

Improving the Teacher Supply: The Relationship between Workplace Conditions and a Former
Teacher's Consideration to Return to Teaching

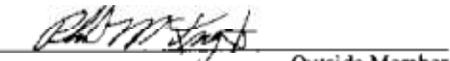
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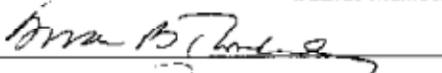
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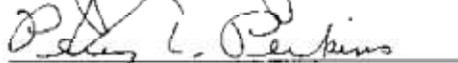
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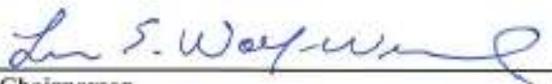




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Chairperson

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Abstract

High attrition rates of teachers have had a significant impact on the quality of teachers within the field of K-12 education in the United States. This issue has been analyzed from the perspectives of new teacher recruits, as well as the retention of current teachers. This study analyzes the perceptions of former teachers who have left the teaching profession, and who may or may not consider returning to the profession. These reentering teachers constitute a potentially significant source of professionals to fill vacancies in schools.

This study looks at former teachers and determines the relationship between their perception of compensation, perception of degree of control and input into organizational policies, perception of institutional conflict, and perception of administrative support and the consideration to return or not to return to teaching. Using 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey, three logistic regression models were used to determine the relationships between the perception of workplace conditions, reasons for leaving, professional and personal variables, and the consideration to return to teaching. Survey questions related to workplace conditions include a sample of former teachers who were employed at the time the survey was taken, while questions related to reasons for leaving and personal and professional variables include former teachers who were either employed or unemployed.

All three logistic regression models used in this study show that “Safety” is a significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching. Regression model 2, which determines the relationship between perceptions of workplace conditions, reasons for leaving, and the consideration to return to teaching, shows that former teachers are more likely to return if salary played an important role in their decision to leave. Regression model 3, which determines the relationship between perceptions of workplace conditions, reasons for leaving, personal and professional characteristics, and the consideration to return to teaching, shows that teachers are

more likely to consider returning to teaching if they feel as if they have more influence of policies and practices in their current jobs. Also, if they initially left to pursue a job outside of the education field, they are less likely to consider returning. Lastly, White and female teachers were more likely to consider returning than male and non-White teachers. Overall, though, “Safety” is the consistent predictor whether or not a former teacher would consider returning to the profession.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Teacher shortages are currently a major problem facing urban and rural school districts (Darling Hammond, 2000; Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp, 2001; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001; Langford, Loeb, and Wycoff, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007; Prince, 2002). While extensive research has been focused on studying new teacher recruitment and the attitudes and retention rates of current teachers (Allen, 2005; Brookhart & Freedman, 1992; Broughman & Rollefson, 2000; Guarino, Santibanez, & Galey, 2006; Wadsworth, 2001; Weiss, 1999), there is a lack of current research regarding the perspectives of former teachers. As school enrollment increases across the United States, the demand for qualified teachers increases as well. As older teachers retire and younger teachers leave the profession altogether, we are left with the following question: What can be done to encourage people to fill these positions? Research should not only be directed at recruiting new teachers and retaining existing teachers, but also should focus on what can be done to draw former teachers, who already possess training and experience, back into the profession.

Legislators have attempted to solve teacher shortages by viewing the issue from a recruitment standpoint (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). For example, financial incentives for new teachers willing to serve in high-needs areas have been used (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp, 2001). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) state that, "Financial incentives, such as signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement have all been instituted to aid teacher recruitment" (p. 1) and that "the 'No Child Left Behind Act,' passed in Winter 2002, provides federal funding for such initiatives" (p. 30).

The increasing demand for qualified educators can also be viewed from the perspective of high attrition. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) state that according to the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS), “data suggest that after just five years, between 40 and 50 percent of all beginning teachers have left the profession” (p. 32). While recruiting new teachers to fill positions may be a problem, it is also challenging to retain certified personnel. Ingersoll (2001) points out that school staffing problems are not only a result of attracting new, qualified applicants, but are also due to the numerous teachers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2002), “The high demand for teachers is not being driven by an undersupply of entering teachers, but by an excessive demand for teacher replacements that is driven by staggering teacher turnover” (p. 6). It has been argued that the problem of staffing schools with qualified applicants should be explored in terms of both recruitment and retention (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003).

Educators are choosing to leave the profession, thus contributing to the teacher shortage. “High needs areas,” as labeled by the U.S. and state departments of education, are content and certification areas where there is a high demand for qualified applicants and that are especially prone to high teacher attrition. Impoverished urban areas that have traditionally had difficulty recruiting teachers also have had difficulty retaining them. Langford, Loeb, and Wycoff (2002) found that schools that had higher minority and low socio-economic status populations faced more challenges regarding teacher attrition. The 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey found that, nationally, compensation and working conditions were major factors that led teachers to quit (Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2005). In areas with economically disadvantaged students, these two aspects of the vocation are not always competitive with more affluent schools

(Darling-Hammond, 2003; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007; Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2005).

Policymakers have chosen to solve the teacher shortage by focusing on recruitment, but, as Ingersoll (2003) states, "the data do not show, contrary to the conventional wisdom, that there is overall an insufficient supply of teachers being produced" (p. 3). His analysis of NCES's Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS) shows that there is a sufficient supply of certificated educators. Though this data is unable to show there are adequate numbers of teachers in each specific field (many degrees are in elementary education), it also underestimates the number of new-hires labeled "reserves," or teachers who are delayed-entrants (teachers who did not begin teaching directly after completing certification requirements) and re-entrants (those who left the profession and then returned), thus adding credence to the idea that there are currently enough qualified applicants to fill empty teaching positions.

Purpose of the Study

This study looks at former teachers and determines the relationship between their perception of compensation, perception of degree of control and input into organizational policies, perception of institutional conflict, and perception of administrative support and the consideration to return or not to return to teaching. Relevant teacher variables, both personal and professional, serve as control variables. Personal variables include age, gender, marriage status, and race. Professional teacher variables include the type of school where they worked (public or private), their years experience and teaching status (full-time, part-time), level of education (attainment of a Master's degree), participation in a formal induction program (yes or no), and their reason for leaving the profession (salary, retirement, family, or pursue another career). The dependent variable, which is whether or not the former teacher decides to return to the

profession, is dichotomous. This study explores teacher supply from the perspectives of former educators who left the profession but who are considering a return.

Importance of the Study:

Recent research regarding teacher reentrants is lacking. These reentering teachers constitute a potentially significant source of professionals to fill vacancies in schools. During the late 1980's, teacher reentrants were an important a source of newly-hired, constituting one-third of all new hires (Broughman and Rollefson, 2000). In 1999, approximately 80,000 new teacher hires were selected from a national pool of former educators returning to the classroom (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002). These teachers were already certified and did not require as many resources for the purposes of training. Significant workplace factors, as identified by former teachers, have been isolated, and policies can be created to entice these former teachers back to the profession. For example, if specific characteristics of the work environment are better predictors of a teacher's return to the profession than compensation, more time and resources could be spent on improving workplace conditions than on salary and benefits. This would make teaching a profession to which former teachers may want to return. This may improve the supply of educators to vacant positions.

Previous Studies:

Teachers who have left the profession and then returned are labeled as "reentrants" by the U.S. Department of Education (Rollefson, 1993). Beaudin (1993, 1995) used data from the 1970's through the mid-1980's for both the state and district levels to analyze the differences in teacher characteristics, content-area specialty, and ability to pursue employment outside the education field for teachers who decided to return to teaching and those who did not. These studies conducted by Beaudin found that reentrants are a practical source for potential candidates

to fill empty positions (Beaudin, 1993), and that older, Black females were more likely to return to districts that they left than go to other school districts (Beaudin, 1995). The U.S. Commission on National Security in the 21st Century, using data from the 1993-1994 Schools and Staffing Survey, calculated estimates of newly hired teachers (which consisted of first-time teachers, reentrants, and transfers) that would be needed to fill vacant science and mathematics positions from 2000 – 2010 (Beard and Pentland, 2001). During this ten year time frame, they estimated that two million new teachers would be needed. Broughman and Rollefson (2000), using Schools and Staffing Survey data from 1987-1988, 1990-1991, and 1993-1994, found that in 1987-1988 the proportion of reentrants was equal to first-time teachers hired in public schools and higher than first-time teachers hired in private schools, but that, “by 1993-1994, it was first-time teachers who predominated, filling 46 percent of public and 42 percent of private school newly-hired positions” (p. 15). Though the number of reentrants in public schools remained relatively steady, the percentage of new-hires considered reentrants declined from the late eighties to early nineties (Broughman and Rollefson, 2000).

While this data from the 1970’s through the 1990’s has been collected and analyzed, there is still a need to study more recent data regarding teacher reentrants. Most of the data collected prior to the 1990’s was based on district and state data, and there have been four Schools and Staffing Surveys, as well as Teacher Follow-Up surveys, conducted since 1994. These surveys contain survey data collected from teachers across the United States, as opposed to just teachers within one district or state. These data are the one used to conduct the present study.

Organization of the Study:

Chapter II focuses on literature related to teacher recruitment and turnover, as well as compensation and organizational factors that affect a teacher's consideration to return to the profession. Chapter III provides an analysis of the methodology used in this study, including the survey instrument, an explanation of statistical methods used to interpret survey data, and the limitations of the study. Chapter IV discusses the results of the statistical analyses, and Chapter V discusses the implications of these findings regarding the current teacher shortage.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study is informed by literature that examines the teacher shortage that currently exists in American education. The presence of teachers in the workforce is commonly referred to as the “teacher pipeline.” While this study focuses on those who would consider a reentry into this pipeline, the literature reviewed in Chapter II concentrates primarily on the reasons why people initially consider entering the teaching profession, the recruiting methods by which these people are influenced, and why teachers stay in or leave the profession. First, literature investigating the reasons why teachers choose to enter the education profession is reviewed. A review of literature that identifies the content and socio-economic areas that struggle to recruit teachers, as well as the means by which the government has tried to encourage qualified applicants to apply for vacancies in these areas is explored. Research related to retirement is addressed to show that the cause of teacher attrition is a subject that is currently debated. Both retirement eligibility and organizational factors can influence teacher attrition. Lastly, the workplace conditions that affect teachers’ perceptions of their school environments are discussed. These are factors that can be controlled by an administrator and that are related to teacher retention.

Why Candidates Enter the Profession

Current research identifies reasons teachers enter into the education profession. Studies have shown that these include a “sense of mission” (Wadsworth, 2001), and achieving the service-oriented goals of working and helping people and imparting knowledge (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992). Respondents of the Teacher Voices survey (2000) stated that the top four reasons why educators chose teaching as a profession are: 1. A desire to work with children; 2. The influence of a former teacher; 3. Love of subject matter; and 4. A belief in the importance of

teaching. While compensation is not listed as one of these, legislators have attempted to solve teacher shortages by viewing the problem through the lens of recruitment and the use of financial incentives for teachers willing to serve in high-needs areas. The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) recommended that incentives like grants and loans be used to attract prospective college students towards filling empty positions. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) state that, “Financial incentives, such as signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement have all been instituted to aid teacher recruitment,” and that, “The ‘No Child Left Behind Act,’ passed in Winter 2002, provides federal funding for such initiatives” (p. 30). However, while incentives have been offered, a substantial number of certification areas still report shortages (American Association for Employment in Education, 2007). According to the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2007), “Teacher attrition has grown by fifty percent over the past fifteen years. The national teacher turnover rate has risen to 16.8 percent. In urban schools it is over twenty percent, and, in some schools and districts, the teacher dropout rate is actually higher than the student dropout rate” (p. 1). This study initially attempted to use Title I designation as a means to identify the workplace conditions that would lead teachers who had taught in high-poverty schools to consider returning to the profession in order to determine whether there is a difference in perception between teachers who had worked in high-poverty schools and those who did not. However, there was no such data located in the Schools and Staffing Survey data. An attempt was made to link Schools and Staffing Survey data with the Common Core of Data Survey, but officials at the National Center for Education Statistics stated that this could not be done.

While research has focused on teachers’ initial motivations for entering the teaching profession, this study examines what organizational factors are related to a former teacher’s

consideration to return to teaching. In addition to these organizational factors, the personal and professional characteristics of teachers are studied with relation to these organizational factors.

The Teacher Shortage, Recruitment, and Retention

As school enrollment increases across the United States, the demand for qualified teachers increases, as well. According to the United States Bureau of Labor of Statistics (2008), a majority of teaching jobs will be available due to a large number of retirements expected to occur from 2006-2016. Many new teachers will leave within two years. According to recent projections, 30 percent of the estimated 2.2 million new teachers who entered the workforce will leave within the first three years of teaching, while 45 percent will leave within the first five years (Zhang, et. al., 2008). There are significant shortages in specific certification areas, and as older teachers retire and younger teachers leave the profession altogether, we are left with the following question: What can be done to encourage people to enter into and stay in teaching?

Teacher recruitment has been seen as a major component of solving the teacher shortage in high-needs areas. According to Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp (2001), there are shortages of teachers in math, science, English as a Second Language (ESL), and in certain geographic areas (i.e., rural and urban). There is also a lack of minority teachers. Prince (2002) states that while affluent schools are not encountering problems related to teacher recruitment and retention, high-poverty schools with large minority student populations are experiencing difficulties finding new teachers to fill vacant positions. While there is a teacher shortage in America, the problem is predominantly found in poorer rural and urban schools (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). These schools have difficulty in recruiting staff, which is a significant problem considering that these schools often have students who require highly qualified teachers to meet their educational needs. Further complicating matters is the fact that many educators are

drawn to teaching positions that are within close proximity to where they grew up or went to college (Boyd et al, 2003). This has been challenging for schools that traditionally do not have a high rate of graduates complete college studies and/or state teacher certification processes. This study attempted to explore the relationship between the socioeconomic status of the students in former teachers' schools and the consideration to return to teaching. Future studies will be necessary to determine whether or not the SES of students has any impact on a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching. These teachers may have had limited resources, been underprepared, or perceived a lack of administrative support, and this negative experience may have an influence on teacher satisfaction and the decision of whether or not to consider returning to the profession (Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003; Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2005; Teacher Voices Survey, 2000). While previous literature has dealt with efforts to recruit new teachers to fill vacancies, this study explores factors that may lead former teachers, who have already been in the "teacher pipeline," to return to teaching.

Qualified applicants may be intimidated by teaching in high-needs areas and schools where turnover is traditionally a problem. Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) state that inexperienced teachers and limited resources are a constant presence in poor and urban schools. These resources can include a lack of professional development opportunities. As qualified beginning teachers graduate from their university programs, working environments that aid in professional growth and satisfaction are ideal assignments. Recruitment efforts are targeted at filling positions in places like urban core schools where, according to the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (2005), more educators leave because of dissatisfaction than in rural and suburban schools. According to the Teacher Voices Survey (2000), experienced educators stated that the most significant factors in a beginning teacher's success are informal peer support,

administrative support, and formal mentoring programs. However, if there is a shortage of teachers in a building, there is less of a guarantee that experienced mentors and capable peers are present to aid in the beginning teacher's development (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) states that high turnover has led to large concentrations of new and underprepared teachers in urban and rural schools where there is a considerable need for highly-qualified staff. New teachers are faced with professional isolation, left to deal with the complicated nuances of teaching on their own. As a result, struggling schools annually fail to meet their staffing needs. These issues severely limit the learning opportunities of both students and teachers in those schools. Participation in a teacher induction program during the first year of teaching will be used as a control variable in this study for "teaching characteristics" to determine the relationship between this professional development activity and the consideration to return to teaching. Also, the degree of administrative support will be studied in relation to a former teacher's consideration to return to the profession.

While recruits are actively sought, not all content and certification areas have shortages. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), even though increased birth rates create more demand and teacher retirements cause a dwindling supply of educators, "the United States produces many more teachers than its schools hire" (p. 12). Certain areas such as special education, math, science, and bilingual education struggle to find qualified applicants, and states have tried to fill these positions with various financial incentives (Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp, 2001), but, according to the AAEE, in 2007, "Thirteen fields were reported in considerable shortage, compared with eight fields in 2006. Nine of these fields are in special education" (p. 1). Areas where there are surpluses, such as in social studies and physical education classes, continue to

have surpluses, whereas “five special education fields moved into the considerable shortage category for 2007” (p. 1). A limitation of this study is that the relationship between individual certification areas and the consideration to return to teaching will not be determined. Many educators are certified in more than one content area, and it would be difficult to determine a direct relationship between certification in one content area and the consideration to return to teaching. However, it is important to note that the teacher shortage is not an issue faced in all areas of American education.

There has been research that suggests policy should follow an economic approach to recruiting teachers (Allen, 2005; Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp, 2001; Loeb and Reininger, 2004). Loeb and Reininger (2004) state that where teachers choose to teach is dictated by preferences and constraints. Salaries, location, and workplace environment are factors that influence preference, while constraints deal with vocational opportunities (or lack thereof) within and outside of the teaching profession. The authors go on to say that, "While policy cannot change preferences, it can use incentives, such as bonuses or improved working conditions, to encourage teachers to make particular choices" (p. 8). The 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey found that teachers who had left teaching within the first three years of service listed loan-forgiveness as a minor incentive to return to the profession. According to Loeb and Reininger (2001) and Hirsch, Koppich, and Knapp (2001), states are offering financial incentives such as education assistance (e.g., tuition reimbursement and student loan forgiveness), housing assistance, and signing bonuses as a means of attracting teachers and offsetting some of the costs required to gain initial teacher certification. The time and costs related to completing pre-service training and testing for teaching certification may discourage qualified prospective applicants from considering the profession. Reimbursing teachers for the costs associated with earning

certification could entice them to work in underserved or high-needs areas. However, programs such as federal loan forgiveness for teachers have not yet been proven an effective means by which to recruit and retain educators (Allen, 2005). This study explores the relationship between perceptions of compensation and former teachers' considerations to return to teaching. This could help to determine whether or not salary and benefits plays a role in a person's decision to reenter the education profession.

While the shortage of teachers and the teacher pipeline have been analyzed from the perspective of recruiting and retaining teaching staff, this study examines the factors that could influence a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching.

Teacher Attrition

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2002) determined that retirement accounted for a relatively small number of teacher departures, while job satisfaction and the desire to pursue other job opportunities, together, accounted for the largest number of departures. According to the NCTAF (2002), teachers leaving for reasons other than retirement are causing the teacher shortage in this country. According to Ingersoll (2001), even though retirement rates are increasing, teacher job dissatisfaction and teachers pursuing other careers accounts for more of turnover than retirement. This research stands in contrast to a study done by Harris and Adams (2007), who found that teacher retirement accounts for a significant amount of teacher turnover.

Retirement is seen as having an effect on teacher attrition, and is included in this review of literature to show that its effect on the current teacher shortage is debated. The importance that retirement plays in a former teacher's decision to leave is included in this study; however, only retirees who were employed at the time the survey was taken were able to answer questions

related to workplace conditions. While the purpose of this study is not to determine whether or not retirement accounts for more departures than non-retirement reasons, retirees who are employed outside of the education profession can be listed as former teachers, and may consider returning to teaching under certain circumstances; specifically, if organizational factors, controlled by administrators, are manipulated in such a manner as to make the job seem attractive, the former teacher/retiree may consider returning to the profession.

While recruitment has become a primary means of filling vacant teaching positions, some research has looked at the teacher shortage issue through the lens of attrition. Ingersoll (2001) has looked at the problem of high teacher attrition through the paradigm of organizational analysis. His analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), and its component, the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS), is based upon the following three premises: “a. understanding employee turnover is important because of its link to the performance and effectiveness of organizations; b. fully understanding turnover requires examining it at the level of the organization; and c. fully understanding turnover requires examining the character and conditions of the organizations within which employees work” (p. 504). According to Ingersoll, the following workplace conditions are related to teacher turnover: “the compensation structure for employees;” “the level of administrative support;” “the degree of conflict and strife within an organization;” and “the degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies” (p. 507).

This study looks at perceived organizational factors that would lead a former teacher to consider returning to the profession, as opposed to Ingersoll’s study, which focused on perceived organizational factors that led to teacher attrition. Also, while Ingersoll’s study relied upon data from the 1990-1991 Schools and Staffing Survey and 1991-1992 Teacher Follow-Up Survey,

this study will use data from the 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey and 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey. The survey questions used to create the organizational categories are also different. This is due to the fact that newer versions of the SASS and TFS that have different questionnaire items are being used in this study, and because this study is looking at the relationship between a former teacher's perception of organizational factors in their current job, relative to their previous job in education, and the consideration to return to the profession. Ingersoll's study looked at the organizational factors that were related to teacher turnover, but did not consider their relationship with a teacher's consideration to return to education.

Compensation, a workplace condition identified by Ingersoll (2001), has been seen as an important influence in recruiting and retaining educators. According to the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, teachers nationwide earn eighty-eight cents for every dollar that those in sixteen other comparable professions earn (Swanson, 2008). Brewer (1996) found that between 1975 and 1990 there was a positive relationship between higher salaries and female teacher retention, as well as higher retention rates for male administrators in New York City schools. In a recent review of empirical literature regarding teacher recruitment and retention, it was found that, overall, higher salaries were associated with lower attrition rates (Guarino, et. al., 2006). A close inspection of the factors that lead to attrition show that finances have at least some part in many new teachers' decisions to leave. According to the Teacher Follow-Up Survey given in 1993, only 46% of teachers with one-to-three years of experience agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am satisfied with my teaching salary." Most beginning teachers had the perception that they were not being fairly compensated for the amount of work that the job demanded. The TFS given in 1995 showed similar results. Beginning teachers listed "providing higher salaries and/or better fringe benefits" as the most effective way to lower

teacher attrition (Liu, 2007). 78.5% of those teachers surveyed were dissatisfied with their salary (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003). According to the 1995 Teacher Follow-Up Survey, while overall satisfaction is relatively high, compensation is an area where many experience dissatisfaction. This study determines the relationship between a former teacher's perception of compensation and the consideration to return to teaching, as well as the consideration's relationship with the other workplace conditions identified by Ingersoll.

Weiss (1999), using Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data from 1987-1988 and 1990-1991, found that factors such as professional autonomy and decision-making, as well as administrative leadership, affected morale and were predictors of an educator's decision to return to teaching. Ingersoll (2001) also found that schools with more perceived administrative support had lower rates of attrition. According to Newman, Rutter, and Smith (1989), a sense of collegiality can improve teachers' sense of efficacy and community within the context of the school climate. This study determines the relationship between a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching and the perceived administrative support, shared decision-making and organizational conflict that was present in the school where the teacher was previously employed.

The relationship between each of the workplace conditions identified by Ingersoll (2001) and a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching are examined. These conditions can be controlled in such a manner to improve teachers' perceptions of their work environment and, according to Ingersoll, improve attrition. Specifically, this study determines the influence that perception of compensation, degree of input and control over organizational policies, institutional conflict, and administrative support each have on the consideration to return to the profession.

Summary

The literature used in this study examined the teacher pipeline, starting with the reasons why potential candidates choose to become teachers, progressing towards recruitment of qualified personnel, and ending with the factors involved in the retention of teachers. Candidates enter into the profession out of a desire to work with children or a belief in its importance to society, but policymakers have viewed financial incentives as being important to these people who could fill vacancies in schools. This study focuses on the other side of the pipeline, after teachers have left the profession and are considering reentering the classroom. Recruitment and retention continue to be an issue facing schools. Vacancies are still present in many content and teacher certification areas, as well as in impoverished schools. According to the literature in this chapter, poor working conditions (which include salary) have affected low retention rates in these areas and schools. While retirement contributes to the current shortage, it is debated as to whether or not it is related to the lack of qualified staff to fill empty teaching positions in schools. This study examines the relationship between working conditions and former teachers' considerations to return to teaching. These conditions can be controlled by administrators, and may have an impact on a former educator's decision to return to the classroom.

Chapter 3: Methods

The Teacher Follow-Up (TFS) survey questions and Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data are used to determine the correlation between workplace conditions, as identified by Ingersoll (2001), with a former educator's decision to consider returning to teaching. The guiding question for this study is:

Looking at former teachers and controlling for relevant teacher variables, what is the relationship between perceptions of compensation, degree of control and input into organizational policies, institutional conflict, and administrative support on the consideration to return to teaching?

Data Source

This study uses the 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey and the 2004-2005 version of the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, and which is a component of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS). The 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey sampling frame includes the 2001-2002 Common Core of Data school file for public teachers, the 2001-2002 Private School Universe Survey list for private teachers, and the Program Education Directory maintained by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for Bureau of Indian Affairs teachers. The sample size for public school teachers was 52,478, for private school teachers was 9,947, and for Bureau of Indian Affairs was 710 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up sampling frame includes all teachers who participated in the 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey (Cox, et. al., 2007). The survey was completed by 7,429 current and former elementary and secondary teachers, excluding teachers for the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools due to "insufficient sample sizes" (Cox, et. al., 2007). One-third of respondents were mailed paper questionnaires, while the remaining respondents were given the option of completing the survey on the internet. This study uses survey data collected from former teachers only.

The Teacher Follow-Up survey was intended to examine how many teachers, categorized as working either in the public or private sector, stayed at their job, moved to another teaching job, or left the profession, altogether. The Teacher Follow-Up Survey was intended for those individuals who had taken the 2003-2004 SASS, and was divided into two parts: one for those who remained in teaching, and one for those who have left the profession.

According to Cox, et. al. (2007), the three categories for sampled cases are completed surveys, interviews and noninterviews, and those listed as out of scope. Completed interviews were those completed by teachers who met the criteria for inclusion, which means that they completed the previous year's Schools and Staffing Survey. These interviews were given an Interview Status Recode (ISR) of "1," and were put through a series of computer edits which included a range check, a consistency edit, and a blanking edit. After the edits, a final ISR was assigned to each case that reached eligibility as a survey, and imputation was conducted for cases with "not answered" values for variables (Cox, et. al., 2007). After imputation, a final round of computer edits were conducted, and the surveys were separated into two categories: current teachers and former teachers. Noninterview cases were those teachers who met the criteria for inclusion, but who did not complete the questionnaire. Out of scope cases were those completed by respondents who incorrectly listed themselves as teachers on the previous year's Schools and Staffing Survey, lived outside of the United States during the 2003-2004 school year, or who were deceased. Unit responses rates from completed questionnaires were listed as either weighted or unweighted (Cox, et. al., 2007). According to Cox, et. al. (2007), "the unweighted response rates are the number of interviewed cases divided by the number of eligible sample units (i.e., including interviews and noninterviews, but not out-of-scope cases)" (p. 39). The, "weighted response rates are the base-weighted (initial basic weight multiplied by the sampling

adjustment factor) number of interviews cases divided by the base-weighted number of eligible cases” (p. 39). The base-weighted response rate for teachers listed as “current” during the 2004-2005 timeframe was 92%, while the base-weighted response rate for teachers who identified themselves as “former teachers” was 89.6%. The overall response rate for the Teacher Follow-Up Survey was calculated as follows: (Teacher Listing Form Response Rate for the Schools and Staffing Survey) x (Teacher Questionnaire Response Rate for the Schools and Staffing Survey) x (Response Rate for the Teacher Follow-Up Survey) (Cox, et. al., 2007). The overall response rate for current teachers during the 2004-2005 survey timeframe was 68.8%, while the overall response rate for former teachers was 66.9%. The item response rate for the former teacher questionnaire ranged from 63.00% to 100.00%, with 95.85% of items having a response rate of 85% or more (Cox, et. al., 2007). For each item response rate, there was no evidence of bias.

Data was acquired by applying for a restricted-use data license through the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The survey information had already been administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, and then analyzed by the Department of Education. Once the data was acquired for this study, the selected variables were extracted and analyzed.

Data Analysis

This study uses 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey data, 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey data, and Ingersoll’s workplace conditions related to teacher turnover (2001) in order to determine what factors are related to a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching. The study focuses on the perceptions of former teachers who have left the profession, are employed outside the field of education, and who may or may not be considering a return to teaching.

Descriptive statistics are used to determine the total number of former teachers who participated in the survey, as well as personal and professional characteristics of former teachers who would or would not consider a return to teaching. These personal and professional characteristics are used as controls. Personal characteristics include age, gender, race, and marital status (single or married). Professional characteristics include teaching status and experience, level of education, whether or not they participated in a formal induction training program during their first year of teaching, and their reason for leaving the profession (retirement, children, family or personal reasons, or to pursue another career). Beyond these personal and professional characteristics, other descriptive statistics include the dependent variable (i.e., the total and average number of 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey respondents who claimed they would consider a return to teaching, and the total and average number of respondents who claimed that they would not consider a return to teaching). Also, descriptive statistics are run for the following independent variables: 1. Perceived Compensation, 2. Perceived Level of Administrative Support, 3. Perceived Degree of Conflict and Strife within an Organization, and 4. Perceived Degree of Employee Input into and Influence over Organizational Policies. The percentage of respondents who answered “Better in teaching,” “Not better or worse,” or “Better in current position” for each survey question are determined.

The dependent variable is whether or not the former teacher considers a return to teaching. The independent variables are based on the following four workplace factors that affect teacher turnover: “the compensation structure for employees;” “the level of administrative support;” “the degree of conflict and strife within an organization;” and “the degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 507). Questionnaire items and responses on the Teacher Follow-Up survey are grouped into these four organizational

categories. The compensation structure for employees involves two items: the former teacher's perception of salary and benefits. The perceived level of administrative support involves four items: recognition and support from administrators/managers, professional development opportunities, the presence of performance evaluations, and the availability of resources materials necessary for the job. The perceived degree of conflict and strife within an organization includes three items: the perceptions of social relationships with colleagues, the perceived safety of the work environment, and the perception of general work conditions. The perceived degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies includes two items: the former teacher's perceived influence over workplace policies and practices, as well as the perceived autonomy or control over their work. Survey responses in these areas ranged from 1. Better in teaching, 2. Not better or worse, or 3. Better in the current position. If respondents indicated that they were not working, they were to skip questions 20a through 20t on the TFS survey, which were related to workplace conditions.

Separate stepwise logistic regression models involving the four organizational factors are run controlling for factors influencing the decision to leave, as well as the personal and professional characteristics of respondents. Questions related to workplace conditions have a smaller sample size than questions related to the factors contributing to the decision to leave and questions related to the personal and professional characteristics of respondents. This is due to the fact that all former teachers answered questions related to the decision to leave and their personal and professional characteristics, while only those former teachers who were employed at the time the survey was taken answered questions 20a through 20t, which are related to workplace conditions.

Logistic regression is used because the dependent variable is dichotomous, and the independent variables are continuous. Three regression models are used. The first model will determine the relationship between workplace conditions and the consideration to return to teaching. The second model will determine the relationship between workplace conditions and factors that influenced the decision to leave with the consideration to return to teaching. The third model will determine the relationship between workplace conditions, factors that influenced the decision to leave, and personal and professional variables with the consideration to return to teaching. Table 1 shows the dependent variable, as well as the independent variables used in this study.

Table 1
Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables Used to Determine the Relationship Between Workplace Conditions and the Decision to Return to the Position of a K-12 Teacher

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables
<p>1. Would you consider returning to the position of a K-12 teacher (yes or no)?</p>	<p>1. How would you rate your current position relative to teaching in terms of each of the following aspects (Better in teaching [1], Not better or worse [2], Better in current position [3])? *</p> <p><u>“The compensation structure for employees”</u></p> <p>a. Salary b. Benefits</p> <p><u>“The level of administrative support”</u></p> <p>c. Recognition and support from administrators/managers d. Opportunities for professional development e. Procedures for performance evaluation f. Availability of resources and material/equipment for doing job</p> <p><u>“The degree of conflict and strife within an organization”</u></p> <p>g. Social relationships with colleagues h. Safety of environment i. General work conditions</p> <p><u>“The degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies”</u></p> <p>j. Influence over workplace policies and practices k. Autonomy or control over your work</p> <p>*Teacher Follow-Up questionnaire items are grouped under Ingersoll’s workplace conditions related to turnover (2001).</p>
Controls	
<p>Personal Demographics:</p> <p>Age (young, middle-aged, older) Gender Marital Status (married, not married)</p>	
<p>Professional Variables:</p> <p>Type of School – Public, Private, Bureau of Indian Affairs Teaching Experience and Status – Years Experience, Full-time Level of Education - Master’s, Doctorate degrees Participation in a Formal Induction Training Program (yes/no) Reason for Leaving the Profession – Better Salary, Retirement, Family or other Personal Reasons, To Pursue Another Career</p>	

Limitations of the Study

Former teachers may consider reentering the profession for reasons other than the four factors (“the compensation structure for employees;” “the level of administrative support;” “the degree of conflict and strife within an organization;” and “the degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 507)) used in this model. Other areas of the Teacher Follow-Up survey may need to be analyzed to obtain further information regarding the preferences of former teachers with relation to the consideration to return to teaching. Qualitative studies may need to be used in order to determine more specific factors regarding why educators may consider returning to teaching.

For questions related to workplace conditions, this study uses survey data collected from individuals who are either employed in the education field, but not as a teacher, or who are working in an occupation outside the field of education. Data related to the perceptions of workplace conditions in a current occupation relative to teaching are not collected from those former teachers who were currently unemployed at the time the survey was taken. For example, stay-at-home mothers and retirees who were not currently employed at the time the survey was taken could not answer questions related to workplace conditions, while working mothers and retirees who were employed could. However, all former teachers were included in the samples for questions related to reasons for leaving, as well as for questions related to personal and professional characteristics.

Another limitation is that this study does not determine what factors directly result in a teacher’s return to the profession. The sample used in this study is of teachers who have chosen to leave the profession, but there is no data regarding whether or not these teachers actually become employed in a teaching profession in the year following the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-

Up survey. Again, a qualitative study may help to explain the specific factors that may lead a former teacher to return to the classroom.

This study also attempted to use Title I designation as a means to identify the workplace conditions that would lead teachers who had taught in high-poverty schools to consider returning to the profession in order to determine whether there is a difference in perception between teachers who had worked in high-poverty schools and those who did not, but there was no such data located in the Schools and Staffing Survey data. An attempt was made to link Schools and Staffing Survey data with the Common Core of Data Survey, but officials at the National Center for Education Statistics stated that this could not be done due to the fact that Schools and Staffing Survey respondents are not the same as the respondents for the Common Core of Data survey.

Summary

Looking at former teachers and controlling for relevant background variables and teacher variables, the relationship between the perception of compensation, degree of control and input into organizational policies, institutional conflict, and administrative support on the consideration to return to teaching are studied. This study explores teacher supply from the perspectives of former educators who left the profession but who may or may not be considering a return. The 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey data, 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey data, and Ingersoll's workplace conditions related to teacher turnover (2001) are used in order to determine what factors are related to a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study is to determine what variables best predict the likelihood that someone who has left the teaching profession would consider returning to the profession. In particular, this study examines the relationship between perceptions of compensation, degree of control and input into organizational policies, institutional conflict, and administrative support on the consideration to return to teaching.

Characteristics of Respondents

The personal and professional characteristics of the respondents from the Schools and Staffing Survey and Teacher Follow-Up Surveys (TFS) were analyzed. Table 2 provides information regarding the characteristics of all 2004-2005 TFS respondents, individuals who were identified as K-12 teachers in 2004. Most of the respondents in this survey are White women who work as teachers in public schools. Black, Latino, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American respondents only account for a small fraction of respondents. Teachers from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools and those who had obtained a doctoral degree constituted such a minute percentage of overall respondents that they were dropped from the study.

Table 3 provides information regarding former teacher respondents who completed the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey. These former teachers are the focus of this study. The characteristics of former teachers closely mirror those of the larger sample of current teachers in that most are White women who worked in public schools. The demographics of both former and current teachers are very similar, which leads to the conclusion that demography may not play an important role in a teacher's decision to initially leave the profession. However, the sample sizes for non-White groups are very small so conclusions about race and ethnicity in this study might

be questionable. Future research looking at the effects of race/ethnicity on teachers' decisions to leave the profession or return to it will probably need to use a different dataset.

Table 2
Selected Characteristics of 2004-2005 TFS Respondents (Both Former and Current Teachers)

Characteristic Respondents	Number of Respondents	% of Total TFS Respondents
Total Respondents	7429	100.00%
White	6469	87.08%
Black	607	8.17%
Latino/Hispanic*	331	4.46%
Asian or Pacific Islander	262	3.53%
Native American	176	0.39%
Male	1938	26.09%
Female	5491	73.91%
Married at Time TFS was Given	5107	68.74%
Respondents with Master's Degree	2882	38.79%
Former or Current Public School Teacher	5323	71.65%
Former or Current Private School Teacher	2106	28.35%
Participated in Induction Program	1467	19.75%

*Note – Respondents who answered that they were of Latino or Hispanic *ethnic origin* on question 77 on the SASS for public school teachers and 78 on the SASS for private school teachers may have also answered that they were “White,” “Black,” “Asian or Pacific Islander,” or “Native American” for *race* on question 78a on the SASS for public school teachers and 80a on the SASS for private school teachers.

Table 3***Selected Characteristics of 2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher Respondents Currently Working Outside the Field of Education***

Characteristic	Number of Respondents	% of Former Teacher TFS Respondents
Total Respondents	2653	100.00%
White	2338	88.13%
Black	195	7.53%
Latino/Hispanic*	116	4.37%
Asian or Pacific Islander	87	3.28%
Native American	61	2.30%
Male	760	28.65%
Female	1893	71.35%
Married at Time TFS was Given	1913	72.11%
Respondents with Master's Degree	1095	41.27%
Former Public School Teacher	1826	68.83%
Former Private School Teacher	827	31.17%
Participated in Induction Program	385	14.51%

*Note – Respondents who answered that they were of Latino or Hispanic *ethnic origin* on question 77 on the SASS for public school teachers and 78 on the SASS for private school teachers may have also answered that they were “White,” “Black,” “Asian or Pacific Islander,” or “Native American” for *race* on question 78a on the SASS for public school teachers and 80a on the SASS for private school teachers.

Former Teachers' Perceptions of Workplace Conditions Relative to Teaching

The means and percentages of former teacher respondents working outside the field of education who rated workplace conditions as “1-Better in Teaching,” “2-Not Better or Worse,” or “3-Better in Current Position” can be found on Table 4. There is little information on the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey pertaining to the specific field in which respondents of these questions currently work. While a few former teachers have indicated their specific professions, a vast majority have merely indicated that they work “outside the field of education.” Former teachers who were not currently employed at the time this survey was taken did not answer the questions on table 4. If respondents indicated that they were not working, they were to skip questions 20a through 20t on the TFS survey. Questions related to workplace conditions have a smaller sample size than questions related to the factors contributing to the decision to leave and questions related to the personal and professional characteristics of respondents. Of the combined workplace conditions, the mean of responses for “Benefits” leans furthest towards “Better in Teaching,” while the mean of responses for “Autonomy or Control Over Your Work” leans furthest towards “Better in Current Position.” Of all of these variables, it appears that “Benefits” (i.e., health insurance, retirement) is perceived by the largest percentage of respondents to be the one thing that is better in teaching. “Autonomy or Control Over Your Work” is perceived by the largest percentage of respondents to be better in their current position, which shows that these former teachers perceive they have a greater degree of influence in their current occupations.

Table 4***Descriptives for Workplace Conditions, as Rated by Former Teachers, Relative to Teaching***

Workplace Condition	Mean on a Scale of 1 to 3	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied “1-Better in Teaching”	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied “2-Not Better or Worse”	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied “3-Better in Current Position”	Std. Deviation
Salary	2.20	28.8 (311)	22.78 (246)	48.43 (523)	0.857
Benefits	1.97	29.54 (319)	43.70 (472)	26.76 (289)	0.750
Recognition	2.26	17.78 (192)	38.70 (418)	43.52 (470)	0.740
Professional Development	2.19	22.96 (248)	35.46 (383)	41.57 (449)	0.782
Performance Evaluations	2.11	19.35 (209)	50.46 (545)	30.19 (326)	0.696
Availability of Resources for Doing Job	2.29	13.70 (148)	43.33 (468)	42.96 (464)	0.694
Social Relationships with Colleagues	2.04	25.74 (278)	44.81 (484)	29.44 (318)	0.742
Safety of Environment	2.15	12.41 (134)	59.72 (645)	27.87 (301)	0.616
General Work Conditions	2.35	9.72 (105)	45.28 (489)	45.00 (486)	0.651
Influence Over Workplace Policies and Practices	2.34	15.00 (162)	36.11 (390)	48.89 (528)	0.724
Autonomy or Control Over Your Work	2.41	16.76 (181)	25.65 (277)	57.59 (622)	0.760

Note: The mean score here reflects a respondent’s rating of each workplace condition as 1. “Better in Teaching,” 2. “Not Better or Worse,” or 3. “Better in Current Position”

Factors Influencing the Decision to Leave the Teaching Profession

The means and percentages of responses regarding the factors that influenced a former teacher's decision to leave K-12 education are located on Table 5. "Pregnancy" has the highest percentage of respondents who believe it was "Not Important" in influencing their decisions to leave teaching, while "Retirement" has the highest percentage of respondents who believe it was "Extremely Important" in influencing their decisions to leave. "Pregnancy" may have the highest percentage of respondents who believe it was "Not Important" because most respondents may have not been pregnant at the time they took the survey, or they may have been considering multiple factors, including pregnancy, when choosing to leave the profession, thus affecting its perceived importance. "Retirement" might have the highest percentage of respondents who perceive it as being "Extremely Important" because teachers who are old enough to retire most likely wouldn't consider other factors as being influential when making the decision to leave, thus increasing the perceived importance of retirement.

Most respondents list the factors contributing to a teacher's decision to leave the profession that were listed on the TFS survey as being "Not Important" in influencing their decisions to leave. These leaving factors do not seem to capture the "extremely important" decisions why teachers initially choose to leave the profession. Further study is needed to find what other factors, if any, are perceived to strongly influence the decision to leave the teaching profession.

Table 5***Factors Influencing a Former Teacher's Decision to Leave the Position of a K-12 Teacher***

Influence	Mean (on a scale of 1 to 5)	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied "1-Not Important"	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied "2-Slightly Important"	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied "3-Somewhat Important"	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied "4-Very Important"	% Respondents Who Replied "5-Extremely Important"	Std. Deviation
Better Salary	1.81	71.2 (1571)	4.3 (94)	6.7 (147)	8.3 (182)	9.6 (211)	1.391
Retirement	2.21	63.5 (1684)	2.0 (53)	5.8 (153)	8.0 (213)	20.7 (550)	1.685
Pregnancy	1.58	82.6 (2191)	1.4 (36)	1.9 (51)	3.4 (89)	10.8 (286)	1.333
Other Family or Personal Reasons	2.09	60.5 (1606)	6.7 (179)	9.7 (257)	9.5 (251)	13.6 (360)	1.515
To Pursue a Position Other Than That of a K-12 Teacher	2.15	59.1 (1567)	5.4 (143)	10.3 (273)	11.6 (308)	13.6 (362)	1.537

- Note: The mean score here reflects a respondent's rating of each as leaving factor as 1. "Not Important," 2. "Not Slightly Important," 3. "Somewhat Important," 4. "Very Important," or 5. "Extremely Important."

Correlations and Chi-Squares Between Variables and the Consideration to Return

The percentages of those who would consider returning to teaching and those who would not consider returning to teaching can be found on Table 6. Bivariate correlations between the consideration to return to teaching and workplace conditions, reasons for leaving, and professional and personal variables that are not nominal can be found on Table 7. “Recognition,” “Professional Development,” “Performance Evaluations,” “Resources Available for Work,” “Social Relationships,” “Safety of Environment,” “General Work Conditions,” “Influence Over Policy and Practices,” and “Autonomy and Control Over Work” are the workplace conditions significantly correlated with the consideration to return to teaching. Respondents were less likely to consider returning to the teaching profession if these workplace conditions are perceived to be better in their current positions. While significant relationships exist, most of them are quite weak (below $r=.2$).

The reasons for leaving that have significant correlations with the consideration to return to teaching are “Leave for Better Salary,” “Leave for Pregnancy,” “Leave for Family or Personal Reasons,” and “Leave to Retire.” Respondents were more likely to consider returning if they indicated that leaving for salary, pregnancy, or family or personal reasons were important in their decisions to leave. However, if retirement was important an important factor in their decision to leave, they were less likely to consider returning.

Table 8 includes the results of the chi-square tests that show the relationships of nominal variables with the consideration to return. Chi-squares were used for nominal variables in order to determine their relationship with the dependent variable. The variables “Attainment of Master’s Degree,” “Type of School,” “Gender,” “White,” and “Marital Status” are significantly related with the consideration to return to teaching. “Participation in an Induction Program” was

not found to be significant, and this finding is discussed in Chapter 5. Respondents who had not earned their master's degrees were significantly more likely to consider a return to teaching than those teachers who had not earned master's degrees. While the relationship between returning to teaching and not possessing a master's degree is significant, it is weak. Private school teachers are much more likely to consider returning to teaching than public school teachers. The relationship between being a private school teacher and considering a return to teaching is significant, but the association is a weak one.

White respondents are significantly more likely to consider returning to teaching than their counterparts. There is a significant relationship between White teachers and the consideration to return, but the value of Phi shows that the relationship is weak.

Women are significantly more likely to consider a return to the profession than males. While the relationship between women and the consideration to return to teaching is significant, it is a weak one. Respondents who are married are much more likely to consider returning to teaching than those who are not married. The relationship between married respondents and the consideration to return to teaching is significant, but it is a weak association.

Table 6***Percentages of Former Teacher Respondents Who Would or Would Not Consider Returning to Teaching***

	% and (N) Respondents Who Would Consider Returning to Teaching	% and (N) Respondents Who Replied They Would <i>Not</i> Consider Returning to Teaching
Total Respondents	57.1 (1514)	42.9 (1139)
White	56.9 (1330)	43.1 (1008)
Black	55.4 (108)	44.6 (87)
Latino/Hispanic	67.2 (1514)	32.8 (1139)
Asian or Pacific Islander	64.4 (56)	35.6 (31)
Native American	73.8 (45)	26.2 (16)
Male	52.8 (401)	47.2 (359)
Female	58.8 (1113)	41.2 (780)
Married at Time TFS was Given	57.7 (1104)	42.3 (809)
Respondents with Master's Degree	50.0 (547)	50.0 (548)
Public School Teacher	51.1 (933)	48.9 (893)
Private School Teacher	70.3 (581)	29.7 (246)
Participated in Induction Program	74.5 (287)	25.5 (98)
Did Not Participate in an Induction Program	78.3 (329)	21.7 (91)

Table 7***Bivariate Correlations Between Workplace Conditions, Reasons for Leaving, Professional and Personal Variables and the Consideration to Return to Teaching***

Variable	Pearson Correlation with the Consideration to Return to Teaching	Sig. (2- tailed)/Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Workplace Conditions		
Salary	0.047	0.114
Benefits	0.036	0.233
Recognition	0.096	0.001***
Professional Development	0.139	0.000***
Performance Evaluations	0.200	0.000***
Resources Available to Perform Work	0.106	0.000***
Social Relationships	0.108	0.000***
Safety of Environment	0.103	0.001***
General Work Conditions	0.135	0.000***
Influence Over Policy/Practices	0.081	0.007***
Autonomy/Control Over Work	0.171	0.000***
Reasons for Leaving		
Leave for Better Salary	-0.080	0.000***
Leave to Retire	0.448	0.000***
Leave for Pregnancy	-0.227	0.000***
Leave for Family/Personal Reasons	-0.079	0.000***
Leave to Pursue a Position Other Than That of a K-12 Teacher	0.004	0.822
Professional Variables		
Annual Salary	0.252	0.000***
Yrs. Experience Full-Time in a Public School	0.065	0.181
Yrs. Experience Full-Time in a Private School	0.388	0.000***
Age	-0.357	0.000***

* p<0.100; ** p<0.050; *** p<0.010

Table 8*Chi-Square Relationship Between Selected Variables and the Consideration to Return to Teaching*

		Actual N/Expected N and Actual % Total/Expected %Total of Responses for Selected Variables		Chi-Square	Phi	Cramer's V	df	Sig.
		Not Return	Return					
Earned Master's Degree	Yes	548/478 (22.2%/19.4%)	547/617 (22.2%/25.0%)	32.579	0.115		1	0.000***
	No	528/598 (21.4%/24.3%)	841/771 (34.1%/31.3%)					
Working in Public or Private School	Public	893/784 (33.7%/29.6%)	933/1042 (35.2%/39.3%)	85.275	0.179		1	0.000***
	Private	246/355 (9.3%/13.4%)	581/472 (21.9%/17.8%)					
Participated in an Induction Program	Yes	98/90 (12.2%/11.2%)	287/295 (35.7%/36.6%)	1.604	0.045		1	0.118
	No	91/99 (11.3%/12.3%)	329/321 (40.9%/39.9%)					
White (continued...)	Yes	973/952 (36.7%/35.9%)	1245/1266 (46.9%/47.7%)	4.835	0.043		1	0.016***

	No	166/187 (6.3%/7.0%)	269/248 (10.1%/9.3%)				
Male	Yes	359/326 (13.5%/12.3%)	401/434 (15.1%/16.4%)	8.045	0.055	1	0.003***
	No	780/813 (29.4%/30.6%)	1113/1080 (42.0%/40.7%)				
Marital Status	Married	809/821 (30.5%/30.9%)	1104/1092 (41.6%/41.2%)	14.839	0.075	4	0.005***
	Not Married*	330/318 (12.4%/12.0%)	410/422 (15.5%/15.9%)				

*p<0.100; ** p<0.050; *** p<0.010.

*Note – The classification of “Not Married” includes responses for “Widowed,” “Separated,” “Divorced,” and “Never Married” respondents

The Odds a Former Teacher Would Consider Returning

Logistic regression was used to determine the influence each workplace factor, decision to leave, and professional and personal variables have on a former teacher's consideration to return to the profession. Former teachers who were not employed at the time that this survey was taken were not included in the sample of respondents who answered questions related to workplace conditions. However, other questions related to the reasons for leaving and personal and professional teacher characteristics include both employed and unemployed former teachers. Logistic regression was chosen because the dependent variable is dichotomous. Three models were used:

- Model 1 uses the former teachers' ratings of workplace conditions to predict the consideration to return to teaching
- Model 2 uses the former teachers' ratings of workplace conditions and importance of various factors in the decision to leave to predict the consideration to return to teaching
- Model 3 uses the former teachers' ratings of workplace conditions, importance of various factors in the decision to leave, and professional and personal variables to predict the consideration to return to teaching.

The tables contain the logit outputs for former teacher respondents.

Model 1: Workplace Conditions as Predictors of the Consideration to Return

Table 9 illustrates the odds that selected workplace conditions would be significantly related to a former teacher's consideration to return to the profession. Based on the chi-square observed for the model, it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables in this model and the consideration to return to teaching. The pseudo R-squared shows that five-percent of the variability in the consideration to return to teaching can be attributed to the independent variables in this model. The dependent variable is whether or not the former teacher would consider returning to the profession (1, if "yes," 0, if "no"), and the

predictors are the TFS survey items related to Ingersoll's workplace conditions. Former teacher respondents rated each workplace condition as "1-Better in Teaching," "2-Not Better or Worse," or, "3-Better in Current Position." Final TFS teacher weights were used in the analysis. The logit, marginal probability, odds ratios, and standard error are presented in Table 9.

"Safety," rated in relation to teaching, is the workplace condition that significantly predicts the odds of a former teacher considering a return to the education profession. For every one unit increase in a former teacher's rating of safety in the current position relative to teaching, the odds that the teacher will consider returning decrease by approximately 46%. The other workplace conditions in this model were not significant predictors of the consideration to return to teaching.

Model 2: Working Conditions, Reasons for Initially Leaving, and the Consideration to Return

Table 9 illustrates the odds that selected workplace conditions and factors that influenced the decision to leave would significantly affect a former teacher's consideration to return to the profession. Based on the chi-square observed for the model, it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables in this model and the consideration to return to teaching. The pseudo R-squared shows that ten percent of the variability in the consideration to return to teaching can be attributed to the independent variables in this model. The dependent variable is whether or not the former teacher would consider returning to the profession (1, if "yes," 0, if "no"), and the predictors are the TFS survey items related to Ingersoll's workplace conditions and leaving factors. Former teacher respondents rated each workplace condition as "1-Better in Teaching," "2-Not Better or Worse," or, "3-Better in Current Position." Each decision to leave was rated as "1-Not Important," "2-Slightly Important," "3-Somewhat Important," "4-Very Important," and "5-Extremely Important." Final TFS teacher

weights were used in the analysis. The logit, marginal probability, odds ratios, and standard error are presented in this table.

“Safety,” the “Influence Over Workplace Policies and Practices,” rated in relation to teaching, and the decision to “Leave for Better Salary” significantly predict the odds of a former teacher considering a return to the education profession. For every one unit increase in a former teacher’s rating of safety in the current position relative to teaching, the odds that the teacher will consider returning decrease by approximately 49%. “Influence Over Workplace Policies and Practices” was significant at the 0.10 level. For every one unit increase in a former teacher’s rating of influence over workplace policies and practices relative to teaching, the odds that the teacher will consider returning increase by 54%. “Leave for Better Salary” was significant at the 0.05 level. The decision to leave for a better salary is a significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching. For every one unit increase in a former teacher’s rating of the importance of salary (from “1-Not Important” to “5-Extremely Important”) in the decision to leave teaching, the odds that the teacher will consider returning increase by 15%.

Model 3: Working Conditions, Reasons for Initially Leaving, Personal and Professional Characteristics, and the Consideration to Return

Table 9 also illustrates the odds that selected workplace conditions, factors that influenced the decision to leave, and professional and personal variables would significantly affect a former teacher’s consideration to return to the profession. Based on the chi-square observed for the model, it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables in this model and the consideration to return to teaching. The pseudo R-squared shows that twenty-percent of the variability in the consideration to return to teaching can be attributed to the independent variables in this model. The dependent variable is whether or not

the former teacher would consider returning to the profession (“1-Yes,” or “0-No”), and the predictors are the TFS survey items related to Ingersoll’s workplace conditions and leaving factors. Former teacher respondents rated each workplace condition as “1-Better in Teaching,” “2-Not Better or Worse,” or, “3-Better in Current Position.” Each decision to leave was rated as “1-Not Important,” “2-Slightly Important,” “3-Somewhat Important,” “4-Very Important,” and “5-Extremely Important.” Professional variables include whether or not the respondent has earned a master’s degree (“0-No,” or, “1-Yes”), annual salary, whether the teacher works in a public school (1) or private school (0), and years of experience at a private school. The variable “Years Full Time Experience in Public School” was removed from this model because it was causing a suppressor effect on the variable “Salary.” Private variables include race (“0-No,” or “1-Yes” for White) and gender (“0-Female,” and “1-Male”). Final TFS teacher weights were used in the analysis. The logit, marginal probability, odds ratios, and standard error are presented in this table.

The only workplace condition that significantly predicts a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching at the 0.01 level is “Safety.” For every one unit increase in a former teacher’s rating of safety in the current position relative to teaching, the odds that the teacher will consider returning decrease by approximately 49%. “Influence on Workplace Policy and Practices,” rated in relation to teaching, is the workplace condition that significantly predicts the consideration to return to teaching at the 0.05 level. Respondents are 70% more likely to return to teaching for every one unit increase in the rating of “Influence on Workplace Policy and Practices” in their current position relative to teaching. “Performance Evaluations,” rated in relation to teaching, is a workplace condition that is marginally significant in predicting the odds of a former teacher considering a return to the education profession. Workplace conditions

besides these three variables are not significant predictors of a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching at any level.

The variable "Leave to Pursue Non-K12 Position" is a significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching. For every one unit increase in the importance of pursuing a non-K12 position, the odds that a former teacher will consider returning to teaching decreases by 21%. The other reasons for leaving the teaching profession were not significant predictors of a former teacher's decision to return.

In terms of personal demographics, White respondents are significantly more likely to consider returning to teaching than Non-Whites. The racial categories of "Black," "Hispanic/Latino," "Asian," "Pacific Islander," and "Native American" were condensed into the category of "Non-White" due to their small sample sizes.

Summary

Three models were used to determine if workplace conditions, reasons for leaving the profession, and professional and personal variables were significant predictors of a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching. In all three models "safety" was a significant predictor of the likelihood that a former teacher would consider returning to the profession. If safety was rated more highly in the current position, then respondents were more likely to not consider returning to teaching. In models 2 and 3, respondents who perceived that they had more influence on workplace policies and practices in their current position were significantly more likely to return to teaching, and if performance evaluations were better in their current job, they were less likely to return. Also, if respondents indicated that salary played an important role in their decision to leave, they were more likely to consider a return to teaching. In model 3, the variable "Leave to Pursue Non-K12 Position" was a significant predictor of the consideration to

return to teaching. If leaving to pursue a non-K12 position was important, they were less likely to return to teaching. White respondents were significantly more likely to consider returning to teaching than non-Whites, and females were somewhat more likely to consider returning than males.

Table 9

Results of Logistic Regression Models Predicting the Odds of Former Teachers' Consideration to Return to Teaching

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3			
	Logit	Mar. Prob.	Odds R.	Std. Err	Logit	Mar. Prob.	Odds R.	Std. Err	Logit	Mar. Prob.	Odds R.	Std. Err
Salary	-0.170	6.411	0.844	0.136	-0.248	4.555	0.780	0.131	-0.206	5.376	0.814	0.151
Benefits	-0.017	58.352	0.983	0.179	0.028	-34.690	1.029	0.196	-0.071	14.493	0.931	0.185
Recognition	0.092	-10.412	1.096	0.231	0.198	-4.560	1.219	0.268	0.165	-5.587	1.179	0.277
Professional Development	-0.257	4.420	0.774	0.169	-0.206	5.378	0.814	0.180	-0.169	6.415	0.844	0.176
Performance Evaluation	-0.277	4.128	0.758	0.159	-0.340	3.467	0.712	0.152	-0.350	3.386	0.705 *	0.141
Resources to Perform Work	-0.098	10.661	0.906	0.216	-0.240	4.694	0.787	0.191	-0.247	4.577	0.782	0.190
Social Relations	-0.137	7.803	0.872	0.157	-0.115	9.198	0.891	0.164	-0.117	9.081	0.890	0.170
Safety	-0.620	2.165	0.538 ***	0.117	-0.673	2.042	0.510 ***	0.114	-0.676	2.035	0.509 ***	0.118
General Work Conditions	0.063	-15.253	1.066	0.346	0.082	-11.719	1.085	0.346	0.258	-3.392	1.295	0.909
Influence on Policy/Practices	0.389	-2.101	1.476	0.362	0.431	-1.858	1.538 *	0.392	0.531	-1.426	1.701 **	0.426
Autonomy	-0.206	5.364	0.814	0.165	-0.161	6.732	0.851	0.170	-0.188	5.831	0.829	0.165
Leave for Better Salary					0.137	-6.826	1.146 **	0.119	0.153	-6.048	1.165	0.116
Leave to Retire					-0.112	9.468	0.894	0.143	-0.038	26.818	0.963	0.150
Leave for Pregnancy					0.134	-6.967	1.144	0.176	0.076	-12.721	1.079	0.174
Leave for Family/Personal					-0.044	23.271	0.957	0.140	-0.084	12.453	0.920	0.136
Leave to Pursue Non-K12 Teaching					-0.214	5.184	0.807	0.075	-0.242	4.646	0.785 ***	0.069
Annual Salary									0.000	-166666.667	1.000	0.000
Male									-0.592	2.238	0.553 **	0.164
Masters									-0.414	2.953	0.661	0.223
White									0.827	-0.778	2.286 ***	0.787
Public									-0.440	2.811	0.644	0.231
Years Fulltime in Private School									-3.879	1.021	0.021	0.051
Log Likelihood	-680.069				-531.660				-476.909			
Chi-square	72.860 ***				117.280 ***				127.110 ***			
Pseudo R-square	0.050				0.099				0.118			

Note: Workplace Condition measures ("Salary" through "Autonomy") were measured on a 3-point scale (1=Better in Teaching, 2=Not better or Worse, 3=Better in Current Position). Specifying dummies for this scale, as opposed to treating this scale as a linear measurement, made negligible differences in the results.

* p<0.100; ** p<0.050; *** p<0.010.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study looks at former teachers and determines the relationship between their perception of compensation, perception of degree of control and input into organizational policies, perception of institutional conflict, and perception of administrative support and the consideration to return or not to return to teaching. Relevant teacher variables, both personal and professional, serve as control variables. Personal variables include age, gender, and race. Professional teacher variables include the type of school where they worked (public or private), their years experience and teaching status (full-time, part-time), level of education (attainment of Master's degree), participation in a formal induction program, and their reason for leaving the profession (better salary, retirement, family, or to pursue another career). The dependent variable, which is whether or not the former teacher would consider returning to the teaching profession, is dichotomous. The sample for questions related to workplace conditions includes only former teachers who were employed at the time the survey was taken, while the samples for all other questions used in this study include both employed and unemployed former teachers. This study explores teacher supply from the perspectives of former educators who left the profession but who are considering a return.

Discussion of Findings

The characteristics of former teachers closely mirror those of the current teachers in that most are White women who worked in public schools. The demographics of both former and current teachers are very similar, which leads to the conclusion that demography may not play an important role a teacher's decision to initially leave the profession. Also, respondents in this

survey are disproportionately White, making it difficult to draw conclusions about the effects race has on the consideration to return to teaching.

It is interesting to note that overall, most survey respondents would consider a return to teaching. After taking demographics into consideration, most white, non-white, male, female, and private and public school teachers would consider returning. While recent research has projected that 30 percent of teachers will leave within the first three years of teaching, and 45 percent will leave within the first five (Zhang, et. al., 2008), a majority of these teachers may consider returning to teaching. These former educators could fill vacant positions in schools.

The workplace conditions of a former teacher's current job rated in relation to teaching are analyzed in this study. There is little information on the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey pertaining to the specific field in which respondents of these questions currently work. While a few former teachers have indicated their specific professions, a vast majority have merely indicated that they work "outside the field of education." This study does include the responses of former teachers who are not employed; however, the responses of these teachers are not included in the regression analyses for questions related to workplace conditions. If respondents indicated that they were not working, they were to skip questions 20a through 20t on the TFS survey. Questions 20a to 20t were related to workplace conditions, and were used in the three regression models in this study. If former teacher respondents were not employed, they could not answer these questions.

According to the bivariate correlation analysis, all of the workplace conditions identified in this study except "Salary" and "Benefits" were found to have a significant correlation with the consideration to return to teaching. As former teachers perceived "Recognition," "Professional Development," "Performance Evaluations," "Resources Available for Work," "Social

Relationships,” “Safety of Environment,” “General Work Conditions,” “Influence Over Policy and Practices,” and “Autonomy and Control Over Work” as being better in their current workplace, they were less likely to consider returning to teaching. Data from the Teacher Voices survey (Goldberg & Proctor, 2000) shows that the top four reasons why educators chose teaching as a profession are: “1. A desire to work with children; 2. The influence of a former teacher; 3. Love of subject matter; and 4. A belief in the importance of teaching.” Other studies (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Wadsworth, 2001) show that that the attitudes and preferences of former teachers and new recruits are also very similar in these respects. This is interesting to note considering the push within the last decade to provide more incentives to prospective teachers (Hirsh, Koppich, and Knapp, 2001; Ingersoll and Smith, 2003), as well as findings that indicate the importance teachers place upon salary (Guarino, et. al., 2006; Loeb and Reninger, 2004; Lui, 2007). Despite the recent focus on financial incentives and teacher salary as areas to improve the teacher supply, the findings in this study show that “Salary” and “Benefits” were not significantly related to a former teacher’s consideration to return. Another area that has been seen as influencing teacher attrition is participation in an induction program. Induction programs are seen as a component of administrative support for new teachers, which can have an influence on a teacher’s job satisfaction ((Darling-Hammond and Sykes, 2003; Teacher Follow-Up Survey, 2005; Teacher Voices Survey, 2000). However, the results of the chi-square analysis in this study show that there is no significant relationship between participation in an induction program and a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching. Teachers who had chosen to leave the profession may have felt they were not adequately prepared to deal with the challenges they encountered, and that these challenges were unrelated to the content of their induction programs, but this requires further study.

The reasons for leaving that have significant correlations with the consideration to return to teaching are “Leave for Better Salary,” “Leave for Pregnancy,” “Leave for Family or Personal Reasons,” and “Leave to Retire.” If participants indicated that “Better Salary” was an important reason for leaving, they were more likely to consider returning. As mentioned earlier, various studies (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Goldberg & Proctor, 2000; Wadsworth, 2001) show that former teachers and new recruits choose to work in education for reasons other than monetary gain. While former teachers may have left because of money, they may still be likely to consider returning to the profession because of a desire to work with children or a belief in the importance of teaching. “Pregnancy” and “Leave for Family or Personal Reasons” may be temporary issues faced by the respondents, and former teachers may be more likely to consider a return to the profession because they understand that these issues may not permanently influence their decisions to teach. Respondents who indicated that retirement was important in their decision to leave teaching were less likely to consider returning. Teachers who are eligible for retirement benefits will be far less likely to return to the profession when, if they work outside of teaching, they are able to collect full retirement benefits and earn extra income at their new jobs outside of teaching.

Logistic regression was used to determine the influence workplace factors, decision to leave factors, and professional and personal variables have on a former teacher’s consideration to return to the profession. Based upon the logistic regression used in model 1, “Safety,” rated in relation to teaching, is the workplace condition that significantly predicts the odds of a former teacher considering a return to the education profession. According to interviews conducted by ORC Macro, a research and evaluation company employed by the U.S. Census Bureau to gather feedback from a small sample of current and former teachers regarding questionnaire items on

the 2004-2005 TFS, respondents tended to interpret “Safety” in terms of the students and fellow colleagues as opposed to the safety of the school building, itself, (Cox, et. al., 2007, p. D-25) and one former teacher commented that, “students were often highly emotional and came with a lot of ‘baggage,’ whereas people in the office were more mature and could handle situations better” (Cox, et. al., 2007, p. D-25). According to Newman, Ritter, and Smith (1989), teachers’ perceptions of student behavior significantly affects their efficacy in the classroom. Students and colleagues affect one’s perception of the workplace environment, which Loeb and Reninger (2004) found to significantly affect where an educator chooses to teach. Safety seems to be an emotional component of teaching, and if former teachers perceive that their current job offers a greater sense of overall security in terms of personal safety and emotional well-being, they are less likely to return to teaching.

When looking at workplace conditions and factors that influenced an initial decision to leave teaching, “Safety,” as seen in the first model, is again a significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching. "Influence over Workplace Policies and Practices" is marginally significant at the 0.10 level.

The decision to leave for a better salary is a significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching at the 0.05 level. If respondents indicated that better salary was an important factor in their decision to leave teaching, they were more likely to consider returning to teaching. This may be due to the fact that teachers who initially leave for monetary reasons find that their new jobs, while offering higher pay, do not offer the sense of personal accomplishment that one finds while teaching children. According to Wadsworth (2001), teachers initially enter the profession because they have a “sense of mission,” and Brookhart and Freeman (1992) state that prospective educators desire to achieve the service oriented goals of helping people and

imparting knowledge. After leaving their former jobs, these respondents, who had previously thought that salary was an important reason to leave, may be open to changing their minds because they were drawn towards the sense of personal fulfillment that they experienced in the classroom.

In model 3, “Safety,” rated in relation to teaching, again significantly predicts the odds of a former teacher considering a return to the education profession. “Leave to Pursue Non-K12 Teaching Position” is a reason for leaving that significantly predicts the consideration to return to teaching at the 0.01 level. Former teachers were 21% less likely to consider returning when they rated this reason for leaving as being increasingly important. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2002) determined that the desire to pursue other job opportunities significantly contributes to teacher shortages, and Ingersoll (2001) found that even though retirement rates for teachers are increasing in this country, job dissatisfaction and teachers pursuing other job opportunities accounted for more turnover than retirement. While retirement is seen as accounting for a significant amount of teacher attrition (Harris and Adams, 2007), the results of this study show that it does not significantly predict a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching. Former teachers who indicated that pursuing a non-teaching career played an important role in their decisions to leave are less likely to return than those who listed it as not being important.

“Influence over Workplace Policies and Practices” significantly predicts a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching at the 0.05 level. Former teachers who rate their influence over policies and practices at their current job as being better than in teaching are more likely to consider returning to teaching. Respondents with more influence over policies and practices at their new position may perceive more work-related stress, and may desire to return to

their former job, where they perceived less stress. Weiss (1999) using Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) data from 1987-1988 and 1990-1991, found that decision-making was a factor that affected morale and was a predictor of an educator's decision to return to teaching. He states that when first-year teachers feel more involved in decision making, they are likely to remain in the education field longer. However, the results in model three show that if former teachers perceive more influence in policies and practices at their current jobs, they are more likely to return to teaching.

In terms of personal demographics, White respondents are significantly more likely to consider returning to teaching than Non-Whites. The discrepancy in sample sizes between Whites and Non-Whites may affect the predicted effect that race has on the consideration to return to teaching. Gender is also seen as being a significant predictor at the 0.05 level, but males constitute less than one-third of survey, and this discrepancy may affect gender's predictive effect on the dependent variable.

Implications

Teacher reentrants constitute a potentially significant source of certified professionals who can fill vacant positions in schools. Recent research regarding the perceptions and attitudes of former teachers has been lacking. However, this study provides insight into what workplace conditions and personal and professional variables could predict a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching. Across the three models used in this study, "Safety" is a significant predictor of a former teacher's consideration to return. Apparently, this workplace condition is considered an important aspect of the workplace environment. If "Safety" is perceived to be better in teaching than in a former educator's current position outside the field, it is likely that the teacher will consider returning. School administrators play an important role in establishing

school climate, and creating a positive workplace experience for both students and staff (Ingersoll, 2001). Schools that experience a shortage of teachers could target former teachers by establishing an environment where teachers feel safe, and where they can focus on teaching content-related skills, as opposed to teaching behavior skills or dealing with discipline issues. This may cause former teachers to experience a sense of personal satisfaction that accompanies teaching students without worrying about personal safety. Creating a more desirable work environment may also prevent teachers from leaving to pursue jobs outside of K-12 teaching. This is important because as former teachers rate pursuing a job outside of teaching as increasingly important in their decision to leave, they are less likely to return to the profession.

In order to target former teachers as prospective staff members, administrators and policy-makers could focus more attention on creating safe working environments for teachers. State and federal funding could be provided to increase security and the ratio of administrators and counselors to students. The increased presence of security guards and administrators could deter inappropriate behaviors, and counselors could aid both students and teachers in learning and implementing behavior management strategies. If former teachers work in a school where they can focus more on teaching content rather than dealing with student “baggage”(Cox, et. al., 2007, p. D-25), they may be more likely to return to the education field.

District and building administrators could also determine what current teachers feel they need to be “safe” in order to create a more desirable workplace. Surveys and interviews could help to identify specific measures to be taken in order to improve teachers’ perceptions of safety. For example, if a teacher feels as if certain students may cause harm to other students or teachers, a principal would be able to target these students as needing behavior plans, counseling sessions, and daily triage with school staff members. However, if a teacher’s concerns about

safety relate to the physical environment of the school, funds could be diverted to ensure the school building is suitable for teaching and learning. It is important to recognize that safety is something that is perceived and interpreted by the individual teacher, and in order to create a safe working environment, administrators must first determine what safety means to the individual teachers.

According to Ingersoll (2001), the following workplace conditions are related to teacher turnover: “the compensation structure for employees;” “the level of administrative support;” “the degree of conflict and strife within an organization;” and “the degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies” (p. 507). However, the results of this study show that safety, which relates to “the degree of conflict and strife within an organization,” is the only significant predictor of a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching. It is reasonable to conclude, after linking the results of this study and that of Ingersoll’s (2001), that the attitudes and preferences of former teachers regarding safety are not entirely different from current teachers; therefore, improving safety could not only draw former teachers back into the profession, but could also keep current teachers from pursuing job opportunities outside the education field. Both of these studies show that increased perceived safety can not only improve retention rates of existing teachers, but also entice former teachers to consider returning.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study has found significant predictors of a former teacher’s consideration to return to teaching, further study is necessary to determine what factors would lead a former teacher to actually make a return to the profession. Currently, SASS surveys do not include questions asking teachers to identify themselves as “reentrants,” and, consequently, it may be necessary for researchers to collect qualitative data from teacher reentrants to determine the

specific factors that lead former teachers back into the classroom. A qualitative study may also help determine how former teachers interpret the meanings of various survey questions. For example, according to Cox, et. al. (2007), some respondents interpreted “Social Interaction with Colleagues” to mean how employees interacted with one another during the work day, while others interpreted it as meaning whether or not they formed friendships both inside and outside of the workplace. While we know how a few respondents interpret the questions found on the 2004-2005 Teacher Follow-Up Survey (Cox, et. al., 2007), it may be useful to determine whether or not there is any relationship between these interpretations and the consideration to return. Specifically, a deeper understanding of what “Safety” means to respondents and how they feel it would be improved in the school setting could affect their attitudes towards considering returning.

This study only uses the responses of former teachers who were employed at the time that they participated in the survey to determine their perceptions of workplace conditions. Former teachers who were not currently employed at the time this survey was taken did not answer the questions on table 4. Future study may be necessary to determine what workplace conditions would predict a former, unemployed educator to return to the profession. However, a different survey would probably have to be used because the Teacher Follow Up Survey asks respondents to rate the workplace conditions of their former jobs to their current jobs.

Also, it will be necessary to link any findings regarding the consideration to return to teaching with the socio-economic status of the school in which the respondent worked. An attempt was made in this study to link 2004-2005 SASS data with Common Core of Data from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), but NCES stated that this could not be done, as the SASS and CCD respondents are not taken from the same sample. In the future, it may be

recommended that the National Center for Education Statistics keep CCD data on all respondents who participate in other surveys such as the SASS. Impoverished urban and rural schools have experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). It would be helpful to determine the factors that would lead former teachers back to their positions in these areas.

This study does not track the responses of teachers over time; a longitudinal study could help determine factors that consistently predict whether or not a former teacher would consider returning to teaching. The data used in this study could be cross-referenced with data from all previous Former Teacher Follow-Up Surveys, which include the question, "Do you plan to return to teaching?," as well as questions asking former teachers to rate their current workplace conditions to teaching. However, the 2008-2009 TFS former teacher questionnaire does not include a question about whether or not a former teacher would consider or plan a return to teaching.

This study uses survey questions related to Ingersoll's (2001) organizational factors that affect teacher turnover. However, the possibility exists that other factors may predict a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching. For example, the organizational factors "compensation structure," "administrative support," "the degree of conflict and strife within an organization," and "input into and influence over organizational policies" (p. 507) do not take into account factors like "A sense of personal accomplishment" or "Opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others," which can be found on the 2004-2005 Former Teacher Follow-Up Survey. While these two factors have been shown to impact a new teacher's initial decision to enter the profession (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Wadsworth, 2001), no studies have determined the impact they have on a former teacher's consideration to return. Further study may

be necessary to determine whether or not other possible variables serve as significant predictors of a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching.

The sampling groups for non-White groups were so small that conclusions about race and ethnicity in this study may be questionable. Future research related to the effects that race/ethnicity have on teachers' decisions to leave the profession or return to it will probably need to use a different data set. Also, the numbers of teachers who had obtained a doctoral degree were so small that they were eventually dropped from the study, altogether. Future study may be necessary to determine the effect this advanced degree may have on a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching.

Further analysis of this data will be needed to determine the effects each individual variable has on one another in each of the three models. For example, in model 2, the variable "Influence on Policy/Practices" is a statistically significant predictor of the consideration to return to teaching at the 0.10 level, but in model 3, it is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Also, it should be determined which professional and/or personal variable(s) lead "Leave to Pursue Non-K12 Teaching" to become statistically significant and "Leave for Better Salary" to become a statistically insignificant predictor in model 3. There may be a relationship between these variables and the reasons for leaving.

Summary

The emotional aspects of the teaching profession are, apparently, influential in a former teacher's consideration to return to the profession. Perceived safety seems to be a significant predictor of a former teacher's consideration to return to teaching. In all of the regression models in this study, respondents are significantly less likely to consider returning to teaching if they perceive that they are safer in their current position. In order to entice former teachers back into

the profession, administrators should create a school environment that teachers perceive as being safe.

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Appendix A: Independent and Dependent Variable SASS and TFS Questionnaire Items

	Questionnaire Item	SASS/TFS Tag	Questionnaire	Responses
Outcome Variable	Would you consider returning to the position of a K-12 teacher?	F0602 (CONS)	23. 2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher	Yes [1] No [2]
Predictor Variables	How would you rate your current position relative to teaching in terms of each of the following aspects? <u>“The compensation structure for employees”</u> a. Salary b. Benefits <u>“The level of administrative support”</u> g. Recognition and support from administrators/managers d. Opportunities for professional development l. Procedures for performance evaluation o. Availability of resources and material/equipment for doing job <u>“The degree of conflict and strife within an organization”</u> f. Social relationships with colleagues h. Safety of environment p. General work conditions <u>“The degree of employee input into and influence over organizational policies”</u> i. Influence over workplace policies and practices j. Autonomy or control over your work	F0581 (SALREL) F0582 (BENREL) F0587 (RECOGREL) F0584 (PRODEVREL) F0592 (PERFEVALREL) F0595 (RESRCESREL) F0586 (SCIALREL) F0588 (SFTYREL) F0596 (WRKCNSREL) F0589 (INPOLREL) F0590 (ATNMYREL)	20. 2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher	Better in teaching [1] Not better or worse [2] Better in current position [3]
Control Variables	What is your year of birth?	T0416 (DOB)	79. (2003-2004 SASS Public)/81. (2003-2004 SASS Private).	19__
	Are you male or female?	T0408 (GEND)	76. (2003-2004 SASS Public)/78. (2003-2004 SASS Public)	MALE [1] FEMALE [2]
	Are you currently on: maternity or paternity leave, disability leave, or sabbatical? (For former teachers)	FO550 (ONLV)	1b. (2004-2005 TFS Former)	[1] Yes [2] No
	Public or Private School?	SCH	(2003-2004 SASS Public)/(2003-2004 SASS Public)	[1] Public [2] Private
	Do you currently teach any regularly scheduled class(es) in any grades PreK-12?	F0050 (TCHSTS)	1. (2004-2005 TFS Former)/ 1. (2004-2005 TFS Current)	[1] Yes [2] No

	How do you classify your position at your current school, that is, the activity at which you spend most of your time during the school year? (For former teachers who have the wrong questionnaire, or for short-term substitutes, student teacher, or teacher aide).	F0051 (MNTCHASS)	2. (2004-2005 TFS Former)	[1-7] Return to Census Bureau because the respondent is currently employed at the school [8] short-term substitute [9] student teacher [10] teacher aide
	How do you classify your position at your current school, that is, the activity at which you spend most of your time during the school year? (For current teachers)	F0051 (MNASS)	3. (2004-2005 TFS Current)	[1] Regular teacher (full-time or part-time) [2] Itinerant teacher [3] Long-term substitute [4] Administrator [5] Librarian or media specialist [5] Other professional staff [6] Support staff (secretary) [7] Short term substitute [8] Student teacher [9] Teacher aide
	What is your main occupational status? (For former teachers)	F0580 (OCCSTS)	19. (2004-2005 TFS Former)	[1] Working in a position in the field of education, but not as a teacher [2] Working in a position outside the field of education [3] Other than the above
	What is your main occupational status? (For former teachers)	F0553 (MNOCC) F5553(MNOCLBL)	2. (2004-2005 TFS Former)	[1] Working in a field inside of education, but not as a teacher [2] Working in an occupation outside the field of education [3] Student at a college or university [4] Caring for family members [5] Retired [6] Disabled [7] Unemployed and seeking work [8] Other
	Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?	TO409 (HISPLAT)	77. (2003-2004 SASS Public)/ 79. (2003-2004 SASS Private)	Yes [1] No [2]

	What is your race?	T0414 (NAM) T0412 (BLK) T0411 (ASN) T0413 (PAI) T0410 (WHT) T0415 (TRB)	78a. (2003-2004 SASS Public)/80a (2003-2004 SASS Private).	Empty [-8] Choice [1] NATIVE_AMER ASIAN BLACK PAC_ISLAND WHITE TRIBE
	On December 31, 2003, what was your marital status? What is your current marital status?	FO234 (MARSTS03) FO234 (MARSTSCUR) FO235 (MARSTCUR)	32. (2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher)/45. (2004-2005 TFS Current Teacher). 33a. (2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher)/46a. (2004-2005 TFS Current Teacher).	Married [1] Widowed [2] Separated [3] Divorced [4] Never Married [5]
	Type of School	BIA PUB PRI	2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey (Public and Private)	Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] Public [PUB] Private [PRI]
	How many years have you worked as a FULL-TIME elementary or secondary teacher in PUBLIC, CHARTER and/or INDIAN schools? How many years have you worked as a PART-TIME elementary or secondary teacher in PUBLIC, CHARTER and/or INDIAN schools? How many years did you teach FULL-TIME in private schools? How many years did you teach PART-TIME in private schools?	TOO36 (FTPUB) T0037 (PTPUB) T0039 (FTPRI) T0040 (PTPRI)	9a/b and 10a/b. 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey (Public and Private)	<i>Count part of a school year as 1 year. Record whole years, not fractions or months. If none, please mark (X) the box.</i> 0 None or __ Year(s)
	Do you have a master's degree? Have you earned your doctorate?	TO123 (MADEG) TO143 (DOCERN)	22a. 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey 23a. 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey	Yes [1] No [2]
	During the current school year, what is your academic year base teaching salary?	T0339 (TCHPAY)	71. (2003-2004 SASS Public)/72. (2003-2004 SASS Private)	Dollar Amount
	In your first year of teaching, did you participate in a teacher induction program?	TO216 (IND)	34 (2003-2004 SASS Public)/ 35 (2003-2004 SASS Private).	Yes [1] No [2]

	<p>Indicate the level of importance each of the following played in your decision to leave the position of K-12 teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. To retire m. Pregnancy/Child Rearing f. For better salary or benefits l. Other family or personal reasons g. To pursue a position other than that of a K-12 teacher 	<p>F0570 (LVRETIRE) F0568 (LVPREG)</p> <p>FO572 (TOTINCREL) F0578 (LVFMLYPERS)</p> <p>F0573 (LVOTHRPOS)</p>	<p>13. 2004-2005 TFS Former Teacher</p>	<p>Not at all important [1] Slightly Important [2] Somewhat Important [3] Very Important [4] Extremely Important [5]</p>
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