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Title: Teacher retention: why do beginning teachers remain in the profession?

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Article Preview :

As beginning teachers continue to leave the profession within the first several years of entering, educators must identify factors which cause teachers to remain in the profession, as well as factors related to attrition if the current teacher shortage is to be remedied. The purpose of this study was to examine the reported attitudes of beginning teachers in order to identify perceived positive aspects of teaching as factors which may lead to teacher retention. The sample, which comprised part of an ongoing study seeking to survey teachers within various areas within the United States, was composed of teachers from randomly selected schools in Georgia. The Professional Attitude Survey, a 10 item survey instrument designed to gather information regarding 21 characteristics related to teacher career stability, was sent to the teachers of randomly selected schools. Teachers were requested to respond to questions related to demographics, teacher background, reasons for remaining in the profession, and job satisfaction. Retention factors identified by the participants are discussed and recommendations for retention are provided for teacher education programs, administrators, and the community. \*\*\*\*\* Continuing concern in the education field, as well as in the United States and society at large, is centered on the high rate at which beginning teachers leave the profession. Over the years studies have revealed that most teachers who leave have fewer than 10 years of

teaching experience Many reports indicate 25%-50% of beginning teachers resign during their first three years of teaching (Voke, 2002; Fleener, 2001; NEA, 2001; NCES, 1999; Haselkorn, 1994). Other reports state that nearly ten percent leave in their first year (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 2000). While accurate measures of teacher attrition are important if school systems, administrators, and potential teachers are to effectively plan for the coming years, the need to identify factors which cause teachers to remain in the profession is perhaps of greater importance (see end notes). The purpose of this study was to perform a conceptual analysis of reported current attitudes of beginning teachers in order to identify perceived positive aspects of teaching as factors which may lead to teacher retention. Attrition and Retention Previously, educational researchers have primarily examined factors such as demographics, teacher background, professional environment, and lack of support systems which were identified as predictors of teacher attrition. The reasons teachers provided for leaving were less often due to insufficient salaries than to a lack of professionalism, collegiality, and administrative support (Bolton, 2002; Recruitment and Retention Project, 2001; Mills, 2001; Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers, 1986). Additionally, while retirement and reduction of school staff were reported reasons for some attrition, the more frequently cited reasons were family, personal circumstances, and job dissatisfaction (Voke, 2002). More recently, disruptive students, uninvolved parents and invasive bureaucracy were identified as contributing to the demoralization of teachers (McDonough, 2003), and to influencing the inclination of teachers to leave the classroom. Today's teachers face an increasing variety of classroom conditions, including English Speakers of Other Languages and language immersion classrooms, inclusion and state mandated programs,...

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