participant's perspective, providing a more thorough answer to the



research questions (Yin, 2018). I organized the protocol of Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention framework (refer to Table 4). I divided the interview questions into personal, school, and external correlates.

Table 4

*Theoretical Framework Alignment with Interview Questions*

Theoretical Framework Category	Interview Questions
Personal Correlates	1–4
School Correlates	5–9
External Correlates	10–12

*Data Analysis Procedures*

I utilized Creswell and Poth’s (2018) data analysis spiral as a framework to guide my collected data’s systematic and comprehensive analysis. The six interconnected steps—preparing, exploring, analyzing, representing, interpreting, and validating the data—facilitated a thorough understanding of the data and its implications.

First, I meticulously prepared the data for analysis by transcribing participants’ responses from questionnaires and audio-recorded interviews. For example, after conducting the interviews, I transcribed the audio recordings verbatim and cross-referenced them with my notes to ensure accuracy. Similarly, I used Google Forms to organize and convert participants’ responses into a digital format for the questionnaire data, making it easier to manage and analyze. Throughout this step, I ensured that all personal identifiers by using pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality and comply with ethical standards.

In the second step of the data analysis, I explored data, immersing myself in the transcripts and survey responses. I identified trends, patterns, and areas of interest within

the dataset through careful reading, annotation, and note-making. For instance, during data exploration, I observed recurring themes in participants' responses related to collaboration's importance in supporting new teachers. This exploration phase provided a foundation for the later analytical steps (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In step three of the data analysis, I analyzed the data first by assigning a priori codes based on the theoretical framework: personal, school, and external correlates (Nguyen, 2018). For example, as I reviewed the transcripts, I assigned specific codes to text segments that represented each teacher's personal experiences and qualifications, influences related to school, or external influences impacting teacher retention. Then, I collapsed the codes into categories that emerged from the data and discovered emerging themes, I derived valuable insights and conclusions relevant to the research questions. For instance, I identified the "the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic" theme under the external correlates category, encompassing participants' experiences directly related to conditions the teacher or school could control.

Additionally, I completed a within-case analysis with each study participant. I closely explored each participant's experiences and perceptions during this analysis. By comparing each participant's responses individually, I gained a more nuanced understanding of the unique perceived influences each teacher experienced. This within-case analysis allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the personal, school, and external correlates affecting teacher retention according to the participants. After reviewing each participant individually, I determined the themes within the three categories.

In the fourth step of Creswell and Poth's (2018) data analysis spiral, I represented the findings through tables, anecdotes, quotes, and visual representations, enhancing the reader's understanding of the main themes evident in the results. I also incorporated relevant quotes from participants to provide concrete examples of their experiences, reinforcing the significance of the identified themes. This step led me to visualize meaningful connections, relationships, or insights within the data, and to derive valuable conclusions that address the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In the fifth step of Creswell and Poth's (2018) data analysis spiral, I interpreted the findings, presenting thick and descriptive details, summarizing significant themes, and connecting the findings with existing literature. For example, when discussing the job satisfaction theme under the personal correlates category, I provided in-depth descriptions of participants' experiences and feelings related to their job satisfaction. I also related these findings to prior research, highlighting the alignment with previous studies on the link between job satisfaction and teacher retention. Throughout this step, I went beyond the surface-level observations and delved into the underlying meaning and implications of the data. Interpretation involved drawing connections between the data, Nguyen's (2018) theoretical framework, and the research questions, leading to a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Last, I validated the data and findings, ensuring credibility and reliability. By verifying data accuracy and conducting member checking, I sought additional perspectives and assessed the trustworthiness of the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data. For instance, after the data analysis, I reached out to each

participant to seek their feedback on the emerging themes and interpretations, allowing them to confirm the accuracy of my findings and add further insights.

Overall, Creswell and Poth's (2018) data analysis spiral, coupled with the within-case analysis, provided a reliable guide to derive meaningful insights and address the research objectives of this study. In the following section, I further detail the credibility of the study's findings, reinforcing the rigor and integrity of the data analysis process.

### *Trustworthiness and Authenticity*

I used Creswell and Poth's (2018) qualitative validity strategies to support the trustworthiness and authenticity of my study's findings. I outlined these strategies from my perspective, the participants' viewpoint, and the reviewers' lens. I corroborated the findings through triangulation of two data sources: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

I actively sought common themes across all collected data sources during the data review process. After finding the common themes, I began member checking, aiming to collaborate with the participants to obtain feedback and establish credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through member checking, I sought to ensure the accurate representations of participants' perspectives and alignment of the conclusions drawn from the data with their experiences. This iterative validation and feedback process contributes to the trustworthiness and rigor of the study's findings, reinforcing the credibility of the research outcomes. I employed member checking throughout the study, having participants read through the transcript and reviewing their analyses to ensure credibility and qualitative reliability.

The final validation strategy adopted an approach viewed from the reviewer's lens. Throughout the study, I generated detailed descriptions from the data, providing sufficient detail for readers to transfer the information to other settings. I focused on achieving this descriptive detail by continuously reviewing the raw data after collection and revisiting it later in the study. Throughout each data review, I found connecting themes within the data that eventually led to my findings.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Throughout the study, I prioritized ethical considerations at every stage of the research process. I first began by checking my own research biases. Then, I completed several additional steps to ensure ethical practices, such as obtaining the required permission from Baylor University to conduct the study, securing consent from a large district in northern Maryland to proceed with the research, and obtaining explicit permission from the participants to engage in the study. By adhering to these ethical guidelines, I aimed to protect the rights and well-being of all individuals involved in the research.

To ensure the integrity and credibility of the study, it was essential for me to address and acknowledge my research biases. Given that I experienced the challenges faced by teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as a new teacher navigating the demands of remote and hybrid learning, it was crucial to recognize the potential impact of these biases on the research design and analysis. These challenges included quarterly observations, the implementation of a new curriculum, and the need to balance multiple responsibilities, which inevitably affected my time for planning and

grading. By acknowledging these biases, I aimed to maintain transparency and mitigate any potential limitations they may have imposed on the study's findings.

The initial step I took in upholding ethical practices was obtaining the necessary permission from Baylor University to conduct the study. Before the study commenced, I submitted my research to the Baylor University Office of Research Compliance for review and received a non-human subjects research determination. This rigorous review ensured that the study adhered to the university's ethical guidelines and research protocols. As a result, I received a non-human subjects research determination, affirming that the study did not involve any direct involvement or harm to human participants. This formal determination demonstrates the careful consideration given to the ethical aspects of the study. The determination also provides reassurance that I would conduct the research per the highest standards of research integrity.

My second ethical consideration involved gaining appropriate permissions from the respective school district. After submitting a request to research within the district, the research review board conducted a thorough review and granted a determination for the study (see Appendix C). Subsequently, I obtained permission from the Human Resources Office to collect contact information and years at the current position for research purposes. Additionally, I sought permission from the school principals where the participants were employed. Data collection commenced in the spring of 2023 with all the required permissions in place.

The final ethical consideration included obtaining informed consent from the participants to be part of the study (see Appendix D). Once selected, I provided the teachers with details regarding the purpose of the study, the types of data I would collect,

the confidentiality and privacy measures I put in place throughout the study, and their right to withdraw. I collected written consent from each participant in the study.

Additionally, I used pseudonyms for the participants to protect their identities.

### *Limitations and Delimitations*

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. The study offered valuable insights into this specific context but faced four limitations and had three delimitations that influenced its design and generalizability.

I identified four primary limitations in this research. First, the limited amount of time available to complete the study affected data collection. In the school setting, I had four months to collect the data within one school district. This constraint may have impacted the richness and comprehensiveness of the findings, potentially hindering a more in-depth exploration of the influences on new teacher retention.

Second, focusing on a single school district limits transferability. Differences amongst teacher backgrounds or between student demographics are not a primary focus of the study, thus limiting the transferability of the findings to different educational settings. The influence of specific organizational, cultural, or regional influences within the selected case might limit the transferability of the findings to other settings (Yin, 2018).

Third, my positionality introduced bias as I guided the data collection and analysis processes. Although I tried to minimize bias through reflexivity, my subjective lens still might have influenced the findings. Additionally, being employed as a teacher

within the school district where the study occurred created a positional limitation, potentially affecting the research process and interpretation of the study findings.

Last, the study relied on participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions, introducing the potential for memory recall and social desirability bias. Participants' employment by the district under study might have skewed their responses, impacting the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. Throughout the study, I diligently tried to establish rapport and create a supportive environment; participants' responses may still be subject to these inherent limitations (Yin, 2018).

Furthermore, there were three delimitations in this study. First, this study focused on a single school district in Maryland. As a result, the findings might not represent teachers' experiences in other districts or educational contexts. Also, I focused the study on new teachers who had remained in their current positions throughout their first five years of teaching, excluding insights into teacher retention for those with more experience or those who changed positions within the first five years. Last, the research employed a qualitative methodology, allowing in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and perspectives. However, this approach did not capture the broader statistical trends and patterns that quantitative methods might provide.

Acknowledging these limitations and delimitations provides a clear understanding of the study's scope and potential constraints, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of the findings. Despite these limitations, it is important to emphasize that this single case qualitative study offers valuable insights into the influences contributing to new employee retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in a single position for their first five years in education. The findings contribute to the existing body of



knowledge and provide a foundation for further research in this area. Future studies with larger sample sizes, diverse contexts, and extended data collection periods can address these limitations, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the influences affecting new employee retention in the K–12 educational setting.

### *Conclusion*

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. The study used a qualitative approach to collect saturated details of the experiences of new employees (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I employed Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework to align the problem, purpose, and data collection protocols and procedures. The study’s findings provide valuable insights for school boards and administrators regarding the influences impacting teacher retention. To that end, the following chapter explains the findings, the discussion, and the related implications and recommendations.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Results and Implications

#### *Introduction*

Employee retention is a pressing challenge faced by organizations across various industries. Prior research has shed light on the difficulties of retaining newly hired teachers at national, state, and county levels, highlighting the profound consequences of attrition within the K–12 public education sector. To delve deeper into this issue, this single case study explored the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. To frame the problem, purpose, and data collection protocols and procedures, for this study, I used Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework. Three research questions guided the research design and methodology of this study:

1. What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
2. What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
3. What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

This chapter reveals the findings of the study, shedding light on the perceived correlates that influence the retention of K–12 teachers in their current positions throughout their first five years of teaching. Through interviews with Richard, Susan,

Karen, and Melinda (pseudonyms), seven key themes emerged regarding job satisfaction, teaching background, school leadership and administration, the overall school environment, union memberships, curriculum expectations, and the impact of COVID-19. The analysis highlights the importance of a supportive work environment, collaboration with colleagues, and feeling valued and supported by the administration in enhancing job satisfaction and retention. Additionally, participants experienced similar themes between the misalignment between curriculum and school needs, overwhelming workload, and challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic impacting teacher well-being and retention. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the influences shaping teachers' decisions to remain in their teaching positions and provide insights that can inform efforts to improve teacher retention and enhance the educational experience for teachers and students.

The following chapter provides the study's findings, starting with the case description. The chapter continues with the embedded units of analysis of study participants Richard, Melinda, Susan, and Karen, followed by a within-case analysis and a discussion of the findings. The chapter then continues with the related implications and recommendations. Last, the chapter concludes with a summary and a preview of the fourth chapter.

### *Case Description*

This section offers essential information regarding the demographic characteristics and background of participants involved in the study. The study participants exclusively consisted of full-time teachers who were actively engaged in their teaching profession during the study period from the site of the study. Moreover, it

is worth noting that each of these teachers was in their fifth year of teaching, in their first teaching position. To maintain the confidentiality and privacy of these participants I will refer to the participants by pseudonyms: Richard, Melinda, Susan, and Karen. Each of the participants brought a distinct background, experiences, and motivations that shaped their decision to remain in the teaching profession. As I explored their individual journeys, I gained valuable insights into the personal, school, and external correlates that they perceive have influenced their commitment to teaching.

*Embedded Unit of Analysis: Richard*

Richard was a social studies teacher who previously ran a pizza shop for 10 years and had been teaching social studies for five years at one of the county's alternative schools at the time of the study. He received his undergraduate degree in history with a secondary education certificate. Richard expressed high satisfaction with his current position, stating during his interview, "I really like the building I am in and the staff I work with." The opportunity to utilize his creativity in lesson planning and collaborating with his co-workers was the most rewarding part for him. However, he acknowledged that the school's reputation and the constantly shifting student population posed challenges. I provided information about Richard's personal, school, and external correlates in the following sections.

*Richard's personal correlates.* The first research question in this study was: What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K-12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Richard.

Richard's background and experiences have shaped his perspective on teaching and influenced his decision to stay in the profession. Having spent five years in his current position, he has successfully navigated the initial years of teaching. Richard shared in the questionnaire that he started his second career in education, transitioning from the restaurant business. Richard brought a unique set of skills and perspectives to the classroom. Richard stated that in his experience, a strong educational background "provides a solid foundation of knowledge and skills that helps in effectively navigating the challenges of teaching," indicating the significance he places on the value of his educational qualifications. Richard's quote highlighted the importance of personal growth, professional development, and expertise in his commitment to teaching.

Richard expressed high job satisfaction in his current position, stating, "I am very satisfied in my current position." He found fulfillment in utilizing his creativity to plan lessons, create materials, and design instruction. Moreover, he emphasized the significance of supportive co-workers at HRS by saying, "My co-workers are a big part of why I am satisfied here." These personal characteristics, job satisfaction, and a supportive work environment contributed to his decision to stay in teaching.

*Richard's school correlates.* The second research question in this study was: What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Richard, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview.

According to Richard, the school environment played a vital role in his job satisfaction and retention. Describing a typical day as an educator during the interview,

Richard explained his early arrival time, student check-in procedures, and the use of various teaching tools. He mentioned close collaboration with other staff members, stating, “Most classes have at least two staff members in the room. We get to know our students very well because of our small student population.” This collaborative environment and close relationships with colleagues may positively influence teacher retention by fostering a sense of belonging and support. He continued emphasizing the impact of a supportive work environment, stating, “Feeling supported and valued by colleagues and administration greatly contributes to job satisfaction and ultimately affects my decision to stay.” Richard shared that he was satisfied with his overall teaching experience, and he attributed part of that satisfaction to the support he receives from his school.

Additionally, when I asked Richard about the support he received from the administration during the interview, he shared:

The principal of my school was my mentor teacher (as a student teacher), and she provided me with valuable knowledge about the school and my lessons. She also ensured that I could collaborate with specialists who assisted me in navigating the curriculum and accessing resources.

Richard’s positive experience with administration and having had a mentor throughout his first year enabled him to feel equipped with the necessary skills and support to succeed in his role.

During the interview, Richard provided insights into his school surroundings at the alternative school, stating, “The student environment can be tense and hostile, largely owing to the population of students that we serve.” Richard believed that the students at his school may come from backgrounds or circumstances contributing to tension and hostility. This characterization sheds light on the potential influences affecting teacher

retention in such environments, emphasizing the importance of understanding the unique challenges educators encounter in alternative schools.

Additionally, Richard continued discussing some of the differences he experienced at his alternative school compared to other public schools in the district, stating during the interview:

Our school does not have more resources than the other public schools, they are simply different. For example, since our students are here typically because of behavioral issues they have presented at their home school. My school has an onsite therapist, and the students have small goals such as to stay in their seat for an entire period.

Richard and his colleagues faced unique challenges working at the alternative school, having students come from all backgrounds or circumstances for any given length of time. The challenges of managing student behavior and addressing behavioral issues require significant effort and expertise from teachers like Richard, with these challenges daily adding stress and pressure to his teaching responsibilities.

*Richard's external correlates.* The third research question in this study was: What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Richard, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Richard.

Richard's responses provided insights into external correlates he perceives affect his retention in his current teaching position. When asked about the pressures he experienced as a teacher, he highlighted the pressure of not having content during his initial years and the everyday pressure of never knowing what the tone of the day would be. He stated during the interview, "The pressure of not having any content during my

first few years as a teacher is perhaps the most stressful.” In managing these pressures, Richard relied on the support of his middle school department and emphasized the transparency and collaboration within his teacher community.

Richard expressed dissatisfaction when asked about his satisfaction with the current district curriculum expectations. He pointed out issues such as broken links and lack of differentiation. He stated, “They could do a much better job providing curriculum. Many of the lessons provided are not even possible for my school or classes.” This misalignment between the curriculum and the school’s requirements may impact teacher retention by hindering their effectiveness and satisfaction.

Regarding financial incentives, Richard stated that they do not play a role in his decision to stay in his current position. He acknowledged the low pay associated with teaching, mentioning during the interview that “Everyone knows teachers are not well paid, even the kids make jokes about it.” Financial incentives, therefore, were not a driving influence for his retention.

Richard, however, acknowledged the benefits of being a member of the teacher union, mentioning, “Being a member of the teacher union has been beneficial in terms of having a collective voice and support. It allows us to advocate for our rights and interests as educators.” Richard’s insight suggested that the union provided him with solidarity and collective support. He continued, stating, “It makes me feel more secure in my position, that someone will make sure I am ok even if I make a mistake.” Being part of a union gave him a sense of support and protection, contributing to his decision to stay.

Regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Richard mentioned some challenges, particularly with student attendance and worsening behavior. During the



interview, he shared, “[The] pandemic was just a lot of black screens for me. Since then, though, the kids’ behaviors are getting worse.” This adverse effect of the pandemic on his teaching experience may have influenced his decision to stay in the profession. The challenges posed by remote teaching, such as student disengagement and behavioral issues, increased his overall workload and diminished the effectiveness of his teaching strategies, potentially affecting his retention. The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted the school culture. Richard mentioned several teachers left the teaching profession once the district returned to in-person instruction. However, with a change in leadership, he noted that “The staff is continually talking about a new feeling of togetherness, something they say has not felt this way for over 10 years.” Even though the pandemic has challenged the teachers, Richard believed that the staff works better together than before the pandemic.

*Summary for Richard.* Overall, Richard’s responses provided valuable insights into his personal, school, and external correlates that influenced his decision to stay in the teaching profession as seen in Table 5. His personal correlates included his experience, career transition, and job satisfaction. School correlates encompassed support from administration, daily responsibilities, interaction with peers and students, and the school environment. External correlates encompassed the pressures experienced as a teacher, financial incentives, the role of being part of a teacher union, curriculum expectations, and the impact of the pandemic. These perceived influences shaped Richard’s decision to remain in his current teaching position.

Table 5

*Richard’s Themes Based on Personal, School, and External Correlates*

Personal Correlates	School Correlates	External Correlates
Positive attitude towards teaching	Supportive work environment with collaborative colleagues	School reputation and student population shifts
Utilization of creativity in lesson planning	Supportive administration and mentorship	Challenges in student behavior at alternative school
Importance of personal growth and expertise	Close relationships with colleagues	Misalignment between district and school requirements
High job satisfaction and job commitment	Dissatisfaction with district curriculum	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student attendance and behavior
School environment influences job satisfaction		Positive impact of a change in leadership post-pandemic

*Embedded Unit of Analysis: Melinda*

Melinda was a high school mathematics teacher and had been in her current position for five years at the time of the study. In exploring Melinda’s responses from the interview and questionnaire, it becomes apparent that various experiences have influenced her decision to remain in the teaching profession. I categorized the experiences into personal, school, and external correlates, highlighting teacher retention’s complexities.

*Melinda’s personal correlates.* The first research question in this study was: What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Melinda, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Melinda.

Melinda's background and experiences have shaped her perspective on teaching and influenced her decision to stay in the profession. Melinda stated, "I have only taught math since I started, and my undergraduate degree is in Secondary Math Education," when asked about her background. When asked about job satisfaction, she emphasized the significance of positive relationships with students, stating, "The most rewarding part for me is the relationships with the students. It is just really fulfilling to have that connection and see them grow." This statement highlights the personal fulfillment she derives from student-teacher interactions. Melinda's remark suggested that the ability to form meaningful connections with students contributes to her decision to remain in teaching.

When asked about job satisfaction, she expressed overall contentment but acknowledged the challenges, saying, "I am satisfied with my job. I enjoy what I do and find it rewarding. However, there are unnecessary tasks and roles that make my experience less satisfying." Melinda's statement suggested that specific job responsibilities and administrative burdens impact her job satisfaction and potentially contribute to attrition.

*Melinda's school correlates.* The second research question in this study was: What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K-12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Melinda, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Melinda.

According to Melinda, the school environment played a vital role in Melinda's job satisfaction and retention. She discussed the challenges of adapting to different

teaching environments, emphasizing the importance of a supportive school setting. In the questionnaire, Melinda stated, “Having a diverse background, including experiences in various educational settings, makes things a lot smoother. It enables teachers to effectively address the needs of different students and navigate a diverse classroom dynamic.” Melinda’s remark suggests that a supportive school environment, which accommodates the diverse needs of students and provides resources for effective teaching, contributes to Melinda’s decision to stay in the profession.

Regarding school leadership, Melinda felt unsupported by the administration, stating, “In meetings, it often seems like the teacher is blamed for student failure or not providing enough support to each student. Additionally, the administration only engages when there is negative news.” This lack of administrative support can negatively affect teacher morale and job satisfaction. She also described her typical day as an educator, mentioning the heavy workload and lack of breaks by saying:

I arrive at school almost an hour before the expected time to grade and check emails. Throughout the day, I have no bathroom breaks, and teaching math and completing assigned tasks, such as monitoring the bathrooms during class change, occupies my time. I often stay an additional hour at the end of the day to plan for the next day, print materials, or tutor students.

Melinda expressed that she spends many hours during the day on extraneous tasks and has little time to plan her day.

*Melinda’s external correlates.* The third research question in this study was: What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Melinda, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Melinda.

According to Melinda, the impact of COVID-19 and its aftermath influenced Melinda's decision to continue teaching. She acknowledged the challenges posed by the pandemic, including the shift to remote or hybrid learning and increased student absences, stating in the questionnaire, "The dynamics of the classroom have changed, with students not being the same, and lessons relying heavily on technology. Absenteeism has also significantly increased." Melinda also mentioned the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these pressures, stating, "The expectation of managing both in-person and online teaching doubles the workload. Moreover, the departure of senior teachers has added pressure to support students with long-term substitute teachers and assist these substitutes in planning." The pandemic-related challenges, including the shift to remote and hybrid learning, increased workload, and the need to support students with substitute teachers, further contributed to the pressures experienced by teachers.

Additionally, during the interview, Melinda admitted the other pressures she feels by stating, "Dealing with the expectations from administration and parents can be quite challenging." Melinda expanded on the pressures she faces as a teacher. She identified three main sources of pressure: parents, the school, and the county. She explained,

On one side, parents expect students to have high grades, but the students themselves may not be willing to put in the effort. Additionally, parents seek more involvement in the classroom, requesting to attend virtual meetings or visit classes. On the other side, the county imposes policies and expectations related to testing scores, while the school may only partially adhere to these policies.

Melinda's responses indicated the challenges teachers encounter in meeting the expectations of multiple stakeholders, which can create additional stress and impact job satisfaction.

Melinda also provided insights into the curriculum expectations at her school. She found the current expectations suffocating, stating:

The county details the curriculum down to the last minute in the classroom, with additional standards that teachers are supposed to be scheduled ‘when there is freetime.’ There is a disconnect between the material and the assessments. There are so many required tests in math, and students spend two days per unit taking tests for the county, in addition to one that aligns with what they learned.

Melinda’s comment highlighted the perceived limitations and frustrations with the curriculum, including the excessive testing and lack of alignment between the material taught and assessed. Melinda mentioned, “Taking the autonomy out of teaching makes it less enjoyable, and it is hard for me to even connect with some lessons.” Melinda’s statements revealed that she does not have control over some of the curriculum that she teaches and finds it difficult to make personal connections to her lessons.

When discussing the role of financial incentives and teacher unions in her decision to stay in her current position, Melinda indicates that financial incentives do not play a significant role for her, stating, “Although a bonus was nice last year, I did not become a teacher for the money.” Regarding teacher unions, she mentions being part of the union as a safety net, but it does not influence her decision to stay.

Melinda highlighted several external pressures faced by teachers and suggests that the ability to adapt to and overcome such challenges contributes to Melinda’s decision to remain in teaching. These insights from Melinda’s responses highlight the significance of addressing influences such as county expectations, workload management, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teacher pressures.

*Summary for Melinda.* Overall, the insights from Melinda’s responses underline the importance of addressing personal, school, and external correlates to enhance teacher

retention as seen in Table 6. The analysis reveals the significance of positive student relationships, a supportive school environment, and the ability to navigate external challenges. Understanding these personal, school, and external correlates that influence Melinda’s perception and reasoning makes it easier to understand why she chooses to stay in her current position.

Table 6

*Melinda’s Themes Based on Personal, School, and External Correlates*

Personal Correlates	School Correlates	External Correlates
Importance of prior educational experiences for teacher retention	Supportive school environment that accommodates diverse student needs	Increased workload and demands due to remote and hybrid learning during COVID-19
Overall contentment with job satisfaction	Fulfillment from positive student-teacher relationships	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student emotional challenges and academic scores
Stressors of balancing curriculum expectations and workload	Lack of administrative support and guidance during initial years	Increased accountability with parent involvement and monitoring of virtual learning

*Embedded Unit of Analysis: Susan*

Susan was a fourth-grade elementary school teacher. She received an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and had been teaching for five years at the time of the study. Susan rated her satisfaction with her current position as very satisfied. Susan’s interview and questionnaire responses provided valuable insights into the influences that have impacted her decision to stay in the teaching profession. By exploring her personal, school, and external correlates, I gained a more comprehensive understanding of the influences contributing to Susan’s job satisfaction and commitment to teaching.

*Susan's personal correlates.* The first research question in this study was: What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Susan, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Susan.

Susan indicated that her dedication to teaching and job satisfaction. She shared one of her most rewarding experiences, stating in the interview, “Witnessing the growth and development of my students. Seeing their faces light up when they grasp a concept is very fulfilling. It is a rewarding aspect.” Susan’s remark highlighted the personal gratification she receives when witnessing her students’ progress, motivating her to remain in the teaching profession. “I also love it when a lesson goes really well, and the students are super engaged,” Susan continued, highlighting the intrinsic rewards of teaching and its positive impact on her job satisfaction.

When describing her typical day as an educator, Susan provided details on the various responsibilities and challenges she faced, stating:

My day starts with preparing the classroom and materials for the day’s lessons. Once students arrive, I greet them individually and help them settle in. We begin with a morning meeting to build community and set a positive tone. Most of the day is spent teaching core subjects like math, language arts, science, and social studies. I provide instruction, have discussions, and engage students in interactive activities. During specials and recess, I supervise transitions and work on grading and lesson planning. I also come in early or stay late to be available for emails, phone calls, and updates on student progress.

Susan provided a clear image of the demanding nature of a teacher’s daily tasks and the importance of managing various responsibilities.

Susan also discussed how she manages these pressures, mentioning that she takes walks during specials to rejuvenate herself. She stated, “I try to take walks while the



students have specials. Although sometimes judged by colleagues, I have found that leaving the classroom for 15 minutes can really help give me a boost and finish the day strong.” To help alleviate some of the work pressures, Susan found that walks helped her cope with the various pressures that she faced as a teacher.

*Susan’s school correlates.* The second research question in this study was: What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Susan, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and interviewed Susan, which provided valuable insights into the correlates influencing teacher retention in the school context.

According to Susan, the school environment and support systems played a significant role in her job satisfaction:

My school is always bustling with all kinds of little kid energy. The hallways echo with the sounds of students’ laughter, chatter, and footsteps as they move from class to class. Colorful displays of student artwork and achievements fill the public areas. School culture encourages collaboration, and there is a sense of camaraderie as we exchange ideas, share resources, and support one another.

Susan continued the comment by acknowledging the value of a supportive work environment. She emphasized the importance of feeling supported at school, mentioning during the interview that, “Feeling supported and valued by colleagues and administration makes the hard days easier.” Susan emphasized the significance of a supportive school culture that recognizes the contributions of teachers and fosters a sense of belonging.

Susan shared her perspective on the level of support provided by the administration, stating:

It goes back and forth. It seems like most of the time, they are on my side, giving me helpful tools and overall, supporting me. However, sometimes I ask for help, and it seems like the support is never actually there, and you have to figure it out yourself.

This observation highlighted the fluctuating nature of administrative support Susan experiences and the need for consistency in administrative assistance.

*Susan's external correlates.* The third research question in this study was: What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Susan, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Susan.

One perceived external correlate, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, influenced Susan's experience as a teacher. Susan shared her observations, stating:

The instant communication that is expected for teachers has increased. Also, now that every student has a device, parents often want to call in during class or want to interrupt instruction to watch how material is taught or see what their child is doing.

Susan described the additional challenges and expectations placed on teachers due to the pandemic, including increased parent involvement and monitoring of virtual learning.

Susan also recognized the increase in students' anxiety and emotional challenges brought about by the pandemic, sharing during the interview, "I felt like the pandemic brought an uptick in students' anxiety and emotional challenges." Susan's comment revealed the external pressures and changes that have affected the classroom environment and student well-being since the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, Susan's commitment to supporting her students' emotional needs demonstrates her resilience and dedication to teaching.

Susan additionally mentioned other pressures she experiences as a teacher by stating, “Trying to find the right balance between getting through the curriculum and having all the students understand the material is challenging. Then there is the pressure of all the time communication with parents and instant grading.” These pressures highlight the complex task of meeting academic expectations while ensuring students’ comprehension and engagement. Susan’s experiences provided a more profound understanding of the importance of providing adequate support and resources to teachers, allowing her to navigate these pressures effectively and maintain her professional well-being.

*Summary for Susan.* Susan provided valuable insights through an open-ended questionnaire and interviews. I discovered several themes while analyzing Susan’s data based on the perceived personal, school, and external correlates (see Table 7). When addressing the first research question on personal correlates, Susan’s responses show witnessing student growth fulfills her. The second research question focused on school correlates, and Susan highlighted the importance of a supportive work environment in enhancing my job satisfaction. A bustling school environment filled with student artwork and achievements encouraged collaboration and camaraderie among teachers. However, the fluctuating nature of administrative support posed challenges for Susan, emphasizing the need for consistent assistance. Regarding the third research question on external correlates, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was evident in Susan’s experiences. Additionally, balancing curriculum requirements, student comprehension, continuous parent communication, and instant grading pressured Susan as a teacher. The anecdotes that Susan provided helped me develop a deeper understanding of Susan’s experiences

and perspective, emphasizing the significance of the influences that led her to remain in the teaching profession.

Table 7

*Themes Based on Personal, School, and External Correlates*

Personal Correlates	School Correlates	External Correlates
Witnessing students' growth and development	Supportive school environment	Increased parent involvement and classroom monitoring
Intrinsic rewards of teaching and lesson success	Administrative support	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students
Coping with pressures through walks	Felt supported and valued by colleagues	Membership in a teacher union provides protection

*Embedded Unit of Analysis: Karen*

Karen was a special education teacher working at the same high school for the last four years, working specifically in English, mathematics, and science classes at the time of the study. Before this position, she served as a long-term substitute for elementary and middle special education. Her undergraduate degree is in elementary and special education. Although she genuinely loves working with children, Karen admitted to occasionally considering other job opportunities due to the financial constraints and stress associated with teaching. Nevertheless, her passion for positively impacting students' lives remained a driving force in her career choice. Karen's responses in the interview and questionnaire shed light on the personal, school, and external correlates that influenced her decision to remain in the teaching profession.

*Karen's personal correlates.* The first research question in this study was: What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have

remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Karen, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Karen.

Karen's experiences and beliefs significantly impacted her dedication to teaching. She emphasized the significance of prior educational experiences, stating during the interview, "Previous experiences in education—such as student teaching, interning, or working as a teaching assistant—can contribute to teacher retention. They provide valuable insights and preparation for the demands of the profession." Karen's prior experiences equipped her with valuable knowledge and skills, fostering her commitment to teaching and influencing her decision to stay in the profession.

Additionally, Karen expressed a strong sense of job satisfaction and dedication to working with children, writing in one of her questionnaire responses, "I LOVE working with kids every day." This love for her work contributed to her decision to remain in her teaching position. However, she also admitted to contemplating leaving her job, saying, "I have looked up other jobs to leave teaching where I would make a lot more money with way less stress." Karen's emotions towards her job seem to mix a genuine passion for working with children and some concern towards personal financial considerations and stress levels that play a role in her teaching profession.

*Karen's school correlates.* The second research question in this study was: What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this research question for Karen, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Karen.

The school environment and relationships with colleagues played a crucial role in Karen's job satisfaction and teacher retention. Karen highlighted the lack of task support she received in her first year, explaining, "I was asked to take on some serious tasks with little to no support, which can lead to mistakes being made." The absence of proper guidance and support from the school administration impacted Karen's confidence and job satisfaction, potentially influencing her decision to remain in the profession.

Karen's perception of administrative support significantly influenced her retention. She mentioned feeling supported by administrators who checked in about students of concern and listened to and responded to teachers' concerns, noting, "The administrators I do feel supported by are the ones that are checking in about students of concern as well as listening/responding to teachers' concerns." This active engagement from administrators made Karen feel valued and supported, contributing to her decision to stay. However, she often felt unsupported by administrators in general, particularly regarding information sharing, stating, "In my experience, administrators want you always to keep them in the loop and yet rarely support you by providing necessary information that they could legally share." Karen's comment indicated that in her experience, administrators expected teachers to keep them informed about various matters constantly. However, she felt that the administrators often fail to reciprocate this support by sharing legally permissible information.

*Karen's external correlates.* The third research question in this study was: What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? To answer this

research question for Karen, I collected an open-ended questionnaire and completed an interview with Karen.

Curriculum expectations influenced Karen's experiences as a teacher. She mentioned the challenge of balancing curriculum expectations with a demanding workload. Karen wrote on the questionnaire, "I am satisfied with the job itself, but the workload is overwhelming, especially when trying to meet all the curriculum expectations. It is difficult to find a work-life balance." Karen's quote illustrates the job's demands. She enjoys her work as a teacher, but the heavy workload and high expectations can be stressful and impact her personal life, highlighting the need for better support and strategies to balance her professional and personal responsibilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on Karen's teaching position. She expressed her challenges, including an overwhelming workload, dealing with parental and behavioral issues, adapting to remote learning, and coping with new technological expectations, noting in the interview:

I love teaching children. Currently, my administration is very supportive of [student] behavior issues. However, parental pressure to have a magic wand to "fix" their children is crazy. They want all the responsibility for the student's education, social, and emotional well-being to be cared for here at school. Not to mention, using social media at home is a contributing issue, as well as cell phones and watches in schools.

Karen is very enthusiastic about teaching children, and while she appreciates the support from her administration on student behavior issues, she feels overwhelmed by the unrealistic parental expectations of the school and the impact of social media, cell phones, and watches on students' behavior and academic performance. Additionally, she mentioned that the student behaviors had taken a toll on her motivation since returning to the classroom, remarking, "Phones are just a constant since returning to the classroom,

students refuse to listen or even look up from their phones. I feel like, ‘Why should I try even to plan lessons?’” These external influences added stress and demands on Karen’s teaching responsibilities and potentially affected her overall experience in the classroom. Karen also mentioned the students’ academics: “Students are not only scoring at younger academic levels, but I also see students all the time that are behind in their social skills.” Karen’s awareness of the challenges posed by students’ social and academic development since the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential impact on her role as an educator was evident in Karen’s response.

In addition, Karen valued being part of the teacher union, mentioning in the interview, “Being part of the teacher union has provided me with a sense of support and solidarity. The union represents teachers’ voice and interest and contributes to a positive working environment.” Karen expressed how much she values her membership in the teacher union. It offers her a sense of support as they hear and represent her voice and interests.

*Summary for Karen.* Karen’s responses provided insight into her experiences in education. My interactions with Karen offered valuable perspectives on the personal, school, and external correlates that have influenced Karen’s decision to remain in the teaching profession (see Table 8). Karen’s personal correlates encompassed her passion for working with children while occasionally contemplating other job opportunities due to financial constraints and work-related stress. Karen emphasized the significance of prior educational experiences, which prepared her for the profession’s demands and influenced her commitment to teaching. Within the school correlates, Karen felt valued and supported when administrators checked in about students of concern and responded



to teachers’ concerns. However, she also pointed out a lack of general administrative support in information sharing, which she believed was essential for a more cohesive work environment. Externally, curriculum expectations posed challenges for Karen, especially regarding workload management and achieving a work-life balance. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted her teaching experience, leading to an overwhelming workload, dealing with parental and student behavioral issues, adapting to remote learning, and coping with new technological expectations. These external influences added stress and demands on Karen’s teaching responsibilities, potentially affecting her overall experience in the classroom. Nonetheless, she valued being part of the teacher union, which provided her with support and solidarity, represented teachers’ voices and interests, and contributed to a positive working environment.

Table 8

*Karen’s Themes Based on Personal, School, and External Correlates*

Personal Correlates	School Correlates	External Correlates
Passion for working with children	Positive impact of prior educational experiences for teacher retention	Increased workload and stress associated with teaching pressures
Job satisfaction with teaching children	Administrative support with checks on students of concern and addressing concerns	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student behavior and academic performance
Occasional contemplation of other job opportunities	Felt valued colleagues.	Membership in a teacher union offers support

*Within-Case Analysis*

To begin the thematic analysis of the single case study, I first read through the data—which included the interview and questionnaire of Richard, Melinda, Susan, and Karen. This process led me to determine the connecting themes of the perceived personal,

school, and external correlates that have impacted the retention of the participants, as revealed in their interviews and questionnaires (see Table 9). Exploring their experiences and insights gave me valuable perspectives on the correlates influencing their commitment to the teaching profession.

Table 9

*Theoretical Framework Alignment with Collected Data*

Correlate	Theme	Richard	Melinda	Susan	Karen
Personal	Job Satisfaction	X	X	X	X
	Teaching Background	X	X	X	X
School	Administration		X		X
	School Environment	X	X	X	
External	Union Memberships	X		X	X
	Curriculum Expectations	X	X	X	
	Impact of COVID-19	X	X	X	X

*Themes Related to Research Question One*

This section answers the first research question: What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? Two significant themes emerged after analyzing the participant’s responses to the survey and interview questions. First, is the employees’ job satisfaction. Some participants expressed high satisfaction, citing experiences such as witnessing student growth, positive relationships with students, and the opportunity to utilize creativity in lesson planning. Second, the teachers’ backgrounds, including their prior experiences, qualifications, and educational foundations, play a significant role in teacher retention. In the following two sections, I

further detail the themes related to perceived personal correlates and the participants' collective influences, job satisfaction, and teaching background.

*Job satisfaction.* The level of job satisfaction reported by the teachers varies, with some expressing high levels of fulfillment, attributing it to experiences like witnessing student growth, fostering positive relationships with students, and the opportunity to utilize creativity in lesson planning and instruction. For example, Susan shared her joy in witnessing her students' development, saying, "Seeing their faces light up when they grasp a concept is very fulfilling. It is a rewarding aspect of my job that enhances my overall job satisfaction." Richard echoed this sentiment: "When a lesson goes well, and the students are engaged, it is a fantastic experience." Similarly, Karen's dedication to working with children is evident as she expressed a strong passion for teaching kids daily, contributing to her decision to remain in the teaching profession. These personal gratifications were solid motivators for them to continue their teaching careers.

Moreover, Richard emphasized the vital role of a supportive work environment in job satisfaction, stating, "Feeling supported and valued by colleagues and administration greatly contributes to job satisfaction and ultimately affects teacher retention." Melinda agreed with the others, highlighting the significance of positive relationships with students, saying, "The most rewarding part for me is the relationships with the students. It is just really fulfilling to have that connection and see them grow. Positive student relationships contribute to my job satisfaction." Richard and Melinda found that rewarding relationships with colleagues and students contributed significantly to their commitment to the profession. However, Karen mentioned contemplating other job opportunities due to financial constraints and stress associated with teaching. Despite her

enthusiasm for teaching, Karen faces overwhelming parental expectations and the impact of social media, cell phones, and watches on student behavior and academic performance, leading to stress and potential effects on her overall teaching experience. Despite these challenges, the positive aspects of job satisfaction experienced by Susan, Richard, and Melinda, and Karen's genuine love for working with children, highlight the importance of creating a supportive and fulfilling work environment to foster teacher retention and well-being in the profession.

*Teaching background.* The teachers' backgrounds, including prior experiences, qualifications, and educational foundations, play a significant role in teacher retention. Melinda, Susan, and Karen have degrees in education and went right into the teaching profession. On the other hand, Richard came from a different career (restaurant business) before transitioning to teaching. Such backgrounds may contribute to differences in teaching styles, perspectives, or challenges teachers face. Richard emphasized the importance of a strong educational background and its impact on teacher retention.

Likewise, Susan echoed this sentiment and highlighted the influence of relevant qualifications. She shared, "Teachers with a strong educational background and relevant qualifications are more likely to feel confident and competent in their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention." Karen expressed the significance of prior experiences in a teacher's background. She mentioned, "Previous experiences in education—such as student teaching, interning, or working as a teaching assistant—can contribute to teacher retention. They provide valuable insights and preparation for the demands of the profession." Melinda discussed the relationship between a teacher's background and ability to adapt to different teaching environments. She stated, "Having a

diverse background, including experiences in various educational settings, can enhance teacher retention. It enables teachers to effectively address the needs of different students and navigate diverse classroom dynamics.” The different perspectives provided by the participants highlight the importance of a teacher’s background, including their educational foundation, qualifications, and prior experiences, in relation to teacher retention.

### *Themes Related to Research Question Two*

This section answers the second research question: What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? In this section, after investigating the quotes and insights shared by participants, I gained a deeper understanding of the school correlates that influenced new teachers’ experiences and job satisfaction. The experiences and perspectives educators provided led to two main themes influencing teacher retention. First, the presence of supportive administrators who actively engaged with teachers positively influenced their job satisfaction and retention. Second, creating relationships with students and co-workers, including mentors, is rewarding for teachers, affecting their job satisfaction.

*School leadership and administration.* The participants’ perspectives on school leadership and administration provided valuable insights into their experiences, revealing varying levels of support. Melinda’s view was candid, as she shared, “Administration only comes around when there is bad news.” This sentiment reflects her perception of the limited engagement and support from the administrative team, particularly during challenging situations. Similarly, Karen expressed significant dissatisfaction with the

communication from the administration, stating, “In general, though, I often do not feel supported by administrators.” As a special educator, Karen spends considerable time dealing with students of concern and has high expectations from the administration to keep them informed. However, she expressed frustration with being burdened with responsibility without receiving adequate support, evident in her experience.

Additionally, Richard and Susan acknowledged the mixed messages they received from the administration. Richard shared a positive experience with a former mentor, the school principal, who provided valuable knowledge and support. However, he also mentioned fluctuations in support, stating during the interview:

It seems like most of the time, they are on my side, giving me helpful tools and overall, supporting me. However, sometimes I ask for help, and it seems like the support is never actually there, and you have to figure it out yourself.

Susan, too, highlighted the fluctuating nature of administrative support, sharing, “It goes back and forth. Most of the time, it seems they are on my side, giving me helpful tools and supporting me.” However, she also mentioned instances where the support seemed absent, emphasizing the need for consistent and reliable support from the administration.

These insights from Richard and Susan illustrate teachers’ complex relationship with school leadership and administration, where they experience a mix of support and fluctuating engagement. Positive and negative experiences emphasize the importance of providing consistent and reliable support from the administration to enhance teachers’ job satisfaction and retention. Addressing these concerns can create a more positive and supportive school environment for teachers and foster their commitment to teaching.

*Supportive school environment.* The school environment plays a crucial role in teacher retention, as it directly influences the overall experience of educators. Each

participant in the study provided unique insights into their respective school environments. Melinda expressed concerns about her school's culture, describing it as disarray with a disconnect between students, teachers, and administration. She shared, "The overall culture of the school is just in disarray. It seems like there is a disconnect between the students and the teachers, and even the administration." Despite these challenges, she emphasized her rewarding relationship with her students, stating, "The most rewarding part for me is the relationships with the students. It is just really fulfilling to have that connection and see them grow." Similarly, Richard acknowledged that the student environment could be tense and hostile due to the population they serve. Still, he found solace in the friendly and supportive staff-to-staff interactions. He described, "The student environment can be pretty tense and sometimes hostile, but the staff-to-staff environment is generally friendly and supportive." Richard and Melinda highlighted the significance of feeling supported and valued by colleagues and students.

On the contrary, Susan painted a more positive picture, describing her school as bustling with energy and highlighting the collaboration among teachers and the sense of camaraderie. She expressed her satisfaction with the school environment: "The school environment is great. There is a lot of energy, and I feel like the teachers collaborate well together. We have a sense of camaraderie." The school environment, including the relationships between teachers and students, has a significant impact on new teacher retention. It can either contribute to their satisfaction and motivation or lead to disillusionment.

For Karen, her experiences highlight a more nuanced perspective. While she appreciates her administration's support on student behavior issues, Karen faces

challenges; she mentioned during the interview, “I love teaching children... However, parental pressure to have a magic wand to ‘fix’ their children is crazy. They want all the responsibility for the student’s education, social, and emotional well-being to be cared for here at school.” Karen’s experiences highlight the need for schools to understand the pressures teachers are currently facing. By addressing the stressors, schools can better support their teachers and create a conducive atmosphere for them to thrive in their roles. Susan’s positive experience further reinforces the importance of fostering supportive school environments that promote job satisfaction and ultimately contribute to teacher retention.

#### *Themes Related to Research Question Three*

This section answers the third research question: What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching? While analyzing the data, I found three external correlates that influence teacher retention. First, union memberships provide teachers with collective support and a platform to address concerns. Union memberships provide a collective voice and support system for teachers, fostering a positive working environment, as Susan, Richard, and Karen expressed. Second, excessive workload and unrealistic curriculum expectations can negatively impact teacher retention. Curriculum expectations can significantly impact teacher retention, with quotes from Karen and Melinda emphasizing the challenges of balancing workload and meeting expectations. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic has left several challenges for teachers to overcome, underscoring the need for support and adaptability to maintain job satisfaction and retention in an evolving educational landscape. Melinda, Richard, Susan,



and Karen described their experiences such as remote learning and student behavior changes. These insights shed light on the multifaceted influences that contribute to teacher retention.

*Union memberships.* The participants' perspectives shed light on the significance of union memberships in relation to teacher retention. The involvement in teacher unions emerged as a common theme among the participants, highlighting the collective voice and support that unions provide. Susan acknowledges that being part of a teacher union provides a safety net. Richard mentioned the high participation rate in the teacher union, stating, "Being a member of the teacher union has been beneficial in terms of having a collective voice and support. It allows us to advocate for our rights and interests as educators." Richard's quote emphasizes the importance of union membership in providing a platform for teachers to express their concerns, collaborate, and collectively address issues impacting job satisfaction and retention. Karen also acknowledged the value of union membership: "Being part of the teacher union has provided me with a sense of support and solidarity. The union represents teachers voice and interest, and it contributes to a positive working environment." Karen's observation highlights the role of unions in fostering a supportive community and advocating for the well-being and rights of teachers.

*Curriculum expectations.* The curriculum expectations placed on teachers significantly impact their job satisfaction and retention. Melinda expressed concerns about the expectations placed on teachers by administration and parents, stating, "Often in meetings, it seems like the teacher is the one causing the student to fail or that they are

not giving enough to each student.” Melinda emphasized the challenges she faces from the administration and parents. Additionally, Richard mentioned when asked about his satisfaction with the current district curriculum expectations, he pointed out issues such as broken links, lack of differentiation, and curriculum misalignment between the curriculum and the school’s requirements.

On the other hand, Susan sees value in the county setting a standard curriculum but highlights the confusion experienced by students who transfer schools. These quotes collectively illustrate the impact of curriculum expectations on teacher retention.

Excessive workload, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of support can lead to feelings of stress, burnout, and dissatisfaction among teachers. Conversely, when teachers feel supported, valued, and have a work environment that aligns with curriculum expectations, it enhances their job satisfaction and the likelihood of staying in the profession.

*Impact of COVID-19.* The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the teachers’ current positions. All four interviewees mention the challenges posed by the pandemic, including the shift to remote or hybrid learning, difficulties with student engagement, increased student anxiety, and the strain of technology-driven lessons. When I asked Melinda about the differences since returning from the COVID-19 pandemic, she said, “Lessons are overpowered by technology, and there are a lot more students’ absences.” Karen described the overwhelming workload and challenges of meeting curriculum expectations since the pandemic, explaining, “The workload became overwhelming, especially when trying to meet all the curriculum expectations within the

given time frame.” The shift to remote learning during the pandemic also added new challenges for teachers, affecting their teaching strategies.

Regarding the COVID-19 impact on students, all four interviewees mentioned student behavior has changed since the pandemic. Richard shared, “Since then, though, it seems the kids’ behaviors are getting worse.” Similarly, Susan stated, “I felt like the pandemic brought an uptick in students’ anxiety and emotional challenges.” Interestingly, Karen gave a reason for some of the behavior, sharing, “Students are not only scoring at younger academic scores, but I also see students all the time that are behind in their social skills.” When asked to expand, Karen continued, “The students that are our current freshman and sophomore class function as if they are currently 7th and 8th graders.” These experiences highlighted the external influences teachers experienced when adapting to new teaching environments and managing the effects of the pandemic on teaching and student behavior.

### *Discussion*

The findings from the above sections provide valuable insights into the personal, school, and external correlates that influence the retention of new K–12 teachers in their current positions. The study employed questionnaires and interviews to gather comprehensive perspectives from participants, enabling a deeper understanding of the influences contributing to teacher retention. The analysis of the data and the existing literature highlighted in Chapter One revealed several themes related to personal, school, and external correlates that influence teacher retention. First, I found two themes relating to the personal correlates and research question one: job satisfaction and the individual teacher’s background. Second, I found two themes relating to the school correlates and

the second research question, school leadership and being part of a supportive school environment. Last, I found three themes within the external correlates and the third research question, that the impact of COVID-19, union membership, and the expectations imposed by curriculum and standardized testing influence teacher retention.

*Themes Related to Personal Correlates with Connections to Literature Review*

The individual teacher's background and job satisfaction are important personal correlates that influence teacher retention. Research by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) explored the positive impact of teachers' qualifications and competence on their commitment to teaching. They determined that Teachers with solid educational backgrounds and relevant qualifications are likelier to feel confident and competent in their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). I found the teachers' backgrounds, including their prior experiences, qualifications, and educational foundations, play a significant role in teacher retention. Teachers with solid educational backgrounds are more likely to feel confident and competent in their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention. Additionally, research by Billingsley (2004), Goldhaber et al. (2011), Jones et al. (2011), and Redding and Smith (2016) highlighted the influence of teacher qualifications, such as certifications, years of experience, and academic ability on teacher retention. I found that participants' prior experiences in education, such as student teaching or working as a teaching assistant, contributed to their teacher retention because it provided valuable insights and preparation for the profession's demands.

Furthermore, interviews with participants shed light on the importance of job satisfaction and teachers' backgrounds. Richard emphasized the significance of feeling

valued and respected by colleagues and administrators and the impact of workload and stress on his decision to stay in the profession, aligning with Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) findings regarding the link between teacher job satisfaction and attrition rates. Moreover, the interviews highlighted the influence of personal joy in teaching, as Susan and Karen mentioned finding satisfaction in working with children daily and deriving fulfillment from their growth. These findings highlight the importance of considering individual qualifications, professional development opportunities, job satisfaction, and teaching backgrounds in supporting and retaining new teachers.

#### *Themes Related to School Correlates with Connections to Literature Review*

The perceived school correlate's themes from the data unveiled that school leadership and a supportive school environment significantly contributed to job satisfaction and teacher retention. Positive relationships with colleagues and feeling supported and valued by colleagues and administration significantly contribute to job satisfaction and teacher retention. The literature stated that schools with higher levels of teacher collaboration and opportunities for interaction are less likely to experience attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Yada et al., 2019). I found the participants emphasized the significance of having a supportive administration that values and appreciates teachers' contributions. Richard, for example, expressed his satisfaction with his current school's administration and its positive impact on his decision to remain in education. The literature supports these findings, indicating that schools with robust and supportive administrations have lower attrition rates (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011). Conversely, research identifies a lack of administrative support as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession (Thibodeaux et al., 2015).

The interviews and questionnaire responses also highlighted the importance of a supportive school environment. Susan emphasized the positive impact of collaboration among teachers in her school, highlighting the value of sharing ideas, resources, and support. Susan's emphasis on the positive impact of collaboration within her school aligns with the existing literature, which I found indicates that schools with higher levels of teacher collaboration are less likely to experience attrition (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Yada et al., 2019). In addition, I found that mentorship programs, as highlighted by Richard, also play a crucial role in supporting new teachers and reducing attrition rates, a finding supported by Mihaly et al. (2015) and Smith and Ingersoll (2004).

#### *Themes Related to External Correlates with Connections to Literature Review*

The external correlates identified through the questionnaire and interviews encompassed the impact of COVID-19, union membership, and the expectations imposed by curriculum and standardized testing. I found the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges for educators, as the participants shared their experiences with the added stress, burnout, and pressure faced by teachers during this unprecedented time. The literature supports their sentiments, indicating that external correlates, such as the pandemic, can lead to increased attrition rates due to heightened levels of stress and demoralization (Walker, 2022).

Furthermore, the interviews and questionnaire responses shed light on the role of union membership. I found the participants expressed the positive influence of union support in their decision to remain in the profession. The participants described involvement in the union as a provider of support and solidarity, representing teachers'

interests and contributing to a positive working environment. The literature supports these findings, indicating that union membership significantly reduces the likelihood of teachers leaving the profession (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016).

Moreover, the literature underscores the impact of external accountability measures, such as standardized testing, on teacher stress and attrition rates (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). I found in my study that the teachers experience pressures from parents, the school, and the county. Melinda, for example, shared that parents want high grades without student effort, while the county has policies and expectations on testing scores. Teaching a graduation requirement class adds pressure to defend grades and support students.

### *Implications and Recommendations*

The findings from the above sections provide valuable insights into the personal, school, and external correlates that influence the retention of new K–12 teachers in their current positions. Addressing these influences requires a multi-faceted approach involving teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. For teachers, the findings underscore the importance of their qualifications and certifications in promoting retention (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Administration and policymakers should prioritize teachers' support and professional development to enhance their qualifications and encourage them to stay in the profession (Billingsley, 2004; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Providing support for new teachers, promoting collaboration and mentorship programs, ensuring school leadership and administrative support, reducing external pressures, and valuing the

teaching profession are critical steps toward creating an environment that fosters teacher retention and benefits both teachers and students.

### *Teachers*

For teachers, it is crucial to recognize the influence of their personal backgrounds and job satisfaction on their decision to stay in the profession. Teachers with strong educational backgrounds and relevant qualifications feel more confident and competent, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Providing ongoing professional development opportunities and support for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge can contribute to their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. Furthermore, educational experiences, such as student teaching, interning, or working as a teaching assistant, offer valuable insights and preparation for the demands of the profession (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Teachers should reflect on their experiences and seek opportunities for growth and development.

### *School Administration*

For school administrators and leaders, the findings highlight the critical role of leadership in promoting teacher retention. Supportive and appreciative administrators positively impact teachers' job satisfaction and commitment to the profession (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011). Administrators should receive leadership training and support to foster a positive school culture and enhance their skills in creating a supportive environment (Boyd et al., 2011).

Moreover, the study emphasizes the role of job satisfaction and support from administrators and colleagues in teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011;



Ladd, 2011). School leaders should focus on creating a positive and supportive work environment that values teachers' contributions and provides opportunities for collaboration (Boyd et al., 2011). Mentorship programs for new teachers also play a crucial role in reducing attrition rates (Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Schools and districts should establish comprehensive mentorship programs that pair experienced teachers with new teachers to provide guidance, support, and professional growth opportunities (Mihaly et al., 2015).

### *Policymakers*

Policymakers need to consider the external influences on teacher attrition. The study highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accountability measures on attrition rates (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). Policymakers should develop policies and practices that support teachers during challenging times and recognize the importance of union membership in teacher retention (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016).

There is a need to deepen the understanding of teacher attrition through further research. Future studies should investigate the impact of specific interventions, such as targeted professional development programs or policy changes, on teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011). Additionally, exploring the influence of cultural and socio-economic contexts on retention rates in diverse settings can provide valuable insights (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020). Longitudinal studies tracking teachers' career trajectories can also identify the elements contributing to their long-term commitment to the profession (Boyd et al., 2011).

## *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the various perceived influences on teacher retention. The findings highlight the importance of teacher qualifications, such as certifications and years of experience, in promoting teacher retention. Additionally, the study emphasized the role of job satisfaction, supportive school environments, and effective leadership in enhancing teacher commitment to the profession. Furthermore, I identified perceived external correlates, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accountability measures, as significant perceived influences on teacher attrition.

The implications of this study are significant for different stakeholders in the field of education. Teachers, school administration, and policymakers can use these findings to inform strategies promoting teacher retention, including prioritizing professional development, mentorship programs, and creating supportive work environments. Policymakers should also consider the effects of external influences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and accountability measures, and develop policies that support teachers during challenging times. Furthermore, future research should focus on investigating specific interventions and exploring the influence of cultural and socio-economic contexts on teacher attrition. By addressing the identified implications and recommendations, stakeholders can work towards creating a supportive and sustainable environment for educators, benefiting both teachers and students in the education system. I provide an Executive Summary and Distribution of Findings in the upcoming chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Executive Summary and Distribution of Findings

#### *Executive Summary*

This single case study aimed to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. The problem of teacher attrition in education has been a significant concern, with approximately 44% of new teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Ingersoll et al., 2018). I recognized the need to understand the perceived influences contributing to teacher retention, particularly focusing on personal, school, and external correlates, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Walker, 2022). This study addresses this gap and provides valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers to improve teacher support and job satisfaction.

To address the research questions, I designed a qualitative single-case study, employing in-depth interviews and questionnaires to gather comprehensive perspectives from teachers (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I utilized Nguyen's (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework to align the problem, purpose, and data collection procedures. The research questions guiding my study were as follows:

1. What perceived personal correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

2. What perceived school correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?
3. What perceived external correlates influence the retention of K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching?

### *Overview of Data Collection and Analysis Procedures*

In this study, I employed a qualitative research methodology to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influenced new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who remained in their current positions throughout their first five years of teaching. I chose a single-case study design, focusing on one school district in Maryland, as a single-case that could provide unique insights into the new teacher’s perceived influences contributing to their retention (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Guiding my research was Nguyen’s (2018) Teacher Attrition and Retention theoretical framework, which breaks down the reasons for teacher attrition and movement into three main correlates: personal, school, and external. This framework informed the development of my research questions, with each question seeking to understand one of the three perceived personal, school, and external correlates influencing teacher retention among K–12 educators who had completed their first five years of teaching.

For data collection, I started with a district-wide questionnaire containing sections aligned with the three correlates identified in Nguyen’s framework. This questionnaire was a foundation for subsequent semi-structured interviews, providing deeper insights into the influences contributing to teacher retention. I purposefully selected four participants from the questionnaire respondents using a critical case sampling procedure to ensure specific insights into retention rates (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In analyzing the data, I carefully followed Creswell and Poth's (2018) data analysis spiral, which involved six interconnected steps: preparing the data for analysis, exploring the data, analyzing the data, representing the data analysis, interpreting the results, and validating the data and findings. I used a priori codes based on the three main correlates from Nguyen's (2018) framework to categorize the data. These predetermined codes enabled me to identify distinct categories and emerging themes, facilitating a comprehensive exploration of the data (Saldaña, 2015).

### *Summary of Key Findings*

The study's findings offer valuable insights into the personal, school, and external influences that shape K–12 teacher retention. Employing questionnaires and interviews, I comprehensively explored participants' perspectives, leading to a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to teacher retention. Analyzing the interviews and questionnaires and the literature highlighted in Chapter One revealed several themes related to the three correlates influencing teacher retention.

The first key finding in this study pertained to the background and job satisfaction of individual teachers, which emerged as crucial personal influences on teacher retention. Teachers with strong educational backgrounds and relevant qualifications felt more confident and competent, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Educational experiences provided valuable insights and preparation for the profession's demands (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). Furthermore, teacher qualifications, such as certifications, years of experience, and academic ability, played a significant role in teacher attrition (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016).

The interviews highlighted the influence of job satisfaction and personal experiences with teachers during their education on teacher retention (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

The second key finding in this study was focused on the perceived school correlates, school leadership, and a supportive environment. Positive relationships with colleagues and feeling supported and valued by colleagues and administration significantly contributed to job satisfaction and teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Yada et al., 2019). Participants emphasized the significance of having a supportive administration that values and appreciates teachers' contributions, as a lack of administrative support emerged as a major reason for teachers leaving the profession (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011). Additionally, a supportive school environment fostered through teacher collaboration and mentorship programs played a crucial role in supporting new teachers and reducing attrition rates (Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The third key finding in this study encompassed the perceived external correlates: the impact of COVID-19, union membership, and expectations imposed by curriculum and standardized testing. The COVID-19 pandemic heightened stress and burnout among teachers, potentially contributing to attrition rates (Walker, 2022). Union membership emerged as a positive influence on teacher retention (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016). In addition, external accountability measures like standardized testing and county curriculum expectations contributed to teacher stress and high attrition rates (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017).

In conclusion, the study's findings shed light on the interconnected perceived influences on teacher retention. Addressing these influences requires collaborative efforts

from teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. By recognizing the importance of supportive school environments, fair compensation, professional development opportunities, and realistic workload expectations, educational systems can create an environment that supports and retains highly skilled and committed educators, benefiting teachers and students. The implications of this study underscore the importance of ongoing support, mentorship, and recognition for teachers while also highlighting the need for responsive leadership and thoughtful policymaking to foster a thriving and stable teaching workforce.

### *Implications and Recommendations*

The findings provide valuable insights into the personal, school, and external correlates that influence the retention of new K–12 teachers in their current positions. Addressing these influences requires a multi-faceted approach involving teachers, school administrators, and policymakers. For teachers, the findings underscore the importance of their qualifications and certifications in promoting retention (Billingsley, 2004; Goldhaber et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2011; Redding & Smith, 2016). I recommend that teachers actively seek ongoing professional development opportunities and support to enhance their skills and knowledge, contributing to greater job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. Moreover, teachers should reflect on their personal experiences in education, such as student teaching or working as teaching assistants, to gain valuable insights and seek opportunities for growth and development in their profession.

For school administrators and leaders, the findings highlight the critical role of leadership in promoting teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011). I recommend that administrators receive leadership training and support to foster a positive school culture

that enhances their skills in creating a supportive environment. By recognizing the impact of job satisfaction and support from administrators and colleagues on teacher retention (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011), school leaders should focus on creating a positive and supportive work environment that values teachers' contributions and provides opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, establishing comprehensive mentorship programs that pair experienced teachers with new teachers can play a crucial role in reducing attrition rates (Mihaly et al., 2015; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Policymakers must consider the external influences on teacher attrition. The study highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and accountability measures on attrition rates (Podolsky et al., 2019; Ryan et al., 2017). I recommend that policymakers develop policies and practices that support teachers during challenging times and recognize the importance of union membership in teacher retention (Jabber et al., 2020; Kelly & Northrop, 2015; Redding & Smith, 2016). Furthermore, future research is essential to deepen the understanding of teacher attrition. Longitudinal studies tracking teachers' career trajectories can identify the elements contributing to their long-term commitment to the profession (Boyd et al., 2011). Moreover, exploring the influence of cultural and socio-economic contexts on retention rates in diverse settings can provide valuable insights (de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020).

This research offers important implications and recommendations for stakeholders in education. By addressing personal, school, and external correlates, policymakers, school leaders, and teachers can work together to enhance teacher retention, benefiting educators and students (Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Ladd, 2011). I encourage further research in this area, considering different contexts, populations, and



methodologies, and actively engaging in the scholarly discussion established in the literature review (Boyd et al., 2011; de la Torre et al., 2014; Grant et al., 2020). By implementing evidence-based strategies and continuously exploring teacher retention dynamics, educational systems can create an environment that supports and retains highly skilled and dedicated teachers, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and positively impacting students' learning experiences.

### *Findings Distribution Proposal*

This study provides valuable insights into the perceived influences on retaining new K–12 teachers. My research aims to empower teachers, school administrators, and policymakers with knowledge that will enable them to make positive changes in their professional practices. I disseminated my findings first through two presentations with the administration and the teacher union. I aim to foster a collective understanding and collaborative effort that strengthens teacher retention, creates supportive school environments, and benefits the entire educational community. After meeting with administration and the union, I plan to work with the new teacher hiring team to welcome incoming teachers to the district and give them advice for finding job satisfaction in the ever-changing educational setting. Through targeted and strategic distribution, I envision lasting impact and the inspiration for further research and action to enhance teacher retention efforts in K–12 education.

### *Target Audience*

The primary target audience for these findings is teachers. I recognize the significance of empowering teachers with insights into the perceived influences that affect their professional retention. By understanding the personal, school, and external

correlates impacting their decision to stay in their current positions, teachers can make informed decisions about their career paths and take proactive steps to enhance their job satisfaction and commitment to teaching. These findings inspire teachers to seek ongoing professional development opportunities, reflect on their educational experiences, and actively participate in mentorship programs to grow and thrive in their roles. To reach this audience, distribution methods included disseminating the study findings through a presentation with the teacher union and the online platforms used within the district.

The second target audience for these findings is school administrators and leaders. I recognize school administrators' critical role in creating a supportive work environment that fosters teacher retention. By sharing these insights with school leaders, they can gain a deeper understanding of the importance of their leadership in influencing teacher job satisfaction and commitment. These findings can prompt administrators to prioritize ongoing training and support for school leadership to enhance their skills in creating positive school cultures. Additionally, school administrators can use these findings to design and implement comprehensive mentorship programs for new teachers, fostering a sense of belonging and support. To reach this audience, distribution methods involved presenting the study findings to the district administration, and the online platforms used within the district.

The final target audience for these findings is policymakers in the education sector. Policymakers are pivotal in shaping the education landscape and influencing teacher retention through policy decisions. By sharing these insights with policymakers, they can understand the impact of external influences on teacher attrition rates, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and accountability measures. With this knowledge,

policymakers can develop evidence-based policies that support teachers during challenging times and recognize the significance of union membership in teacher retention. I shared my findings with the teacher union to best reach this audience. As a representative body of teachers, the union has the potential to amplify these findings and advocate for evidence-based policies that support educators during challenging times. With this knowledge, the teacher union can create concise and accessible policy briefs and recommendations, presenting a unified voice and perspective on teacher retention to policymakers. As the union engages with policymakers and education authorities, they can leverage the research to underscore the importance of addressing external factors affecting teacher retention and emphasize the significance of union membership as part of the solution. This collaboration between the teacher union and policymakers fosters a stronger understanding of the issues at hand, leading to more informed and impactful policy decisions that benefit teachers and support their professional well-being.

#### *Proposed Distribution Method and Venue*

The proposed distribution methods for my findings primarily focus on reaching the local stakeholders within the studied district. The key target audience for this research includes the teacher union, district administration, and policymakers within the district. To best reach the target audience, I will present my study findings at two meetings: one with the teacher union and one with the district administration. I have already reviewed my findings with the district principals in September 2023 at our staff development center. I presented my study utilizing a PowerPoint presentation shared online via Google with the viewers. Additionally, I will explain my findings to other teachers at the local teacher union chapter meeting in November 2023. By employing these distribution

methods and venues, I aim to foster a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and influences affecting teacher retention at the local level, leading to targeted and effective strategies for supporting and retaining teachers in the district.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, this single case study explored the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. Through questionnaires and interviews, I gathered comprehensive perspectives from teachers, enabling a deeper understanding of the perceived influences on new teacher retention. The key findings highlighted the significance of teacher qualifications and job satisfaction as essential personal aspects influencing commitment to the profession. Ongoing professional development opportunities and recognition of contributions can enhance job satisfaction and encourage new teachers to stay in teaching. Moreover, a supportive school environment, characterized by collaborative practices, mentorship programs, and appreciative administration, positively impacts teacher retention rates.

Additionally, my research shed light on external correlates, such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the value of union support in retaining teachers. Policymakers need to consider these external influences when shaping education policies. By addressing these aspects collectively, including the recommendations derived from this research, educational stakeholders can cultivate an environment that nurtures and retains highly skilled and resilient educators, benefiting both teachers and students. Through these efforts, we can work towards creating a sustainable and thriving teaching workforce, contributing to the overall advancement of education for generations to come.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire Questions

#### **Personal Correlates**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your race?
4. Are you a full-time teacher or part-time teacher?
5. What is your highest education/degree earned?
6. What grade do you teach?
7. How long have you taught?
8. How long have you been with your current school?
9. What current certifications do you hold?

#### **School Correlates**

10. How often do you collaborate with other colleagues?
11. Did you have a mentor teacher? If yes, explain your experience.
12. What resources were you provided as a new teacher from school leadership?
13. How would you describe your school environment?

#### **External Correlates**

14. What pressures have you experienced as a teacher?
15. Have you received a financial incentive to stay in your current position?
16. Are you part of the teacher union?
17. Job satisfaction is defined as “a feeling of fulfillment a person experiences in their job” how would you describe your level of satisfaction with your current position?
18. Would you be interested in participating in the study further with an in-person interview?

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Protocol

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Interview Comments or Leads: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introductory Protocol

*We want to videotape our conversations today to facilitate our notetaking. Please sign the release form. Only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes, eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet our human subject requirements. This document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary, and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) we do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.*

*We have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. We have several questions that we would like to cover during this time. If time begins to run short, it may be necessary to interrupt you to push ahead and complete this line of questioning.*

#### Introduction

You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as a fifth-year teacher within the school district. My research project explores the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence teacher retention for K–12 teachers within their first five years since the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is not looking to find ways to solve attrition amongst new teachers but to understand what personal, school-related, and external correlates influence retention. This research is being conducted as part of the principal investigator’s dissertation at Baylor University. Additionally, participation (or lack of) in the study will not affect any relations that the participant has with the district.

#### **A: Personal Correlates**

1. How long have you been in your current position?

Probes: Have you taught other subjects?

Probes: Did you come from a different profession?

2. What was your undergraduate degree?

Probes: If not an education degree, how did you become certified to teach?

3. How satisfied are you in your current position?

Probes: What is the most rewarding part of the position?

Probes: What is the most challenging part of the position?

4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your current position?

### **B: School Correlates**

5. Do you feel supported by the administration? Why or why not?

6. What does a typical day as an educator look like for you?

7. What ways do you interact with other teachers and students?

8. How would you describe your school's overall environment?

9. How satisfied are you with the current FCPS curriculum expectations?

Probes: Do you feel there should be more, less, or the same amount of county involvement in developing your curriculum? Explain your selection.

10. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your school's culture?

### **C : External Correlates** *(reviewing questionnaire questions 14–17)*

11. Describe the pressures you are experiencing as a teacher.

Probes: How are you managing the pressures?

Probes: How has COVID-19 impacted the pressures put on teachers?

11. What role, if any, do financial incentives take in your decision to stay in your current position?

12. What role does be part of a teacher union play in your decision to stay in your current position?

Post Interview Comments and Observations:



## APPENDIX C

### Review Board Determination for School District

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 9, 2023 1:30 PM  
**To:** Reid, Fawn E  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Application to Conduct Research [#78] - F. Reid

Hello,

Thank you for providing information related to your revised recruitment method (i.e., completion of PIA request). Your application to conduct research, *Retaining New Teachers: A Single-Case Qualitative Study Examining the Underlying Factors that Affect Retention*, has been reviewed. You have been granted approval to conduct your research.

It is imperative that the following processes are conducted:

Any consent form must include a statement such as the following: Participation in or lack of participation in does not affect their relationship with Baylor University or [REDACTED]

2. In all communication with program participants, it is important that you reiterate that participation is completely voluntary. Thus, there are no consequences for not participating or withdrawing from the study at any point.
3. If requested, participants should have the option of seeing the survey/interview questions prior to participation.
4. Research activities should be conducted when they least impose burden on daily work activities/time.
5. [REDACTED] school names or affiliation of research participants will not be used in dissemination and/or publication of findings/results. Instead, descriptors, such as, school system in Western Maryland, may be used.
6. It is important that you adhere to all procedures to maintain participant confidentiality and anonymity as you conduct your research. This includes, but not limited to the following:
  - Use of all data gathered should be used in a confidential and appropriate manner.
  - No identifying information will be used, unless permission is received. (Note: Datasets will be stripped of personal identifiers.) Demographic information should not be published if potentially identifying.
  - All data reporting procedures will be followed in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as appropriate.

We will be interested in the findings from your research. Please do share with us.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

## APPENDIX D

### Recruitment Letter Protocol

Hello,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on teacher retention. The study will involve completing a questionnaire that should take no more than 15 minutes. The purpose of this study will be to understand what perceived correlates influence on new employee retention by exploring the experiences of K–12 teachers who have remained in a single position for their first five years in education. I am asking you to participate in this study because you are a current teacher within the district.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and all information collected will be kept confidential. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be linked to your name or any identifying information. Participation (or lack of) in the study will not affect any relations that the participant has with the district. If you are willing to participate in this study, please reach out to me.

Please reach out by April 7th. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED]. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in this important study. I appreciate your participation in this study.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter,

Fawn Reid  
Mathematics Teacher

## APPENDIX E

### Questionnaire Informed Consent

PROTOCOL TITLE: Questionnaire Informed Consent

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Fawn Reid

SUPPORTED BY: Baylor University

**Purpose of the research:** The purpose of this single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. We are asking you to participate in this study because you are a current teacher in the district who is in their fifth year of teaching. We are conducting the study as part of the principal investigator’s dissertation at Baylor University.

**Study activities:** If you choose to be in the study, you will complete a questionnaire to fill out about your current position as a teacher.

**Risks and Benefits:**

You may be uncomfortable with some of the questions and topics we will ask about. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

**Confidentiality:**

The risk of participating in this study is the possibility of losing confidentiality. Loss of privacy included sharing personal information with someone not on the study team who was not supposed to see or know about your data. The researcher plans to protect your confidentiality. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Your participation in this online questionnaire involves risks like a person’s everyday use of the Internet, which could include illegal interception of the data by another party. If you are concerned about your data security, contact the researcher to schedule a time to complete a printed questionnaire with the same questions/you should not participate in this research. We will keep the records of this study confidential by organizing the data into files using the online software NVivo and then placed in a secured location. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your documents. The authorized staff of Baylor University may review the study records for quality control or safety.

**Questions or concerns about this research study**

You can reach out to us with any concerns or questions about the research. Our email addresses are listed below:

Principal Investigator: Fawn Reid, Fawn\_Reid1@baylor.edu

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Amy Sloan, Amy\_Sloan@baylor.edu

Suppose you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s). In that case, you may contact the Baylor University IRB through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at 254-710-3708 or irb@baylor.edu.

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or stop at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you choose to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. Information already collected about you cannot be deleted. Additionally, participation (or lack of) in the study will not affect any relations that the participant has with the school district.

You provide consent by continuing with the research and completing the study activities.

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F

### Interview Informed Consent

PROTOCOL TITLE: Interview Informed Consent

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Fawn Reid

SUPPORTED BY: Baylor University

**Purpose of the research:** The purpose of this single case study was to explore the perceived personal, school, and external correlates that influence new teacher retention among K–12 teachers who have remained in their current position throughout their first five years of teaching. We are asking you to participate in this study because you are a current teacher in the district who is currently in their fifth year of teaching. We are conducting the study as part of the principal investigator’s dissertation at Baylor University.

**Study activities:** If you choose to be in the study, you will be interviewed about your experiences working as a teacher since COVID-19.

#### **Risks and Benefits:**

You may feel emotional or upset when answering some of the questions. Tell the interviewer anytime you want to take a break or stop the interview. There are no benefits to you from taking part in this research.

#### **Confidentiality:**

The risk of participating in this study is the possibility of losing confidentiality. Loss of privacy included sharing personal information with someone not on the study team who was not supposed to see or know about your data. The researcher plans to protect your confidentiality. We will keep the records of this study confidential by organizing the data into files using the online software NVivo and then placed in a secured location. We will make every effort to keep your records confidential. However, there are times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of your documents. The authorized staff of Baylor University may review the study records for quality control or safety.

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Principal Investigator: Fawn Reid, [Fawn\\_Reid1@baylor.edu](mailto:Fawn_Reid1@baylor.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Amy Sloan, [Amy\\_Sloan@baylor.edu](mailto:Amy_Sloan@baylor.edu)

Suppose you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s). In that case, you may contact the Baylor University IRB through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research at 254-710-3708 or [irb@baylor.edu](mailto:irb@baylor.edu).

Taking part in this study is your choice. You are free not to take part or stop at any time for any reason. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. If you choose to withdraw from this study, the information that you have already provided will be kept confidential. Information already collected about you cannot be deleted. Additionally, participation (or lack of) in the study will not affect any relations that the participant has with the school district.

You provide consent by continuing with the research and completing the study activities.

Name of Participant (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Researcher (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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