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## Selected School Characteristics And Their Relationship to High School Teacher Retention

Jhunu Mohapatra  
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SELECTED SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP  
TO HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER RETENTION

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Educational Research, Technology, and Leadership  
in the College of Education  
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2005

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to examine the perceptions of Orange County high school teachers and administrators regarding selected school characteristics and their relationship to teacher retention. The study was based on another investigation conducted by the Charlotte Advocates of Education (2004) inquiring into the working conditions in schools and their impact on teacher retention. A total of 292 teachers with less than 4 years of experience and 14 administrators with more than 1 year of experience responded to 25 survey items related to the 6 factors comprising positive school characteristics.

Factors such as School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development contributed positively to the school characteristics, and Collegial Environment, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment factors were present to a lesser degree. Administrators perceived, to a greater extent than did teachers, the presence of the six factors. For the most part, the perceptions of teachers regarding the six factors did not differ significantly based on sex, age, education, and ethnicity. Some differences between ethnic groups concerning Professional Development and New Teacher Support factors and some differences between age groups for Collegial Environment and Professional Development factors were determined.

The presence of Professional Development and New Teacher Support was a good indicator of teachers' intention to stay in the teaching profession. One fourth of respondents (54, 25%) indicated interest in long-term teaching careers, and almost half of those surveyed wished to conclude their teaching careers within 5 (54, 25%) or 10 (43 (20%) years.

I dedicate this study to my loving parents Bishnu and Basanti Mishra for giving me a life of unconditional love, nurturing, and a deep rooted value to appreciate learning. I also dedicate this to my dearest departed Father-in-law, Mrutyunjaya Mohapatra for his selfless love and encouragement to pursue knowledge. Even at age 93, his hunched over body peering into literature showed me that age poses no barrier to seeking an education.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
CHAPTER 1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS.....	1
Introduction.....	1
New Hires in Public Schools .....	3
Effect of Enrollment Growth on the Number of Teachers Needed .....	4
The Class Size Amendment and No Child Left Behind Act .....	5
Critical Shortage Areas.....	5
Purpose of Study.....	8
Statement of the Problem.....	9
Assumptions.....	9
Delimitations.....	10
Definition of Terms .....	10
Research Questions.....	10
Methodology.....	11
Population .....	11
Instrumentation .....	12
Data Collection Procedures and Analysis.....	13
Significance of the Study.....	14

Organization of the Study .....	14
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	15
Introduction.....	15
How Real is the Teacher Shortage? .....	15
Teacher Attrition.....	17
The Development and Challenges of Public Secondary Schools .....	25
Florida’s Teacher Shortage .....	27
Orange County Public Schools’ Need for Teachers .....	30
School Culture .....	31
School Facilities.....	33
Resources .....	38
Collegial Environment .....	41
Professional Development .....	44
New Teacher Support .....	47
Teacher Empowerment .....	51
Summary.....	55
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....	57
Introduction.....	57
Statement of the Problem.....	57

Population .....	57
Instrumentation .....	58
Reliability.....	61
Data Collection .....	61
Data Analysis .....	63
Data Analyses for Research Questions 1 and 2 .....	63
Data Analysis for Research Question 3 .....	64
Data Analysis for Research Question 4 .....	65
Data Analysis for Research Question 5 .....	65
Data Analysis for Research Question 6 .....	66
Summary.....	66
CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA.....	68
Introduction.....	68
Characteristics of Respondents.....	69
Research Question 1 .....	74
Research Question 2 .....	77
Research Question 3 .....	79
Research Question 4 .....	81
Research Question 5 .....	88

Research Question 6 .....	91
Summary .....	96
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	98
Problem Statement .....	98
Methodology .....	98
Population and Data Collection .....	98
Instrumentation .....	99
Summary of Findings .....	100
Research Question 1 .....	100
Research Question 2 .....	102
Research Question 3 .....	103
Research Question 4 .....	105
Research Question 5 .....	107
Research Question 6 .....	108
Discussion .....	108
Conclusions .....	110
Implications and Recommendations for Practice .....	112
Recommendations for Further Research .....	115

APPENDIX A SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS .....	118
APPENDIX B SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY FOR ADMINISTRATORS .....	123
APPENDIX C QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION CHECKLIST .....	128
APPENDIX D INITIAL CONTACT LETTER .....	130
APPENDIX E HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER COVER LETTER .....	132
APPENDIX F HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR COVER LETTER.....	134
APPENDIX G THIRD TEACHER CONTACT LETTER .....	136
APPENDIX H FOURTH TEACHER CONTACT LETTER.....	138
APPENDIX I FIFTH TEACHER CONTACT LETTER.....	140
APPENDIX J ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL APPROVAL.....	142
APPENDIX K INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	144
APPENDIX L RELIABILITY ANALYSIS SCALE.....	146
APPENDIX M CHARLOTTE ADVOCATES FOR EDUCATION PERMISSION ....	148
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	150

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Factor Analysis .....	59
Table 2 Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers (N = 292) and Administrators (N =14) .....	70
Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 292) .....	71
Table 4 Teachers' (N = 292) and Administrators' (N = 14) Years of Experience .....	73
Table 5 Subjects Taught by Responding Teachers (N = 292) .....	74
Table 6 Teachers' Perceptions: School Characteristics (N = 292) .....	75
Table 7 Administrator Perceptions: School Characteristics (N = 14) .....	77
Table 8 Differences in Perceptions of School Characteristics: Teachers and Administrators.....	80
Table 9 Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Gender .....	81
Table 10 Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Education Degree .....	83
Table 11 Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Ethnicity ..	85
Table 12 Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Age .....	87
Table 13 Teachers' Intention to Teach Next Year (n = 276).....	89
Table 14 Not-returning Teachers' Reasons for Departure ( N = 292).....	89
Table 15 Teachers' Intention to Remain in the Teaching Profession (n = 214).....	92
Table 16 Teachers' Overall Satisfaction with their Current School (n = 252).....	92

## CHAPTER 1

### THE PROBLEM AND ITS CLARIFYING COMPONENTS

#### Introduction

According to Darling-Hammond (2003) and Dove (2004), the teacher shortage has become one of the most important concerns in the United States and throughout the world. They have expressed their concerns that teachers have left the profession at a rate faster than that of any other profession. According to Dove, 9.3% of public school teachers exited the school system prior to the completion of their first year; more than 20% of U.S. public school teachers left teaching within the first 3 years of teaching; and nearly 30% of America's teachers left the teaching profession within their first 5 years.

The shortage of qualified teachers has been a widely acknowledged problem (Billingsley, 1993; Dove, 2004; Hunt & Carrol, 2003; Mitchell, 1968; Shann, 1998). Teacher shortages have been driven by many factors such as increasing student enrollment, demand for smaller classes, retirements, and inadequate supply of qualified teachers (Hunt & Carrol). These authors referred to their retention concerns regarding the loss of teachers as a "national crisis" (p. 22).

In the early 1980s, a crisis was anticipated in the educational system due to the projected severe teacher shortages in elementary and secondary schools. The prediction was that schools would be forced to fill vacancies by employing under-qualified teachers and thereby lower standards (Ingersoll, 2001b). This concern sparked immense interest among researchers to study teacher supply and demand. Merrow (1999) reported that

many individuals who became teachers either did not teach or did not remain in the profession.

Mitchell (1968) expressed his views regarding the supply and demand of teachers even during his teaching days. According to him, although the teaching institutions supplied huge numbers of teachers every year, scarcity of qualified teachers continued to be an ongoing issue even in the 1920s. Mitchell was concerned that a large number of qualified teachers never entered the teaching field. A large number that did accept teaching positions left after a year or a few years. Mitchell discussed the reasons schools had not attracted more career teachers. He saw working conditions and personnel practices as two major factors responsible for the teacher exodus problem and noted that these had been concerns as early as 1900.

According to Ingersoll (2001c), 418,588 of nearly 3 million teachers left their teaching jobs by the end of the 1995 school year. His data reflected a departure count equal to or more than that of new hires. A total of 191,179 teachers entered the profession for the 1990-91 school year, but within 12 months, 173,994 teachers (91% of the number hired) left. In 1993-94, approximately 192,550 teachers joined the teaching profession, but in the following 12 months, 212,908 (equal to 110% of the number hired) left the occupation.

In a professional analysis of teacher shortages, Ingersoll (2001a) expressed his views on the characteristics of organizations that employed teachers, a largely overlooked area. He did not believe that adding recruitment programs would, in itself, solve staffing issues. He believed that the organizational sources affecting retention needed to be

addressed. The challenge to provide qualified teachers for every classroom became a demanding task and became major issues for the media and researchers. In order to meet the staffing problem challenge, wide ranges of initiatives were implemented to lure qualified candidates to the teaching field (Ingersoll, 2001a). Yet, according to Seyfarth (2002), little research had occurred to investigate the relationship of organizational features of schools and higher levels of teacher turnover.

According to *Quality Counts 2000*, the fourth annual 50-state report by *Education Week*, the most important question at that time was related to states' actions in attracting, screening, and keeping good teachers. The response, resulting from a comprehensive survey of state initiatives, was "not enough" (p. 8). It was stated in the executive summary of *Quality Counts 2000* that,

While they set standards for who can enter the profession on the front end, most keep the door cracked open at the back end. As a result, millions of students sit down every day before instructors who do not meet the minimum requirements their states say they should have to teach in public schools. (p. 8)

### New Hires in Public Schools

The Florida Department of Education (2003) used a survey of Florida school districts to report the newly hired teachers at the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year. During Fall 2002, a total of 15,388 teachers were hired by all school districts. This number exceeded that of any previous year. According to the fall 2003 New Hires Survey, 19,317 classroom teachers and 978 other instructional personnel were hired between July 1, and November 1, numbers greater than any other year; and there was a 25% increase over the number of new hires in Fall 2002. These new hires comprised

13.1 % of all classroom teachers and had increased (from 10% to 11% in the prior years).

The implementation of a class size amendment to the Florida State Constitution triggered the demand to hire more classroom teachers. In March 2003, the Florida State Board of Education approved a teacher projection report indicating that an estimated 22,582 teachers were needed to fill vacancies for the 2003-2004 school year. Overall, 11.5 % of the new hires in fall 2003, a number lower than in previous years, were not certified in the areas in which they were hired to teach.

Based on the information from school districts in the End of Year Survey, 9.8% of Florida's teachers left the classroom during 2002-2003. That percentage was greater than that of previous years. Of the total 13,751 teachers who left teaching positions during 2002-03, 8,538 (62%) were reported as having resigned voluntarily (The State Board of Education, 2004).

#### Effect of Enrollment Growth on the Number of Teachers Needed

The demand for teachers has also been affected by the increased number of student enrollments. According to a November 2004 State Board of Education report, even though the rate of growth was expected to slow in the future, Florida was likely to enroll 50,000 or more students each year. That would necessitate an additional 2,000 to 3,000 additional teachers being employed each year to accommodate the growing student population.

### The Class Size Amendment and No Child Left Behind Act

Teacher turnover and enrollment growth have continued to affect the demand for new teachers. Another component that had been added to this existing concern has been the Class Size Amendment passed by Florida Voters in 2002 and the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) that mandated there must be a highly qualified teacher in every core-subject classroom by 2005-2006. These legal mandates have further complicated the seriousness of the existing condition. From the class size amendment alone, the projection for additional teachers needed in 2004-2005 was 4,300, 2,400 teachers in 2005-06, and a steep increase to 11,821 in the year 2006-07 when the class size requirements would be in effect (The Florida Department of Education, 2004).

### Critical Shortage Areas

The Florida State Board of Education (November, 2004) referred to a critical shortage of teachers as a number of graduates significantly smaller than the number of job openings and fields with insufficient numbers in reserve. Critical shortages in Florida, in addition to those in specific content areas, required: (a) replacing teachers leaving or retiring (56%), (b) achieving class size targets (34%), and (c) providing for enrollment growth (10%). Results of a survey of graduates, completed by the 29 institutions in Florida that offered teacher education programs, indicated that 61% taught in Florida public schools the year after their graduation, and 58% were still teaching even after 4 years.

The State Board of Education in Florida (November, 2004) projected the total education graduates to be 6,409 teachers. The ratio of graduates in 2002-03 to the number of needed new hires in fall 2003 was 1:13 ratio. In 2006-07, the projected ratio of 1:17 showed a larger gap in meeting statewide needs for teachers. The gaps between new hires and graduates were projected to be even wider in the content areas such as technology and foreign language.

According to The U.S. Bureau of Census (2000), there was a 23.5% increase in the population growth from 12,937,926 in 1990 to 15,982,378 in 2000. That implied that there was an increase of 3,044,400 new arrivals in Florida during the 10 years. Florida's population size increase was considered to be one of the largest when it went from 33<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> in rank among the states. The demand for experienced and expert teachers grew along with the increase in new residents.

The National Center for Education Statistics (1998) predicted that by 2008 more than 2.4 million teachers would be needed in the United States. Due to increased birth rates and immigration, student enrollment in American schools was expected to pass 54 million by 2008 (Merrow, 1999). Of equal concern were the anticipated retirements of more than one-third of teachers over 50 years of age by 2015. In Florida, a bill was passed in 2004 to reduce class size necessitating the need to hire additional teachers (Merrow). Merrow expressed concerns that the teacher supply problem was one of retention rather than recruitment. According to him, a sufficient number of teachers were being produced but were choosing other careers within a short period of time leaving behind voids to be filled by yet another set of novice teachers. This led to the conclusion

by many researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Delgado, 1999; Seyfarth, 2002) that mentoring and induction programs designed to assist the new teachers could greatly reduce the teacher exodus.

Other researchers (Billingsley, 1993; Kim & Loadman, 1994; Shann, 1998) indicated that there were several reasons for a teacher shortage. Among the reasons, salary, opportunity for advancement, retirement, relocation, and support from administrators were discussed. Some issues like salary, relocation, and retirement were beyond a school leader's control, but the work environment was one of the main reasons teachers showed dissatisfaction leading to leaving the teaching profession. Many teachers felt that they were not treated like professionals. Fiore & Whitaker (2005) expressed this frustration:

A lack of authority to make decisions about curriculum, assessment, scheduling, and policy leads both experienced and novice teachers to doubt their professional status. These feelings of doubt are enhanced when teachers feel the pressures of accountability without some degree of buffer from the principal. The best principals provide protection from excessive stress, enabling teachers to do their jobs in a less threatening environment. (p.37)

Working conditions in a school have been shown to be linked positively with school administrators and in turn have influenced teacher effectiveness. Veenman (1984) studied beginning teachers to analyze the types of problems they faced on a regular basis. He identified 17 serious problems teachers dealt with on the job. The most important factors mentioned were (a) classroom discipline, (b) student motivation, (c) knowledge of school policies and rules, (d) dealing with parents, (e) heavy teaching load, (f) effective use of teaching strategies, (g) lack of materials and supplies, and (h) relationship with the leadership team. The reasons for teacher departure have been studied extensively (Fiore

& Whitaker, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c; Mellow, 1999; Mitchell, 1968; Podsen, 2002; Seyfarth, 2002; Veenman, 1984).

Fiore and Whitaker (2005) observed that most effective teachers constantly strived to improve their knowledge, while ineffective teachers set simple, vague goals. Also acknowledged was the need, by teachers who were most effective, to be supported by administrators who set measurable goals and energized the staff. Seyfarth (2002) suggested that administrators needed to provide stimulating staff development programs, assist with expenses for travel for conferences, and arrange for sabbatical leaves. School leaders needed to enable perpetual growth for faculty.

#### Purpose of Study

Although problems of teacher staffing and attrition have become among the most important policy issues facing schools and the subject of much research, there has been very little research or commentary from a sociological perspective. In particular, few studies have examined the effects of the organizational conditions of the schools. (Ingersoll, 2001c, p. 4)

This study was focused on selected school characteristics in an effort to better understand why teachers desired to stay in their current teaching positions. It was concentrated on selected characteristics of the school and their importance, as perceived by teachers and administrators, in building a culture that encouraged teachers to remain not only in the teaching profession but in their schools. The impetus for the present study was provided by an earlier research effort in which teachers were queried as to the importance of a number of school characteristics (Charlotte Advocates for Education, 2004). The importance of a positive working environment and administrative support as

two major determinants in teachers' desire to stay at a school was noted. The present study was intended to extend the earlier school characteristics study by identifying school characteristic factors and exploring teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding their importance in building a positive school culture.

### Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of currently employed high school teachers and administrators regarding the extent to which a positive school environment, comprised of six school characteristic factors, was present in their schools. Differences in teachers' perceptions based on selected personal and professional variables were also explored in order to determine which, if any, of the school characteristic factors influenced their desire to remain in the teaching profession and in their school.

### Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the teachers and administrators responded to the survey instruments honestly.
2. It was assumed that the survey instruments were adequate in measuring the perceptions of teachers and administrators regarding the characteristics of the school.
3. It was assumed that the six school characteristic factors, as measured by the School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers (Appendix A) and the School Characteristics Survey for Administrators (Appendix B) provided an adequate representation of the school's environment..

### Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to high school teachers in the Orange County Public School District, Florida who had taught in their current school for less than 4 years.
2. The study was delimited to high school administrators in the Orange County School District, Florida who had been in their current school for more than one year.

### Definition of Terms

School environment: Six school characteristic factors (School Facilities, Resources, Collegial Environment, Professional Development, New Teacher Support and Teacher Empowerment) derived from the school characteristics identified on the two surveys developed for the study.

Teacher retention: Teachers who continue to teach in the same school from one year to the next (Wenders, 2004).

Teacher attrition: The premature and voluntary departure of teachers.

Teacher turnover: The percentage of teachers who leave the teaching profession during any year (Wenders, 2004).

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do currently employed teachers agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?

2. To what extent do currently employed administrators agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?
3. What is the difference, if any, between the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the presence of selected school characteristics in their schools?
4. To what extent do teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics vary based on teacher's (a) age; (b) gender; (c) education and (d) ethnicity?
5. What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the same school?
6. What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the teaching profession?

### Methodology

#### Population

The population consisted of 2004-05 high school teachers in Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, Florida who had been teaching in the same school for less than 4 years and whose principals had been in the same school for more than one year. A total of 14 administrators and 292 teachers participated in this study.

## Instrumentation

The methodology was designed to explore the perceptions of high school teachers and administrators regarding selected school characteristics and to identify factors which were descriptive of a school's environment. An instrument used in a study by Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) was reviewed. Its primary purpose had been to examine principal leadership in increasing teacher retention. This instrument was modified for use in the present study with a focus on school characteristics factors and teachers' desire to continue in the teaching profession and in the same school. Two surveys permitting teacher and administrator responses to identical items were developed and subjected to pilot testing to establish the external validity of the instruments. After minor corrections, the two instruments were finalized.

The first part of both surveys contained 25 questions, personalized for the two subgroups, which addressed school characteristics and permitted the identification of teacher and administrator perceptions regarding the following 6 factors: (a) School Facilities (b) Resources, (c) Collegial Environment, (d) Professional Development, (e) New Teacher Support, and (f) Teacher Empowerment.

The second part of both questionnaires was used to elicit demographic information about respondents. These data were used in further delineating subgroups within groups of teacher and administrator respondents and in determining differences in perceptions based on age, ethnicity and gender as well as intention to remain in teaching and to desire to continue teaching in the same school.

## Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

On March 22, 2005 high school administrators were contacted by e-mail to inform them about the dissertation project. On the same day, a cover letter and a copy of the survey were sent to them for their review through the OCPS courier. On April 5, 2005, all eligible participants were again contacted by e-mail informing them of a future visit to the respective schools to distribute the survey instrument. The surveys, cover letters, and self-addressed envelopes were then delivered personally on April 12, 2005; April 13, 2005; April 18, 2005, and April 21, 2005 to be distributed to the teachers and administrators during faculty meetings. Dillman's (2000) five-point method was used to contact teachers who did not respond on time. All the completed surveys were returned to the researcher through the Orange County Public School's courier in the self-addressed envelopes that were provided to participants. After the results were tabulated, a report was provided to respondents who requested a copy.

The statistical procedure, factor analysis, was used to analyze the data gathered regarding the 25 school characteristics issues explored in each of the surveys. The 6 factors (School Facilities, Resources, Collegial Environment, Professional Development, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment) were used as the unit of analysis in all of the subsequent data analysis procedures. Data were analyzed using SPSS (2003) software.

### Significance of the Study

Teachers have left schools for various reasons (Billingsley, 1993; Kim & Loadman, 1994; Shann, 1998), and these reasons have been explored. There has been less research, however, conducted with a specific focus on the relationship between teacher retention and the school's characteristics; thus, it seemed appropriate to examine teacher perceptions of the six factors contributing to the school's environment, the extent to which administrators and teachers agreed on them, and the positive conditions that would encourage teachers to continue teaching and remain in their present schools from year to year. It was anticipated that this study would provide information that would be helpful to administrators as well as teachers in aligning their actions toward common and ideal organizational goals.

### Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 has presented the problem statement and its clarifying components. Chapter 2 consists of the review of literature and the relevance to the purpose of this study. Chapter 3 contains the methodology and the process of data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data collection and interpretation of the data analysis. Chapter 5 is comprised of a summary of the results of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The review of the literature has been organized to address problems associated with retaining an adequate and well qualified core of teachers in the United States. Literature reviewed has focused on (a) the extent to which a teacher shortage exists, (b) why teachers leave and the problems associated with teacher attrition, (c) the modern high school and the need for teachers, (d) the importance of a positive school environment in retaining teachers and (e) the six school characteristics factors comprising a school's environment..

#### How Real is the Teacher Shortage?

Wayne (2000) reviewed the data of the National Center for Educational Statistics (1998) that counted students every year. Wayne speculated that if these predictions were correct, the teaching force might not grow, and the only growth that might be anticipated would come from a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio. Despite this projection, NCES, in its analysis, cited a need for 2.2 million public school teachers by 2008.

There has been continued national debate as to whether there is a national crisis related to a teacher shortage. Researchers have explored turnover and attrition, and some have attempted to quell the fear that has accompanied the debate with opposing views. In his study of public school teacher supply and demand, Wayne (2000) found that according to projections, enrollments were leveling off. He explained that the NCES'

(National Center for Educational Statistics) data for the 10-year period from 1988 to 1998 indicated a 16% increase in student enrollment. From 2000 to 2005, however, enrollments were expected to rise only 1 %, while 2005 to 2010 enrollments were anticipated to decline. From 1990 to 1996, elementary enrollment had dropped around 6% in West Virginia and North Dakota, but had increased about 15% in California and New Jersey reflecting the demographic growth of various regions of the United States. Overall, annual hiring increases were expected to not exceed about 2 or 3 % over the next few years.

Wayne (2000) also cited results from studies on teacher attrition. Excluding retirements, only about 5% of teachers left their profession each year. The beginning teachers who quit did so due to personal and family reasons not due to job dissatisfaction. He expressed concern over inadequate proof of the extent of the problem provided by the research community to policy makers. Though Wayne thought that policy researchers had made considerable efforts to challenge each other's work and shape the public understanding of the teacher quality issues, he felt that, "although that debate will have salutary effects over the long-term, the short-term outlook for lay audiences is confusion over whom to trust" (p. 2).

In keeping with the same concept, Ingersoll's (2001b) theory did not condone hiring more teachers. He observed that recruiting more teachers through alternate programs, financial incentives, signing bonuses, student loan forgiveness, housing assistance, and tuition reimbursement was not going to solve the problem if teachers

continued to leave the profession. He felt that more national research was needed to examine the impact of teacher turnover on school community and school performance.

It has been emphasized that teacher attrition among novices was unusually high and was likely to remain so until schools became more supportive in supplying appropriate working environments and universities better prepared teachers for the classroom. Wayne (2000) expressed his opinion in the following statement:

No doubt these factors matter, but the real numbers show state and federal policy makers that substantial leverage is possible via the blunt instrument before them. Perhaps a twelve-month calendar- and concomitant salary increases- would draw the mainstream labor market in to schools. Given good information, we know not to ignore such options. (p. 4)

#### Teacher Attrition

According to a 1999 report prepared by The United States Department of Education,

We now have compelling evidence that confirms what parents have always known—the teacher makes a critical difference in a child’s learning. Research has found that the quality of teaching in our classrooms is *the most important in-school factor* for improving student achievement. The challenge of ensuring enough qualified teachers is not simply to *increase the numbers* of new teachers that we recruit. The challenge is also to *reduce the demand* for new teachers by eliminating the many factors that drive teachers from the profession and by removing the barriers that prevent the many qualified individuals who are not teaching from doing so. (p. 5)

According to Schneider (2003), many analysts have argued that school-staffing problems were caused less by the lack of new teachers than by teacher attrition. A similar view was expressed in Ingersoll’s (2001a) schools and staffing survey where some schools were reported to have lost as many as 40% or as few as 5% of their new teachers. He suggested addressing the organizational sources of low teacher retention as well as

recruitment issues. His approach focused the attention on school characteristics and organizational conditions that may be responsible for a high teacher turnover rate. He further reported that turnover rates were distinctly lower in schools that had higher administrative support for teachers, had a lower level of student discipline problems, and had a very high level of faculty-decision making influence and autonomy (Ingersoll, 2001a).

In the early 1980s, the most talked about crisis in education was the upcoming possibility of a severe teacher shortage in elementary and secondary schools. Consequently, it was reported that schools were forced to fill those vacancies by employing under-qualified teachers, thereby lowering standards (Ingersoll, 2001b). This concern sparked immense interest among teacher supply and demand researchers. According to Seyfarth (2002), “teacher turnover usually is an indicator of teachers’ lack of satisfaction with their jobs or have to do with factors in their personal lives or the economy” (p. 100).

The retention of public school teachers has been an issue of continuing concern. Ingersoll (2001b) indicated that in 1987-88, approximately 180,000 teachers entered and 170,000 left the teaching profession for various reasons. By 1999-2000, however, the number of teachers who left (280,000) far exceeded the number of teachers (230,000) who entered the field.

Shen (1997) stated that, “in addition to the issue of quality, high rates of teacher attrition disrupt program continuity and planning, hinder student learning and increase school district’s expenditure on recruiting and hiring” (p. 1).

Good teachers have been of utmost importance in assuring high caliber student performance. Hence, there has been an urgency to make sure that qualified individuals with higher academic standards were available to adequately fill teaching vacancies. Hunt & Carrol's (2003) view was:

Our inability to support high quality teaching is driven not by too few teachers coming in, but by too many going out, that is, by staggering rates of teacher turnover. It is as if we are pouring water into a bucket with a fist sized hole in the bottom. (p.21)

Similar thought was reflected by Ingersoll (2001a) who presented his view that “coming shortfalls of teachers will force many school systems to resort to lowering standards to fill teaching openings, inevitably resulting in high levels of under-qualified teachers and lower school performance”(p. 4). By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the challenge to provide qualified teachers for every classroom had not only become a demanding task for school systems, it was receiving widespread media attention. In order to meet the staffing problem challenge, a wide range of initiatives were implemented to lure qualified candidates to the teaching field. Ingersoll (2001a) reported that, programs such as Troops for Teachers, Teach for America, and the Peace Corps were being used to entice other professionals into teaching. He also provided data regarding alternative licensing programs for college graduates that permitted prospective teachers to postpone formal education training and commence a teaching career after obtaining an emergency teaching license.

Low poverty schools turned over about 13% of their teaching staffs, whereas high-poverty schools turned over a higher 20% on average according to the latest schools and staffing survey information analyzed by Ingersoll (2001a). He questioned the number

and impact on staffing of turnovers in a particular school. Unlike other researchers that focused on characteristics of organizations that employed teachers, he addressed the organizational sources of low teacher retention rather than simply focusing on recruitment. His findings indicated that the rate of teacher turnover was higher than that found in many other occupations.

Despite the attention placed on teacher shortage and teacher turnover, the problem has persisted. According to Merrow (1999), approximately 30% of beginning teachers have left the field within 5 years. Of every 100 licensed graduates, 30 never began teaching. Of the remaining 70 teachers, 21 left within 5 years.

Viadero (2003) reported on a study conducted by the Harvard University Graduate School of Education of 486 first and second year teachers in 186 elementary, middle, and high schools in California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan. The purpose of this study was to survey the measures taken to hire qualified teachers. Of this group, approximately 33% of the new teachers were hired after the start of the school year, and 62% were hired within 30 days of the date they started the job. Only 7.5% of the teachers were observed teaching a sample lesson as part of the hiring process, and only 35% got the chance to observe classes prior to their hiring.

Tennessee Tomorrow, Inc. (2002) published an analysis of teacher attrition in Tennessee. Teachers were surveyed on various occasions and were asked to convey the reasons of their departure. Reasons teachers shared for their departure included moving between schools, leaving the teaching field for retirement, pursuing higher education or a different position, and dissatisfaction. The most important reason for teacher turnover

besides retirement was determined to be a lack of support from administrators. The most frequently cited reasons for job dissatisfaction were low salaries, inadequate support from school administrators, and limited involvement in the school's decision making process.

Keller (2003) discussed a study in North Carolina where 75,000 teachers were surveyed to learn more about working conditions and why teachers were leaving the classroom. With a growing teacher shortage, researchers were increasingly interested in exploring the cause of teacher turnover in more detail "seeking to discover whether teachers leave more often than similarly educated workers--which bears on the question of how much and what kind of turnover is unhealthy for education" (p. 8).

Another reason for teacher dissatisfaction was related to a school's lack of a sense of community. According to Royal and Rossi (1999), independence and freedom have been features of the staff culture in many schools, particularly at the secondary level. Also, a growing body of research suggested that experiencing a sense of community at work may benefit teachers personally and advance their instructional efforts. Sense of community was linked to teachers' well being, enhanced their feelings of efficacy and satisfaction with their work.

Ruenzel (1998) reported the experience of a particular teacher in a school in Oakland:

Young teachers in particular, come and go out at a furious rate. Veterans tend to keep their distance from the rookies. The older teachers do not think the younger ones will stay. So they close themselves off in the classrooms all day with the kids while the younger ones flounder in a sink-or-swim situation. (p. 37)

Another teacher in the same school lamented the absence of unity and coherence in the school. He said that, "isolation inevitably occurs at the school, and this isolation

leads to a breakdown of communications. So you end up doing your own thing, not bothering anybody else” (p. 37). Another young female teacher who quit teaching in a Denver public school attributed her departure to not getting basic supplies and support and said, “I felt a tremendous sense of failure everyday because I was unable to reach all the kids” (CNN Report, 2003).

Viadero (2003) looked at the climate of schools and how it affected teacher turnover. Many new teachers found the school culture to be less supportive and collaborative. Of the new teachers surveyed, 43% indicated that they did not have the opportunity to be observed by a mentor or an experienced colleague. Slightly more than half (56%) felt that they did not have any special help due to their inexperience, while 75% equated their academic and administrative responsibilities with those of senior and experienced teachers.

Dworkin (1987) discussed causes of teacher turnover, some of which were related to social-psychological characteristics of teachers, school demographics and the school’s organizational climate. He showed concern that teacher turnover could cause a severe organizational problem for public schools. As teachers left, school districts lost the investments they made in workshops, in-service, and teacher socialization activities. Since the departing teachers were replaced by novice teachers, the district was required to continually expend a high level of funding in the training process for beginning teachers. Furthermore, high levels of teacher turnover led to filling positions with inexperienced teachers and increased the possibility of reduced overall achievement by the school district’s children. Dworkin expressed concern regarding a “snowball” effect that could

occur when large numbers of departures might cause remaining teachers to consider the workplace as undesirable. This could result in additional turnover. He stated that,

Repeated high turnover rates due to low morale, combined with the normal attrition through retirement, leaves a school without a leadership core among the staff, since the experienced teachers who share some of the management duties with the principal are absent. (p. 3)

Dworkin (1987) also reflected on teacher burnout and expressed his belief that “the likelihood of teacher burnout diminishes with each additional year of teaching that a teacher gains beyond the fifth year in the classroom” (p. 155). He also spoke to the importance of like mindedness of teachers and principals when he stated, “the greater the discrepancy between a teacher’s perception of the preferred role of a principal and his or her own principal’s perception of the role, the greater the likelihood that the teacher will experience burnout” (p. 155).

Snyder (2000) wrote about the importance of success in encouraging teachers to continue teaching careers. As a senior researcher for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future and the Director of Teacher Education at the University of California, he stated that, "the most effective strategies are to organize schools in such a way that teachers can be successful with their students and in ways that allow teachers to continually learn with and from each other” (p. 2).

Other researcher/writers addressed such issues as the effect continued turnover had on the teaching staff’s ability to establish teamwork and continuity of curricula and programs along with the impact on community, parents, and students. According to Hunt and Carrol (2003), the most serious consequence of teacher turnover appeared to be in the erosion of teaching quality and student achievement. Schools with high teacher turnover

continually poured money into recruitment efforts and professional support for new teachers. Other experienced teachers who could serve as mentors were under pressure to meet the demands not only of their students but of their newly hired colleagues. In most cases, it was the lowest income students who suffered most. Young people, badly in need of stability and emotional support, have suffered the consequences of excessive teacher turnover.

The Recruitment and Retention Project of Oregon (2004) had various suggestions to improve teacher retention. They were: (a) Develop clear role descriptions; (b) provide adequate teaching resources and office space; (c) reduce/limit administrative requirements; (d) match beginning teacher assignments with their prior experiences and training ; (e) use mentor programs to assist and provide support for beginning teachers; (f) provide specific feedback, encouragement, and continued opportunities for growth especially in areas of coping strategies, behavior management, and collaborative skills; (g) restructure the workplace by giving teachers more responsibility and autonomy.

The report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future also offered solutions to retain teachers. Suggestions were related to ideas for better organization and investments in schools, rigorous teaching and standards in quality preparation programs, and upgrading the appeal of teaching through better preparation, mentoring and pay. Since school districts have been facing the daunting task of providing qualified teachers for every classroom, the concern has been that standards would be lowered or teachers would be asked to teach out of their areas of certification (CNN Report, 2003).

## The Development and Challenges of Public Secondary Schools

In no area of public education have the challenges been greater than in secondary schools. Secondary schools in the United States have had a relatively short life and have been required to respond to the changing needs of the students they serve. Secondary school education was exclusively reserved for the highly privileged until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even up to 1910, a minimal 10% of American youngsters attended high schools. Cited as the first American high school, the Boston Latin Grammar School opened in 1635 and was built to prepare young men to be eligible to enter Harvard, join government service, and provide service in the church. Though elementary schools sprouted up all over America over the next 200 years, it was 1821 when the first public “high” school, the English Classical School, opened in Boston. The curriculum consisted of composition, declamation, mathematics, history, civics, logic, surveying, navigation, and moral and political philosophy. Other public schools soon appeared in other parts of New England and New York. With a major focus on preparing young men for college, their enrollment was very low (Boyer, 1983).

In 1847, the concept of the modern public high school was born when the Michigan State Supreme Court ruled that taxes were to be levied in order to support elementary and secondary schools. By 1870, however, there were only 500 public high schools with 50,000 students in all of the United States. During this time, girls were allowed to be enrolled and trained to become teachers, and young men from economically disadvantaged groups attended high schools to learn a skilled trade. The

industrial revolution and beginning of mass urbanization brought about construction of early modern public high schools (Boyer, 1983).

Massive numbers of immigrants with very little formal education or financial status entered the United States during the first two decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Educational leaders and political pundits did not believe that the education these new immigrants were receiving was adequate to survive and thrive. They believed the focus of education should be on the acculturation of these youths into the American society (Kliebard, 1986).

In the year 1918, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued “The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education” which stated the primary purposes of high schools (Kliebard, 1986, p. 12). This document was published by the U.S. Bureau of Education and assisted in laying the foundations of the modern American High School. The culture of the American schools, with its loose academic standards, was adequate to meet the educational demands of that time period. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American youth were well prepared compared to students in other countries where universal secondary education had not yet been very popular. Beginning in approximately 1960, the American school system began to experience difficulties. Public distrust over the inadequacy of public schooling during the launch of Sputnik and the report “A Nation at Risk” created a demand for American schools to provide all students with access to a rigorous academic curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 1996).

Historically, school teaching was transient work; teachers were recruited randomly for 10 weeks without having a formal training. Teaching was considered a step

up from blue-collar work to a white-collar profession (Carter, 1989). Turnover was very high as teachers were often only one generation away from blue-collar work and life styles (Donaldson, 2001). Educators, especially men, used classroom teaching as a stepping stone to more highly valued roles or professions. By 1925, schools were managed by their administrators, again largely male, and teachers were placed at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder (Carter). Teacher supply and demand in secondary schools has been an issue for decades throughout the United States.

Secondary schools, particularly in Florida, have evolved into large and complex organizations charged with serving their growing diverse populations of students and teachers. Their success in attaining their goals has, in large part, been dependent upon the way in which all of the stakeholders work toward accomplishment of objectives. Efforts were made by states and universities to train and certify only the best teachers, yet public schools have continued to be forced to hire uncertified and poorly performing teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

### Florida's Teacher Shortage

Although supply and demand reports have indicated that enough teachers have been produced to meet the high demand, many individual schools in Florida have repeatedly been faced with severe teacher shortages. Schools with a large percentage of disadvantaged students and teacher shortages in areas such as mathematics, science, and exceptional student education have provided major challenges for schools. These shortages, the differences in schools coupled with mandated class size reduction, and

projected student enrollment growth have presented a complex set of circumstances for schools in the state (Harris, 2004).

According to the Florida Department of Education's (2004) March 2003 projection, the number of classroom teachers needed to fill vacancies in Florida schools was 22,582, and it was reported in the 2003 New Hires Survey that Florida school districts hired 19,317 teachers between July 1 and October 31, 2003. This number did not include teachers hired after November 1. During fall 2003 Florida employed 147,995 teachers in public school classrooms and 17,356 additional instructional personnel such as guidance counselors, and librarians. This reflected a 4.9% increase in the number of teachers in fall 2002 despite only a 2.2% increase in student enrollments. Based on enrollment projections available at the time of the present study and the need for additional teachers to meet the demand of the mandated class size amendment, a 20% increase in the number of teachers between 2003 and 2008 and a 26% increase between 2003 and 2013 has been projected for Florida. This would require an additional 19,600 to 29,600 classroom teachers per year for the next 10 years and would result in a teacher workforce in 2013 more than doubled that of 2003.

During the 2002-03 school year, approximately 10% of all Florida teachers left the classroom. A record high 2,700 teachers retired in 2002-03, and almost half of those were younger than 60 years of age. In the 2004-2005 school year, 21,313 teachers were needed. That included 13,692 teachers who retired, resigned, or were terminated. A total of 3,297 teachers were hired to cover the enrollment growth, and 4,324 were needed for class size reduction.

Considering Florida's aging workforce, it has been expected that Florida would experience a steady increase in teacher retirements. According to the Florida Department of Education (2004), approximately one third of Florida's teachers in 1992 were born between 1947 and 1957. They began to retire in sizable numbers in 1999 after reaching 30 years of state service. A majority of the current teachers in 2005 were between 52 and 56 years of age, and the likelihood of retirement reaching an unprecedented height during the decade following 2006 was very high.

Along with the huge increase in teacher retirements, approximately two thirds of all teachers who resigned each year did so to join another school district, return to school for additional studies, take leave to care for family, or leave the field of education altogether. While prior to 1998-99, only 3-4% of teachers left the teaching profession, that percentage had increased to 5-6% in the subsequent five-year period. The result of this activity was that approximately 7,500 more teachers were required for the year 2004-2005, and 57% of those were required due to the class size adjustments. In the year 2006-07, all the Florida school districts were estimated to need an additional 14,955 teachers, of which 3,134 teachers would be hired to keep pace with enrollment growth. According to Damron and Shanklin (2004), Florida's scramble for thousands of new teachers has opened the schoolhouse door for a new kind of recruit: one with no education degree, classroom experience or college-honed teaching skills expressed. Florida has been required to recruit hundreds of middle-aged career shifters and college graduates who have never been trained to teach and whose preparation has occurred in abbreviated preparation programs rather than the lengthier formal programs offered by colleges of

education. Florida has led the nation in promoting such alternative certification for teachers.

### Orange County Public Schools' Need for Teachers

In Orange County, one of Florida's largest school districts, the number of teachers joining schools through the alternative certification process has been astonishing in its growth. In 2000-01 school year, there were only 38 teachers in this program. That number had increased to 247 by 2004, a staggering 550% increase in 4 years. According to official sources, more were expected in future years (Damron & Shanklin, 2004). Lockheed Martin, Orange County Public Schools and the University of Central Florida College of Education collaboratively have created a fast-track course designed to quickly prepare math and science professionals who wish to leave the business and industry work force and enter the classroom (Priore, 2003).

Deluzuriaga (2005), an *Orlando Sentinel* staff writer, wrote about the search for new teachers by Central Florida schools. She talked about the need for hundreds of classroom teachers that were required to start the new school year and the likelihood that a number of these positions would necessarily be filled by substitute teachers. Debra Pace, an administrator in a central Florida high school was quoted as saying, "Our substitutes are great people, but teaching requires time, energy and training that substitutes just don't have" (p. B1). Due to rapid growth, class size restrictions and salaries well below the national average, school districts have predicted a worsening of the teacher shortage problem (Deluzuriaga). Florida School districts have been concerned

that the class-size amendment approved by voters in 2002 would strain the hiring needs even further. Under the law, classes across the state have been required to be capped at 18 for Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 22 students in grades 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and by 2010, 25 in high schools (Deluzuriaga). Orange County, the 12<sup>th</sup> largest public school district in the nation, has been considered to be very competitive in offering teachers opportunities for growth. Though successful in hiring almost 1300 new teachers to begin the 2005-06 school year, Orange County began the year with 50 vacancies yet needing to be filled.

The Florida Department of Education (2004) estimated that in 2005 and 2006 school districts across Florida would need to hire an additional 11,821 teachers just to comply with class-size legislation. Florida's universities have been anticipated to provide only 6,000 or approximately half of this number. This would necessitate out-of-state recruiting for the remaining 50%. Deluzuriaga (2005) said, "recruiting teachers is already a year around venture, with districts sending recruiters to job fairs across the nation to lure teachers to the sunshine state" (p. B4).

### School Culture

Understanding the culture of the organization has become important in determining ways of working and learning. Hoy and Sobo (1998) described culture as a school's personality, and early conceptualizations of organizational cultures were adaptations of individual personality theory. The early work of March and Simon (1958) and Argyris (1964) emphasized the characteristics of business organizations that affected employee morale, productivity, and commitment. School culture has been defined as the

quality of a school atmosphere that affects the behavior of students and staff (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). According to Haynes, Emmons, and Ben-Avie (1997), school culture was "the quality and consistency of interpersonal interactions within the school community that influences children's cognitive, social, and psychological development" (p. 322).

According to Berger (1995), it has been estimated that culture has been defined in more than 100 ways. Organizational culture dates back to studies of business and industry in the 1930s and 1940s. Barnard's (1938) and Mayo's (1945) concept of workplace culture referred to norms, sentiments, values, and emergent interactions of an organization. School culture also has been defined as the way things are done around the organization and has been referred to as the shared beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, and patterns of communication of the organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

Angelides and Ainscow (2000) defined school culture as the underlying assumptions and beliefs created from the solutions of the earlier problems that assist in defining the reality within an organization. In their definition, Hoy, Tarter, and Kottkamp (1991) synthesized a number of the existing definitions of school culture and suggested it was "a system of shared orientations (norms, core values, and tacit assumptions) held by members, which holds the unit together and gives it a distinct identity" (p. 5). Bolman and Deal (1997) viewed culture as the rituals and ceremonies "to create order, clarity, and predictability" (p. 223).

Donaldson (2001) discussed five attributes of school culture in his articulation of the challenges school leaders faced in promoting school reform to their staffs. They were:

(a) A new leadership model must construe school leadership as being about students, learning, and teaching; (b) a model for school leadership must both honor teachers and support frank critique and creative improvement, (c) a new model of leadership must respect the human needs of school staff even as it seeks to mobilize them to seek school challenge; (d) a new model of school leadership must honor relationships as an integral dimension of leadership; (e) a new model of school leadership must expect and enable each person to enhance her or his contributions to student learning both individually and as a member of the school community.

For the present study, 25 school characteristics were used to arrive at 6 factors which, if present, could contribute to a positive school environment. High school teachers were surveyed as to their perceptions of the presence in their schools of the 25 school characteristics. Originally used in a Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) study, these 25 characteristics had been used to examine principal leadership in increasing teacher retention. The 6 factors are: (a) School Facilities (b) Resources, (c) Collegial Environment, (d) Professional Development, (e) New Teacher Support, and (f) Teacher Empowerment. A review of literature relevant to the understanding of each of the factors and the school characteristics is presented in the following six sections.

### School Facilities

School facility conditions have frequently been linked to teacher satisfaction and success. In the present study, the School Facilities factor emerged as a descriptor for 3 school characteristics. Teachers and administrators were asked to indicate the extent to

which they had adequate space to work productively, tools to communicate, and technology that facilitated instruction

There have been numerous studies to establish a relationship between student achievement and building conditions (Edwards, 1991; Frazier, 1993; Hansen, 1992; Schneider, 2003). Edwards compared achievement scores to building conditions of 52 schools in Washington and concluded that students assigned to schools in poor condition showed a decline of 5.5 percentile points below the schools that were in fair condition, and 11 percentile points below the buildings that were in excellent conditions. Hansen believed that the conditions of school facilities had a direct effect on the quality of student education. Hansen provided evidence that reliable facility and energy information often did not reach school leaders. This, in turn, caused great harm to American students who were deprived of a “safe, healthy, and productive learning environment” (p. 30). Hansen suggested that school facility considerations must be an integral part of state and local school finance planning. Frazier mentioned that there should be greater emphasis on the enhancement of the physical site of learning and that this dimension was usually missing from a school’s reform plans. The lack of repair and remodeling educational facilities could negate some of the gains achieved by the restructure of a sound instructional program.

Schneider (2003) discussed a study where data were collected from a survey of teachers in two large urban systems conducted in spring 2002. In this study, which appeared to have particular relevance for the present research, findings from a large sample of K-12 teachers from Chicago and Washington, D.C. were documented. The

teachers rated the working conditions in their schools and how they perceived the conditions to affect their job performance and teaching effectiveness. Teachers were required to evaluate their surroundings, including the degree of overcrowding, the availability, and adequacy of facilities such as science labs and music rooms. It was observed that about one-third of Chicago teachers and more than one-half of Washington teachers were dissatisfied with their facilities. When asked if they thought their facilities were suitable for effective teaching and learning, about 20% of Chicago teachers and 40% of Washington teachers were negative in their responses (Schneider).

In discussing the size of school, Schneider (2003) reported that about 25% of Chicago teachers and nearly 50% of Washington, D.C. teachers expressed concern that their schools were too large. More than 40% reported that their classrooms were the wrong size for the type of education they delivered and more than 25% reported having taught in non-classroom spaces such as hallways and even closets. Inadequacy or lack of science classrooms, music and art rooms, physical education and recreational facilities considered to be essential to students' well being and achievement were rated very low in this survey. Nearly 60% of all teachers surveyed reported that science labs in their schools were only somewhat adequate or that they lacked a science lab. Schneider (2003) concluded that teaching was a complex task and required collaboration, flexibility, and teaming with colleagues. Yet, nearly one-third of Chicago and Washington, D.C. teachers reported that their schools often provided little or no teacher workspace. When workspace was provided, approximately one-fifth of the teachers in both cities thought it was inadequate.

Environmental problems have been linked to academic outcome and teacher turnover. Dove (2004) viewed problems associated with teachers' decisions to remain in or leave the teaching profession from an international perspective. According to him, teachers worldwide felt that conditions in schools and society had worsened and were causing substantial dissatisfaction and stress in the profession. This was accompanied by a lowered professional status in comparison to other professions with similar educational experience. It was Dove's opinion that teachers all over the world suffered through the consequences of large class sizes, insufficient instructional resources, and inadequate planning time.

Schneider (2003) studied conditions linked to health and academic achievement and found them to be mostly physiological in nature and related to indoor air quality, thermal comfort, lighting, and noise. His report of large city schools was particularly relevant for the present research and provided a report of variables similar to those addressed in the survey used to conduct the present research. Over two-thirds of the Washington, D.C. teachers and more than one-half of Chicago teachers reported fair or poor indoor air quality. Thermal comfort drew negative marks from more than 30% of the Chicago teachers and more than 40% of the Washington, D.C. teachers. Poor lighting, dirty and inoperable windows, and dirty rest rooms were other sources of teacher dissatisfaction. More than one-fourth of the Chicago teachers and about one-third of the Washington, D.C. teachers reported suffering health problems rooted in poor environmental conditions in their schools. These problems were determined to reduce teacher effectiveness with almost 20% of Chicago teachers and one-third of Washington,

D.C. teachers reporting lost teaching time (Schneider, 2003). When asked about the types of health problems experienced, more than a quarter of Chicago teachers and about one-third of Washington D.C. teachers reported asthma and respiratory problems as the most frequent symptoms given their complaint about indoor air quality. Another 16% of the Chicago teachers reported having sinus infections.

Another physiological factor discussed in Schneider's (2003) research, was the noise level. More than 40% of the Chicago teachers and almost 70% of the Washington, D.C. teachers reported that their classrooms and hallways were so noisy that it affected their ability to teach. Further, nearly 50% of the Chicago teachers and more than 30% of the Washington, D.C. teachers had deficient electrical outlets in their respective classrooms and 40% of the Chicago teachers and 30% of the Washington, D.C. teachers found their schools' lunchrooms to be inadequate.

Schneider (2003) provided data to connect school conditions and career decisions of school teachers. Of the teachers who graded their schools to be a C or below, more than 40% said that poor conditions influenced their decisions to change schools, and 30% gave in to thoughts of leaving teaching. The numbers were substantially higher for teachers who suffered from health problems due to the less than desirable facilities of the schools. About 50 % of the Chicago teachers and 65% of the Washington, D.C. teachers had given thoughts to changing schools, and about 40% of both the Chicago and the Washington, D.C. teachers considered quitting the profession completely.

Schneider (2003) expressed his concern over the importance of school facilities on teaching and learning. He said,

Poor school conditions make it more difficult for teachers to deliver an adequate education to their students, adversely affect teacher's health, and increase the likelihood that teachers will leave their school and the teaching profession. Our Nation's school facilities are a critical part of the educational process. Their condition and upkeep must be addressed in the ongoing discourse about student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and accountability. (p. 3)

## Resources

In the present study, the Resources factor from the Charlotte advocates for Education (2004) study emerged as a descriptor for 4 school characteristics. This factor was concentrated on the quality of support provided through administrator response to resource and facility needs, the extent to which the school was clean and well maintained, the special resource provided by administrators in orienting new teachers, and the adequacy of resources available to teachers to enable them to do a good job of teaching.

There have been various studies that examined the influence of salaries on teacher retention, but very little has been written about the impact on beginning teacher decisions to remain in schools based on resource allocations by the school districts. Theobald and Gritz (1995) reported a longitudinal study of 7,957 teachers from 1981 to 1990 to analyze the tools needed to proactively analyze the retention behaviors of new teachers and the relationship between the expenditures based on salary, classified support staff, and teaching materials. Although salary has provided a powerful impetus for the teacher's decision to remain in the classroom, school district spending decisions have also impacted the career decision of beginning teachers. According to this study, the allocation of funds did affect teacher career paths. The authors said that "districts can better influence teacher retention by looking for ways to lower spending for central

administration and channel these funds toward teacher salaries and classroom materials” (p. 153).

In the same context, Rhodes (2001) provided supportive ideas to review, analyze, and enhance the resource management practice to assist the school community. According to him, only one of five secondary schools has had adequate resources for the effective use of curriculum. He narrated problems encountered by school inspectors such as leaking roofs, broken windows, and poor quality classrooms with undesirable ventilation and lighting. Accommodations for secondary schools have often been inadequate for direct whole class instruction. Rhodes felt that there was a big disparity in disbursement of funds and resources.

Resource management has included the management of time, money, and equipment. Inadequate resource management has created roadblocks for effective teaching and learning. Rhodes (2001) said, “it is difficult to advocate a system which is fair, efficient and effective and is able to support teaching, learning and pupil achievement. Resource management is a whole-school issue as well as a classroom based concern” (p. 47).

Most of the money allotted for education has been spent at the school level. It has been important for administrators to acquire a stronger knowledge of financial resource disbursement, to comprehend the impact of educational resources on student outcome, and to find ways to direct future educational resources towards methods that improve student performance (Picus & Fazal, 1996).

Nakib (1996) presented a case study of resource allocation in Florida focused on the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), a K-12 funding program that balanced revenues among the 67 districts. The FEFP has been the source of public school funding in the state and has provided for comprehensive and detailed reporting of expenditures as well as assigning responsibilities for public education funding between state and local governments. The case study in Florida did not show much variation in resource allocation pattern for factors such as the levels of expenditure, district and school size, wealth of the district, or schools with high number of minority students. Nakib wondered,

If expenditures do not differ significantly among schools and districts, then what factors contribute to differences in school effectiveness? Answers may lie in the process by which different schools put their resources (funds and staff) into use, serving varying types of pupils in nonuniform communities with divergent organizational structures. (p. 103)

According to him, systematic effort was needed to establish a resource allocation pattern by considering the nature of the school context and environment.

Keedy and Achilles (1984) identified four ways the building administrator could provide support for resource allotment. The authors believed that resources were not limited to finances. They could be expressed in terms of time, professional support and a warm, caring environment. The administrative expectation of higher achievement was not easily met without the availability of these resources, and often principals were instrumental in providing teachers with them.

## Collegial Environment

The Collegial Environment, the third factor, served as a general descriptor for 6 of the school characteristics about which high school teachers and administrators were queried in the School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers. The 6 items inquired about time set aside specifically to collaborate with teachers, whether teachers had avenues to express concerns and solutions, ways to be recognized for a job well done, opportunities to visit other classrooms and other schools, independence to implement discipline policies, and the extent to which a sustained effort was made in the school to empower teachers, parents and stakeholders.

Goodlad (1984) discussed working conditions and collegiality in American schools. According to him, teachers felt more satisfied with their assigned work when they were involved in problem solving and could influence school-wide decisions regarding instruction. Reflective practice groups, mentorships, and team structures have in recent decades demonstrated the power of collegial networks and partnerships (Darling-Hammond, 1997b; Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Studies of collective teacher efficacy and professional culture have begun to make the case for independent working relationships (Bandura, 1997).

Teachers' lives have been characterized by some degree of ambiguity. They have often experienced great intrinsic rewards but not the equal prestige and appreciation in comparison to their counterparts in other professions (Rury, 1989). School leaders have been challenged to not only retain but to organize and mobilize staff who feel undervalued and isolated. Seyfarth (2002) described the value of having fun and having a

sense of belonging to be a major factor in retaining teachers. He thought that school administrators must devise ways to hold the employees together by providing avenues to ease the daily pressure of teaching.

In studying teacher turnover, various reasons have been cited as cause for concern. Although salary and retirement have been linked with teacher turnover, those factors have often been beyond administrative control. Though school districts might maintain strong research-based programs of observation and evaluation, these programs alone were often inadequate in retaining teachers. Environmental considerations, however, such as positive feelings among colleagues, support from administrators, and relationships with stakeholders were often mentioned as being key in retaining staff. Richin, Banyon, Stein, and Banyon (2003) reported the experience of one teacher who spoke at an induction orientation. When questioned about what attributes of the school helped retain teachers in that particular school, the teacher expressed his confidence in the school and the school's leaders. He indicated he was welcome to contribute his expertise on a daily basis; he felt supported even when he took risks and tried new things; he was recognized for his efforts and accomplishments; and he was never made to feel inadequate in spite of his less than perfect lessons during administrative observations. According to Richin et al., feeling disconnected from the rest of the staff and schools was one of the main reasons teachers left or transferred to another school.

According to Herzberg's (1975) Hygiene-Motivation Theory, certain factors have contributed to workers' dissatisfaction with their profession. These factors had a connection with the employee's physical surroundings and supervisors. Herzberg found

that in order for the workers to derive satisfaction and be productive, the environment needed to provide comfort. He theorized that workers felt motivated if they experienced inner feelings of self-worth and if they had a connectedness to the work place. Hygiene needs in a school were equally important and were evidenced in policies, relationships with supervisors, working conditions, and security.

A major area of emphasis in most high schools has been related to the evaluation of teachers. This is an area where the development of processes in a collegial manner has had the potential for well received and successful supervisory practices. Drake and Roe (1999) commented that the evaluation process must be consistent with the school's philosophy and the purposes of the evaluation should be developed cooperatively. They felt that having a clear understanding of the purposes of the evaluation reduced the tensions or threats that could result from the observation. Teachers could easily identify with the school's goals if they helped to develop the goals and were involved in the process of assessment. The outcome of evaluation was affected by the purpose of the evaluation. Drake and Roe noted that according to their research,

If the purpose is to decide on merit pay, human factors are more important; if the purpose is to make a decision regarding retention, technical factors appear to be more important. Resorting to "defensible" or "safe" technical factors when job retention is in question may be unfair to the job holder and/or those affected by the job performance. (p. 305)

They further suggested that the criteria for assessing performance should be clear before the evaluation began, the evaluation should be continual, and the results of each stage of the evaluation should be recorded and reported.

## Professional Development

The Professional Development factor emerged as a descriptor for 3 school characteristics. This factor was comprised of school characteristics that encouraged growth and development of school personnel. Specifically, survey items addressing this factor inquired as to opportunities to attend workshops and conferences beyond those required by the district, the encouragement provided by school leaders for teachers to be actively involved in formal or advanced training and access to educational support personnel including tutors, counselors and social workers.

According to Corcoran (1995), reform efforts have raised expectations for all educators and students in educational institutions. As a result of reform initiatives, educators have been pressured to master new skills and responsibilities to change their teaching practice. They have been required to expand their content knowledge and hone their pedagogical skills. They have also been asked to increase collaboration with colleagues, develop expertise in analyzing proposed standards, and revisit curriculum plans to improve articulation and establish benchmarks for student performance. Providing opportunities to improve skills used to teach children has become the essence of professional development.

Stevens (1986) believed that, “the best way to help staff members change outdated practices, learn new skills, and function more productively was through school-based staff development” (p. 33). He further felt that an effective leader provided continuous feedback and support for appropriate practice and assisted in eliminating undesirable behavior.

According to Wood, Nicholson, and Findley (1979), many programs have not produced desired results due to the fact that teachers have not had an emotional connection or intellectual involvement in the educational activity. Staff development professionals have advocated for teacher choice in deciding on appropriate educational programs from a variety of proposals most needed or desired. When areas to be addressed have been overwhelmingly difficult to handle or unrealistic, teachers have often not had the required buy-in to benefit from the activity.

A school's characteristics have often been defined, in part, by the provision of ongoing in-service activities and professional development opportunities available for teachers. In order for teachers to master new teaching strategies, it has been essential that long-term developmental and supportive processes be implemented. Cook and Fine (1997) spoke about the necessity for teachers to participate in activities to change their teaching practice. McDiarmid (1995) expressed his displeasure with the fact that teachers often have not had the time to participate in professional development activities and the importance of administrators, parents, and the stake-holders in creating professional development opportunities for educators. He further made a connection between the necessity of teachers' attendance in professional development sessions and the availability of time. He said,

The changes teachers must make to meet the goals of reform entail much more than learning new techniques. They go to the core of what it means to teach. Because these changes are so momentous, most teachers will require considerable time to achieve them. (p. 2)

Fine and Raack (1994) stated that it was a shared responsibility of the individual and the organization to seek higher learning opportunities. Cook and Fine (1997)

considered professional development as events that must continue throughout the year rather than on a particular day during school hours. Unfortunately, finding time for professional development in schools has not been easy and often has not been supported by stakeholders. According to McDiarmid (1995),

Although reform has changed expectations for teachers, how the public and policymakers perceive teachers' work has not changed. They continue to think teachers are working only when they are with their students. As a result, there is little support for providing the time and resources teachers require for teachers to change their practice. (p. 2)

It has been recommended by some reformers that at least 20% of teachers' work time should be assigned for professional study and collaborative work. In the place of exclusive in-service days, the time should be linked to the daily demands of teaching rather than delivered during exclusive in-service days. Schools have had to be creative in allotting time for staff development while being efficient in the proper use of the time. Fine and Raack (1994) noted that "Technologies can support and broaden professional learning communities and help teachers make better use of their time. Through a range of technologies, e.g., the Internet and video- and audioconferencing, teachers can access both instructional resources and collegial networks" (pp. 5-6).

Purnell and Hill (1992) identified six general approaches to creating time for staff development: (a) Assign time outside the classroom during the school hours by assigning substitutes to allow teachers to attend workshops, conferences, and observe other classes; (b) use faculty meetings to refocus the purpose of the time commitment that is already in place; (c) adjust the master schedule of the school to fit in the staff development activity; (d) provide supplemental contracts and stipends for teachers to extend the hours of

participation; (e) promote teachers volunteerism by providing child care and space for teachers' conferences; (f) use technology to promote use of time more efficiently.

Raywid (1993) cited a number of examples for creating professional development time as well. The suggestions were to: (a) Utilize a part of the faculty, team, or department meetings for professional development; (b) lengthen the day for 20 minutes four days per week; (c) use an early release on the fifth day to make time for professional development, (d) provide common lunch, and (e) planning periods for teachers to facilitate collaboration.

### New Teacher Support

Respondents were asked to respond to 3 school characteristics centered on support for new teachers. The New Teacher Support factor, the 5<sup>th</sup> factor from the Charlotte advocates for Education (2004) study, emerged as a descriptor for these 3 school characteristics which addressed the extent to which administrators informally visited classrooms of new teachers, whether new teachers had different class sizes or work loads, and whether school administrators provided individual assistance to teachers enabling them to improve instruction and student learning.

Delgado (1999) discussed the importance of principals providing mentoring and assisting first year teachers to build skills and self-confidence. He expressed concern that first year teachers experienced depressing isolation as they no longer had the protection of student-teaching cohorts, supervising teachers, and university advisors. He believed

that principals needed to demonstrate sensitivity to this concern and provide a nurturing atmosphere for beginning teachers.

According to Merrow (1999), inadequate training often did not prepare the young teachers for the realities of classroom life. In Georgia, it was noted that school administrators assigned teachers to teach subjects regardless of whether they had expertise in the subject or not. Merrow related that at least 20% of the faculty he studied were teaching classes in subjects they had not really studied themselves. He captured the plight of many beginning teachers in the following quotation of one young teacher who left the Oakland High School:

Administrators give new teachers the hardest, most challenging classes that need the most preparation, so they have maybe four different classes to prepare everyday. The administrators expect that it is going to make them excited about teaching. It is just not conducive to retaining young, enthusiastic people. They get burnt out, and so they go to the suburb or they leave teaching completely. (p. 64)

In order to provide a supportive environment for the new teacher, the school administrator has been required to facilitate a smooth transition to the teaching profession. A formal induction program that is systematic and comprehensive has been linked to teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction (Daring-Hammond, 1997a). Induction can range from a short crash course before pre-planning focused on present policies, procedures, and expectations to a year-long initiative. The primary purpose of induction has typically been to orient beginning teachers to the school system without overloading them with massive amounts of information (Podsen, 2002). On the other hand, more comprehensive induction programs have focused on the development of the beginning teacher and have contained specific schedules of activities for the entire school year.

These programs, reinforced by a school administrator and mentor, have not only assisted teachers in meeting their immediate needs but have been used to “improve professional practice, develop a learning community, and orient new teachers to a long-term career goals” (p. 58).

Wong (2002) stressed the importance of induction as the best form of professional development for those new to the profession. He felt that “The best way to support, develop, and cultivate an attitude of lifelong learning in beginning teachers is through a new teacher induction program focused on teacher training, support, and retention” (p. 52). He further believed that successful induction programs offered systematic, administrator-supported training over 2 to 3 years. According to Wong, an ideal program called for components that consisted of effective teaching practices during in-service meetings, demonstrations by experts, and visiting other classrooms. It was not sufficient just to assign a mentor to call upon. Induction needed to include activities to train and support beginning teachers and to acculturate them to the mission and philosophy of their respective schools. He believed that teachers would remain in schools where they were successful, supported, and felt like a part of a team with a common goal.

Podsen (2002) cited literature on teacher retention where more than 20% of public school teachers left their positions within three years and almost 10% quit before their first year was over. She believed that the increasing teacher shortage would force schools to examine ways new teachers were being socialized into the profession. In addition to the planned orientation activities focused on survival for beginning teachers and seasoned teachers who were new to the school district, Podsen saw orientation activities as needing

to help establish and build professional connections. She further believed, “the culture of professional isolation must be attacked on all fronts if we are to keep and retain the teachers selected into the profession” (p. 70).

Class size has also played an important role in attracting and keeping new teachers in the profession. Achilles (2003) has stressed the importance of smaller class sizes in improving students’ academic achievement, improving discipline and behavior in and out of school, and providing incentives for teachers to remain in the teaching field.

Gordon (1991) has discussed various risk factors that confront beginning teachers. He found that novice teachers were often assigned the most difficult students and more course preparations. The second risk factor was related to unclear expectations for the new teacher. Although the faculty handbook cited formal expectations, there were numerous informal practices that were unique to a school’s culture. The third risk factor was the lack of instructional materials and resources. Unlike their more experienced colleagues, beginning teachers often were not able to access additional resources and found themselves relegated to bare classrooms equipped with inferior furniture. A fourth factor was, to some extent, a self-imposed isolation. Because beginners have feared a label of incompetence, they have often been afraid to admit their need for assistance. The final risk factor was related to depression caused by discrepant expectations and the realities of the job that caused a great deal of depression.

## Teacher Empowerment

In the present study, Teacher Empowerment served as the descriptor for 3 school characteristics that demonstrated participatory roles of teachers. Survey items elicited information as to whether teachers assisted in determining the content of in-service training, shared knowledge in mini-professional development sessions, and had a role in how the school's budget was spent.

Beginning in the 1980s, themes of teacher empowerment and professionalism, school-based management, and shared decision making began to dominate school reform initiatives. As school systems across the nation restructured their organizational features and activities, the need to develop a more collaborative approach became increasingly important. A number of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reform initiatives have relied heavily on collaborative principles (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 1993; O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997), and shared governance initiatives have been accompanied by endorsements of collaboration as a means of improving teaching and student achievement.

Increased teacher empowerment has been supported by the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, and the United Federation of Teachers (Blase & Blase, 2001). Restructuring schools for teacher empowerment has taken on high importance as educational leaders have explored ways of sharing power with teachers. According to Blase & Blase, "Educational leaders are being asked to surrender power and to share power *with* rather than holding power *over* teachers in the belief that this power sharing will release the great potential of teachers to effect the improvement of schools and student achievement" (p. 5).

Blase and Blase (2001) reported on a qualitative study that involved 285 teachers from 11 schools in regard to their perceptions of the characteristics of school principals that influenced teachers' sense of empowerment. The 11 schools (5 elementary, 3 middle, and 3 high) belonged to the League of Professional Schools. As charter members of the League, the 11 schools implemented shared governance structures during Fall, 1990. The objective of the League was to promote teacher collaboration and involvement in all the instructional and curricular decisions by establishing a democratic decision-making structure. The teachers responded to an open-ended questionnaire that produced detailed descriptions of empowerment strategies utilized by shared governance principals. Successful principals were described in the report as "those whose staffs had attained high levels of empowerment and participative decision making (shared governance)" (p. 19).

Researchers have agreed that teacher empowerment is not merely participation in decision-making; it has had the effect of elevating teachers as knowledgeable professionals. Literature reviewed indicated that in order to empower teachers, the principal must trust and respect teachers, support staff development, support teachers' decisions, and allow adequate time to develop collaborative relationships within the school (Blase & Blase, 2001; Blase & Kirby, 2000; Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Murphy & Beck, 1995; Reitzug, 1994; Summers & Johnson, 1996).

Blase and Blase (1997) suggested that prior to proceeding with the democratic process and establishing a culture of shared governance, school leaders in coalition with teachers needed to contemplate and answer questions about the following issues: (a)

reasons for shared decision making, (b) barriers to shared governance, (c) central administrative views regarding shared governance, (d) enhancement of teacher autonomy, (e) what decisions should be teacher responsibilities, and (f) ways in which students' personal and academic lives can be enhanced.

Reitzug (1994) conceptualized principal behavior into three major categories: support, facilitation, and revealing possibilities that contribute to teacher empowerment. According to Melenyzer (1990), behaviors such as possessing a vision, believing in teacher recognition, being visible, being decisive in supporting shared decision making, and demonstrating trust are some of the important elements of empowering leadership. Sergiovani (1994) professed that leaders who believed in teachers' increased professionalism not only shared power but also were able to "multiply" it.

Thornton and Mattocks (1999) agreed with numerous authors that, in order to accomplish systemic change and continuous improvement, it has become important to empower teachers. Teachers have been empowered through (a) participation in the development of goals, policies, and rules; (b) exercising professional judgment; (c) sharing authority and responsibility; and (d) working in an atmosphere of open communication. Principals who have sought to empower teachers have accepted the challenge by creating a positive climate and motivating teachers to improve continuously. Thornton and Mattocks have advocated abandoning traditional approaches to management in modern high schools. They have suggested that the principal of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must leave extrinsic motivation to the behaviorists and empower teachers through intrinsic factors.

These authors addressed the importance of school leaders encouraging spirit and culture in an environment where staff development and problem solving are routine, where teachers equipped with the ability and skills to make informed decisions create an atmosphere of superior student learning. Advocates of teacher empowerment have been careful to stress that input into the decisions that directly affect them should be encouraged for employees. Although the process could be time consuming and requires organization, the outcome has often been a stronger commitment to the desired outcome and a better understanding of the process. (Thornton & Mattocks, 1999).

Payzant and Gardner (1994) indicated that teachers, staff members, and parents must be a part of the decision making as to how the school should be organized, ways to improve teaching and learning, and the process of allocating resources. They cautioned against centrally made decisions without including all stakeholders in the decision making process.

According to Cunningham and Gresso (1993) and Sergiovanni (1994), to establish a culture of community, every individual must be trusted and valued. This culture accepts input from all stakeholders and facilitates a process of change. They felt that the structure of an organization need not be sacrificed to promote culture. They also thought that focusing on organizational structure alone blocked the nurturing process of change and progress in a cultural environment. According to them, adopting a participative style of management could invigorate an educational system and promote creativity, autonomy, and problem solving.

Goodlad (1984) suggested that initiating active teacher involvement in decision-making might fail due to lack of principals' leadership skills. Factors such as lack of focus on achievement, institutional barriers, limited authority, lack of information, knowledge, and rewards have been related to the failure of shared governance initiatives to produce gains in student achievement (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998; Murphy & Beck, 1995; Summers & Johnson, 1996). Blase and Blase (2001) suggested that teacher empowerment, shared governance, or participative decision making require educational leaders to be sure of the school's readiness, their own personal philosophy, and leadership behavior. Blase and Blase (2001), have expressed strong beliefs that democratic school leaders engage teachers in the knowledge, work, and decisions related to students. These leaders do not involve teachers in a pretense of false decision making under the guise of shared governance; rather, they involve the teachers in making decisions that influence school operations.

### Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a review of the literature and related research related to maintaining an adequate force of teachers in the United States. The nationwide shortage has been explored with particular emphasis on challenges experienced in Florida and the Orange County Public School District due to student enrollment growth and mandated class size legislation. Also reviewed were reasons for teacher attrition and the potential impact of a positive school environment in retaining teachers. The conceptual basis of this study centered on six school characteristics factors

comprising a school's environment. Literature and research related to the manner in which these factors could impact a school were also discussed. Chapter 3 summarizes the methodology and procedures used for data collection and analysis.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and procedures used to conduct the study. It contains five sections. The first section is a statement of the problem. The second section gives a description of the population. The research instrument is described in the third section. The data collection method and analysis of the data are displayed in the fourth and fifth sections. The fifth and final section contains the analysis of the data.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of currently employed high school teachers and administrators regarding the extent to which a positive school environment, comprised of six school characteristic factors, was present in their schools. Differences in teachers' perceptions based on selected personal and professional variables were also explored in order to determine which, if any, of the school characteristic factors influenced their desire to remain in the teaching profession and in their school.

#### Population

The population of this study consisted of 292 teachers with less than 4 years of teaching experience and 14 school administrators with more than 1 year of experience in 8 high schools in the Orange County Public School District, Orlando, Florida. The School Characteristics Survey for Teachers (Appendix A) and School Characteristics Survey for

Principals (Appendix B) were delivered to the teachers and the site administrators.

Principals and assistant principals were encouraged to participate in this study.

### Instrumentation

The instruments for this research were developed during the summer of 2004. The Charlotte Advocates of Education, North Carolina (2004), created the original survey instrument. The survey was revised by the researcher with permission of the authors (Appendix M) and permission was granted by the Orange County Public School System to explore the relationship between school culture and teacher retention (Appendix J). A pilot group consisting of 3 administrators and 3 high school teachers was formed to test the revised questionnaires. The Questionnaire Evaluation Checklist (Appendix C) was used by pilot group members to record suggestions. After incorporating suggestions from the pilot group, the instrument was prepared for distribution. The survey instruments contained 35 items for administrators and 36 items for teachers. Using a factor analysis, a total of 6 school characteristic factors were derived from survey items 1 through 25. The 6 factors were: (a) School Facility (b) Resources, (c) Collegial Environment, (d) Professional Development, (e) New Teacher Support, and (f) Teacher Empowerment. The results of the factor analysis are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1  
Factor Analysis

Item	Collegiality	Professional Development	Resources	New Teacher Support	Facility	Teacher Empowerment
4	.748					
21	.651					
6	.594					
24	.573					
2	.551				.418	
8	.539					
7	.432					
5		.645				
9		.815				
10		.745				
18		.628				
19			.864			
11			.695			
20			.646			
17			.468			
1				.645		
3				.731		
13				.688		
12				.655		
14					.727	
16			.468		.563	
15					.510	
22						.829
23						.805
25						.453

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

The School Facility factor (questions 14, 15, 16) focused on the provision of professional space, technology, assistance of school personnel, and access to school personnel. The Collegial Environment factor (questions 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 21, 24) addressed the time set aside to collaborate with experienced teachers, adequacy of time to grade

papers, attend parent conferences, attend school related activities, and have opportunities to visit other classrooms. The Resources factor (questions 11, 17, 19, 20) elicited information regarding administrative strategies used to provide orientation for teachers and respond to concerns regarding a well-maintained facility. The Staff Development factor (questions 5, 9, 10, 18) examined the administrator's provision for staff to attend workshops, conferences, and involvement in advanced training, as well as, accessibility to educational personnel: tutors, counselors, and social workers. The New Teacher Support factor (questions 1, 3, 12, 13) sought information regarding the reasonableness of class size, frequency of administrative visits, and administrative guidance to new teachers. The Teacher Empowerment factor (questions 22, 23, 25) was focused on teacher involvement with in-service education, school budget disbursement, and opportunities to share ideas in mini-professional development sessions.

Both the teacher and administrator survey instruments were based on a Likert-type scale. Respondents, in answering questions 1-25, were asked to select 1 of 6 choices: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Not Applicable). Questions 26-29 of the teacher survey inquired as to respondents' intentions to teach in the same school, and question 30 inquired about reasons for teachers planning to leave the school system. Questions 32-35 elicited demographic information, and question 36 asked about the teachers' overall satisfaction in their current school.

In the survey for administrators, questions 32-35 were used to gather demographic information regarding education, age, ethnicity, and gender of administrators. Also

addressed were length of administrative experience (question 26), length of stay at the current school (question 27), number of teachers the previous year (question 28), and number of departing teachers (question 29). Questions 31 and 32 probed for further information from administrators regarding reasons for teachers' departure from their current school.

### Reliability

In order to determine the instrument's reliability, an alpha scale analysis, was conducted on 25 of the survey items. The results of the analysis are displayed in Appendix L.

After compiling and modifying the survey items, the researcher factor analyzed the interrelationships (principal component with varimax rotation) among the items of the instrument. Factor analysis was used as a means of understanding the underlying structure of the data and to determine the derived factors to be used rather than the structure suggested by the original instrument. After the six factors were identified, an alpha scale reliability analysis was run for the items. The overall Alpha was .7865. The individual factor alphas were: School Facility (.7781), Collegial Environment (.7237), Professional Development (.7363), New Teacher Support (.7673), Resources (.7408), and Teacher Empowerment (.7761).

### Data Collection

In March, 2005, a letter was sent through electronic mail to each administrator explaining the purpose of the survey and seeking permission to personally administer the

survey to the teachers as well as the administrators. Of the eight schools, five school administrators permitted the direct delivery of the surveys, and three school administrators gave permission to send the surveys and cover letters through the Orange County courier system. On April 5, 2005, the School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers (Appendix A) along with a cover letter (Appendix E) and self-addressed envelope were delivered to 382 high school teachers from 8 high schools in Orange County. The surveys were color coded and numbered to facilitate the sorting of the returns. The initial return rate was 31.4 %, (n = 120) as of April 28, 2005.

On April 29, 2005 a second contact through electronic mail was sent to all the non-respondents (Appendix G). This contact resulted in an additional 68 (17.8%) returns, with a total return rate of 188 (49.2%) as of May 9, 2005. On May 10, 2005 the third contact letter (Appendix H) was sent to all the non-respondents. Phone calls were made to a random sample of the non-respondents and all the administrators were contacted to request assistance in increasing the return of the surveys by their faculties. This yielded an additional 52 (13.6%) responses. On May 16, 2005, a fourth contact (Appendix I) was made, and another set of survey questionnaires with cover letter and a self-addressed envelope were sent to the non-respondents through the school district's courier. After this contact, an additional 30 (10.3%) surveys were returned. The final and fifth contact (Appendix J) was made through electronic mail to all non-respondents on May 23, 2005. Randomly selected non-responding teachers were also contacted through a personalized electronic mail message. As of May 30, 2005 a final usable return rate of 76.4% (N = 292), was achieved.

The School Characteristics Survey for Administrators (Appendix B) along with a self-addressed envelope, cover letter (Appendix F), and the approval letter from the Orange County Accountability Director (Appendix J) were sent to 15 administrators from 8 high schools on April 12, 2005. The initial return was 60% (n = 9). The second and final contact was made to the non-respondents through electronic mail. The return rate was 93.3% (N = 14) as of May 30, 2005.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis was completed using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows*, Version 11.0 (2003). Descriptive statistics, frequencies, factor analysis, correlation, independent t test, ANOVA, and regression analysis were performed in analyzing the data gathered to answer each research question.

### Data Analyses for Research Questions 1 and 2

Research Questions 1 and 2 addressed the extent to which currently employed teachers (Research Question 1) and currently employed administrators (Research Question 2) agreed that selected school characteristics factors were present in their schools. Data for the analysis were derived from responses to the first 25 questions on the two surveys.

The school's environment was considered to be comprised of six school characteristics factors. These factors, as shown in Table 1, were: Collegial Environment (questions 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 21, 24), Professional Development (questions 9, 10, 18),

Resources (questions 11, 17, 19, 20), New Teacher Support (questions 1, 3, 12, 13), School Facility (questions 14, 15, 16), and Teacher Empowerment (questions 22, 23, 25).

Respondents were presented with a series of 25 items reflecting issues at their current school. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement by selecting among six choices where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree and N/A = not applicable. The presence of positive school characteristics factors were described using frequencies and percentages. The frequencies and percentages of the six choices were calculated to determine the high and low levels of agreement among teachers (Research Question 1) and administrators (Research Question 2) for each factor.

### Data Analysis for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was used to investigate possible differences, if any, between the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the presence of selected school characteristics factors in their schools. The results of the data analysis performed to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 permitted a comparison by factor for teachers and administrators. An independent t-test analysis was conducted in order to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the two groups regarding the presence of the six school characteristics factors.

#### Data Analysis for Research Question 4

In order to answer Research Question 4 as to the extent to which teachers' perceptions of school characteristics factors varied based on teacher (a) age; (b) gender; (c) education and (d) ethnicity, responses to teacher survey questions 32-34 were considered. Data on the teacher perceptions of school characteristics factors based on age (question 33), education (question 32), ethnicity (question 34) were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Differences in age were explored using five age categories (21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61+). Ethnicity categories were African American, Asian, Caucasian, Hispanic and Other. Respondents shared their education level by indicating their highest degree completed (Bachelor's, Master's, Specialist, and Doctoral). An independent t test was conducted using gender data (question 35) to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in perceptions of male and female teachers.

#### Data Analysis for Research Question 5

Research Question 5 was designed to determine the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics factors and their intention to remain in the same school. Teachers were asked (question 29) "Do you plan to teach in this school next year?" Response choices were "Yes," "No," or "Not sure." Regression of Variables was used to analyze this question.

## Data Analysis for Research Question 6

Research Question 6 focused on the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics factors and their intention to remain in the teaching profession. Teachers were queried as to the “number of years you plan to remain in teaching” (question 31) and were afforded an open response opportunity. A qualitative analysis was used in reviewing and summarizing their responses of perceptions of teachers as to their intentions to remain in the teaching field.

### Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology and procedures used to conduct the present study. To describe the most important school characteristics factors perceived by high school teachers and administrators, 25 questions were used. A factor analysis was conducted to distribute the 25 questions into six factors. The six factors consisted of (a) School Facility, (b) Collegial Environment, (c) Resources, (d) Staff Development, (e) New Teacher Support, and (f) Teacher Empowerment. Six research questions guided the research. Frequencies and percentages, independent t tests, analysis of variance and regression of variables were used in the data analysis. A qualitative analysis was used to present open ended responses from teachers.

The survey instrument was completed by 292 teachers and 14 administrators from 8 high schools of Orange County, Orlando, Florida. The final usable return rates were 76.4% (N = 292) for teachers and 93.3% (N = 14) for administrators. The analyses of the data for the six research questions are presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains a

summary of the findings, conclusions drawn based on the data analyses, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

This chapter provides the analysis and description of the data that were collected from the useable questionnaires of 292 teachers and 14 administrators in 8 public high schools. The first section addresses the description of respondents' characteristics. The description contains respondents' gender, age, ethnicity, highest level of education, years of experience as a teacher for teachers, and years of experience as an administrator for administrators.

Data related to the (a) teachers' and administrators' agreement regarding the presence of selected school characteristics factors; (b) the difference between the perceptions of the teachers and the administrators; (c) the variance of the perception based on teachers' age, gender, education, and ethnicity; (d) the relationship between the presence of school characteristics factors and teachers' intent to teach in the same school and remaining in the teaching profession were analyzed. Integral to the data analyses were 6 factors derived from 25 survey items comprising the school's characteristics.

The School Facility factor focused on the provision of professional space, technology, assistance of school personnel, and access to school personnel. The Collegial Environment factor addressed the time set aside to collaborate with experienced teachers, adequacy of time to grade papers, attend parent conferences, attend school related activities, and have opportunities to visit other classrooms. The Resources factor elicited

information regarding administrative strategies used to provide orientation for teachers and respond to concerns regarding a well-maintained facility. The Staff Development factor examined the administrator's provision for staff to attend workshops, conferences, and involvement in advanced training, as well as, accessibility to educational personnel: tutors, counselors, and social workers. The New Teacher Support factor sought information regarding the reasonableness of class size, frequency of administrative visits, and administrative guidance to new teachers. The Teacher Empowerment factor was focused on teacher involvement with in-service education, school budget disbursement, and opportunities to share ideas in mini-professional development sessions.

#### Characteristics of Respondents

There were 17 public high schools in the Orange County Public School District. The teacher and administrator samples were drawn from schools that had a principal who had been in the school for more than one year. Table 2 presents the frequencies and percentages for responding teachers and administrators and their respective schools. A total of eight schools met the criteria. The sample of teachers selected from these eight high schools consisted of those who had been teaching in the same school for less than four years. A total of 382 teachers and 15 administrators were selected to participate in this study. Using Dillman's 5-point contact (Appendixes D-I), an overall response rate of 76.4% (N = 292) for teachers and 93.3% (N = 14) for administrators was achieved.

Table 2  
 Frequencies and Percentages of Teachers (N = 292) and Administrators (N =14)

High Schools	Teachers		Administrators	
	n	%	n	%
School A	32	11.0	2	21.4
School B	26	8.9	2	14.3
School C	26	8.9	1	7.1
School D	11	3.8	1	7.1
School E	32	11.0	2	14.3
School F	81	27.4	2	14.3
School G	50	17.1	2	14.3
School H	34	11.6	2	14.3
Total	292	100.0	14	100.0

Table 3 contains demographic data for teacher respondents. Of the 262 responding teachers who stated their gender, 166 (63.4%) were female, and 96 (36.6%) were male. Only 2 (.7%) of the respondents were over 60 years of age; 40 (14.9%) were between 51 and 60 years of age; 24 (9%) were between 41 and 50 years old. Almost one fourth (64, 23.9%) were in the 31-40 age group, and slightly more than half (138, 51.5%) were between 31 and 40 years of age.

Table 3  
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 292)

Characteristics	Teachers		Administrators	
	n (268)	%	n (14)	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	166	63.4	2	14.3
Male	96	36.6	12	85.7
<b>Highest Degree</b>				
Bachelor's	166	61.9		
Master's	93	34.7	5	35.7
Specialist	4	1.5	5	35.7
Doctoral	5	1.9	4	28.6
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
African American	36	13.7	1	7.1
Asian	8	3.1	0	0.0
Caucasian	164	62.6	12	85.7
Hispanic	42	16.0	1	7.1
Other	12	4.6	0	0.0
<b>Age</b>				
21-30	138	51.5	0	0
31-40	64	23.9	6	42.9
41-50	24	9.0	8	57.1
51-60	40	14.9	0	0
61+	2	.7	0	0

Note. Not all respondents answered every item.

A total of 262 teacher respondents shared the following information as to their ethnicity: There were 164 (62.6%) Caucasians, 42 (16%)Hispanics, 36 (13.7%) African Americans , 8 (3.1%) Asians, and 12 (4.6%) Others. About 166 ( 61.9%) teachers had completed a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. An additional 93

(34.7%) held a master's degree. Only 4 (1.5%) of the teachers had completed specialist and 5 (1.9%) completed doctoral degrees.

Table 3 also contains demographic data for responding administrators. Of the 14 respondents, 12 (85.7%) were male and 2 (14.3%) were female. Five teachers (35.7%) held masters and 5 (35.7%) held specialist degrees. The remaining 4 (28.6%) had completed a doctoral degree. A total of 12 (86%) administrators who responded were Caucasians; only 1 (7.1%) indicated African American, and 1 (7.1%) was Hispanic. Of the 14 administrators, 6 (42.9%) were between 31 and 40 years of age. Eight (57.1%) were between 41 and 50 years of age.

Table 4 presents information related to the teacher and administrator respondents' total years of experience and years in their current school. All teachers had been in the classroom between 1 and 4 years. Slightly more than one-fourth (78, 26.7%) had 1 year of teaching experience, and 96 (32.9%) had 2 years of teaching experience. A total of 36 (12.3%) had 3 years experience and 82 (28.1%) had 4 years of teaching experience. Almost half (144, 49.3%) of the teachers indicated that this was their first year in their current school. An additional 104 (36%) were in their second year. A total of 20 (6.8%) and 24 (8.2%) teachers were in their third and fourth years in their current school.

Administrators had an average of 7 years of experience as school administrators. Of the 14 respondents, 3 (21.4%) had between 10-14 years of experience, 2 (14.3%) had only 2 years of experience. Almost half (6, 42.9%) had 5 years of experience, while 3 (21.4%) had 6 to 9 years of experience. Administrators were asked (question 27) about

the number of years they had been in their current school. The years varied from 2 to 6 years.

Table 4  
Teachers' (N = 292) and Administrators' (N = 14) Years of Experience

	Total Years of Experience		Years Experience in Current School	
	n	%	n	%
Teachers				
1 Year	78	26.7	144	49.3
2 Years	96	32.9	104	36.0
3 Years	36	12.3	20	6.8
4 Years	82	28.1	24	8.2
Total Teachers	292	100.0	292	100.0
Administrators				
2 Years	2	14.3	4	28.6
5 Years	6	42.9	5	35.7
6-9 Years	3	21.4	5	35.7
10-14 Years	3	21.4	0	0
Total Administrators	14	100.0	14	100.0

Table 5 displays the subjects taught by responding teachers. Of the 278 teachers who responded to the question about the subjects taught, one third (90, 32.4%) taught mathematics, 50 (18%) taught language arts, 40 (14.4%) taught science, and 38 (13.7%) taught social sciences. Lesser numbers of teachers included business education (12, 4.3%), physical education (6, 2.2%), exceptional student education (8, 2.9%) and art and music (8, 2.9%). A total of 26 (9.4%) teachers taught elective courses.

Table 5  
Subjects Taught by Responding Teachers (N = 292)

Subjects	n	%
Mathematics	90	32.4
Language Arts	50	18.0
Science	40	14.4
Social Sciences	38	13.7
Business Education	12	4.3
Physical Education	6	2.2
Art & Music	8	2.9
Exceptional Student Education	8	2.9
Electives	26	9.4
Total	278	100.0

Note. Not all respondents indicated subjects taught.

### Research Question 1

To what extent do currently employed teachers agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?

This question examined the perceptions of the sample group of teachers regarding the presence of six school characteristics factors in their respective schools. The instrument for teachers contained 36 questions. The first 25 survey items provided the data source to answer this research question. A factor analysis was performed for the responses generated by the 25 questions. Six factors emerged from the factor analysis that

provided the selected school characteristics factors for each school. The six factors were (a) School Facility; (b) Collegial Environment; (c) Resources; (d) Staff Development; (e) New Teacher Support; and (f) Teacher Empowerment. The frequencies and percentages for the six factors are reported in Table 6.

Table 6  
Teachers' Perceptions: School Characteristics (N = 292)

Factors (n)	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Facility (292)	94	32.2	146	50.0	46	15.8	4	1.4	2	.6
Collegial Environment (292)	8	2.7	68	23.3	142	48.6	66	22.6	8	2.8
Professional Development (292)	74	25.3	148	50.7	62	21.2	6	2.1	2	.7
New Teacher Support (292)	12	4.1	84	28.8	134	45.9	50	17.1	12	4.1
Resources (292)	74	25.3	142	48.6	64	21.9	12	4.2	0	0.0
Teacher Empowerment (290)	14	4.8	56	19.3	122	42.1	80	27.6	18	6.2

A total of 240 (82.2%) respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the school characteristics comprising the School Facility factor; an additional 46 (15.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 6 (2 %) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the school characteristics comprising this factor. For Collegial Environment, 76 (26%) teachers strongly agreed and agreed; 142 (48.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 74 (25.4%) respondents chose disagree or strongly disagree regarding the existence of positive school characteristics based on Collegial Environment.

As to the Professional Development factor, 222 teachers (76%) strongly agreed and agreed, indicating a robust in-service program and provision of workshops and conferences. In contrast, only 8 (2.8%) of the respondents did not agree on the provision of adequate Professional Development and 62 (21.2%) were somewhat neutral as they neither agreed nor disagreed.

In regard to New Teacher Support, 96 (32.9%) teachers chose strongly agree and agree. One hundred thirty-four (45.9%) teachers were unsure about the support provided them and chose neither agree nor disagree. A total of 62 (21.2%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that almost one quarter of the new teachers did not receive the support they felt they needed.

In the consideration of the Resources factor, there was high agreement with 216 (73.9%) of the teachers strongly agreeing and agreeing that schools were providing adequate amounts of material and human resources to facilitate teaching. Only 12 (4.2%) disagreed and 64 (21.9%) were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, regarding the provision of resources. For the sixth factor, Teacher Empowerment, 98 (33.8%) teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed and 122 (42.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed that their schools involved teachers in deciding the contents of in-service training, disbursement of school funds, and opportunities to present ideas in mini staff development sessions. Only 70 (24.1%) strongly agreed and agreed that their school culture empowered teachers adequately as described by the school characteristics making up this factor.

## Research Question 2

To what extent do currently employed administrators agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?

Descriptive statistical analysis was performed to determine the 14 administrators' perceptions regarding each of the six factors comprised of the selected school characteristics. Table 7 presents the frequencies and percentages for administrators for each of the six factors.

Table 7  
Administrator Perceptions: School Characteristics (N = 14)

Factors (n)	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Facility (12)	8	66.7	4	33.3	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Collegial Environment (14)	0	0.0	10	71.4	4	28.6	0	0	0	0
Professional Development (14)	4	28.6	10	71.4	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
New Teacher Support (14)	0	0.0	10	71.4	4	28.6	0	0	0	0
Resources (14)	6	42.9	8	57.1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Teacher Empowerment (12)	0	0.0	4	28.6	8	57.1	0	0	0	0

Note: Not all participants responded to all the questions.

Of the 12 administrators who expressed their views in regard to the factor, School Facility, 8 (66.7%) strongly agreed and 4 (33.3%) agreed their facilities were supportive of a positive school environment. For Collegial Environment, 10 (71.4%) of the administrators agreed and 4 (28.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed that teachers were provided adequate time to collaborate with experienced teachers, had avenues to express

concerns, were given opportunities to be recognized for a worthwhile performance, and were provided platforms to voice their opinions regarding student discipline and school procedures.

The third factor, Professional Development, represented the creation of goals and objectives for the teachers and the urgency in meeting them. It also included provision of attending conferences and workshops, being involved in formal advanced training, and having access to educational support personnel such as tutors, counselors, and social workers. Ten administrators agreed (71.4%) and 4 strongly agreed (28.6%) that their school provided adequate professional development opportunities.

Of the 14 administrators, 10 (71%) agreed and 4 (28.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed in regard to the presence of New Teacher Support. This implied that over two thirds of responding administrators felt that they were providing a reasonable class size for new teachers, were showing support by informal visits to the classrooms of new teachers, were differentiating class size based on teachers' experience, and afforded one-on-one guidance to new teachers.

The fifth factor, Resources, included school characteristics that addressed the occurrence of orientation prior to school opening, solving problems concerning facilities and resources to impart instruction to students, and maintaining a clean environment. Six (42.9%) administrators strongly agreed and 8 (57.1%) agreed that sufficient resources were available in their schools.

In regard to the sixth factor, Teacher Empowerment, 4 (28.6%) agreed and 8 (57.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed as to the presence of this factor in the school's

environment. This implied that only slightly more than one fourth of the administrators at these high schools perceived teachers as being empowered. More than half of the administrators neither agreed nor disagreed that teachers' input was valued in shaping contents of in-service activities, in linking teachers in budgetary decisions, and in empowering teachers to be presenters in staff development sessions.

### Research Question 3

What is the difference, if any, between the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the presence of selected school characteristics in their schools?

The responses of teachers and administrators to the 25 questions were used in determining the presence of six factors and the extent to which the factors were present in their schools. Using the six school factors, an independent t-test was performed to identify any statistically significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and administrators. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 8.

For the School Facility factor, there was no statistically significant difference (equal variances  $t = -2.016$ ,  $df = 302$ ,  $P = .05$ ) in the perception of teachers ( $\underline{M} = 4.08$ ) and perception of the administrators ( $\underline{M} = 4.5$ ). In the factor, Collegial Environment, there was a statistically significant difference (unequal variances  $t = -7.963$ ,  $df = 18.074$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in the perceptions of teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.00$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.95$ ). There was a statistically significant difference (unequal variances  $t = -3.243$ ,  $df = 17.215$ ,  $p < .01$ ) in the perceptions of teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.86$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 4.24$ ) for Professional Development .

Table 8  
Differences in Perceptions of School Characteristics: Teachers and Administrators

Factors	t value	df	Teacher <u>M</u>	Administrator <u>M</u>
Facility	- 2.016*	302.000	4.08	4.50
Collegial Environmentt	- 7.963**	18.074	3.00	3.95
Professional Development	- 3.243**	17.215	3.86	4.24
New Teacher Support	- 2.092*	304.000	2.98	3.46
Resources	- 4.868**	19.513	3.83	4.36
Teacher Empowerment	- 5.297**	28.664	2.92	3.39

Note : \* =  $p < .05$  \*\* =  $p < .01$

For New Teacher Support, the difference between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.98$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.46$ ) was statistically significant (equal variances  $t = - 2.092$ ,  $df = 304$ ,  $p < .05$ ). There was a statistically significant difference (unequal variances  $t = - 4.868$ ,  $df = 19.513$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between the perceptions of teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 4.36$ ) regarding the presence of Resources as a factor. Similarly, in Teacher Empowerment, there was a statistically significant difference (unequal variances  $t = - 5.297$ ,  $28.664$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.39$ ). Overall, there was a statistically significant difference in the perception of teachers and administrators regarding the presence of the six school characteristics factors in their schools.

#### Research Question 4

To what extent do teacher perceptions of selected school characteristics vary based on teachers' (a) age; (b) gender; (c) education and (d) ethnicity?

The perceptions of teachers regarding the selected school characteristics factors based on gender are displayed in Table 9. An independent t test was performed to establish a correlation between male and female teachers. No statistically significant differences in the perceptions of male and female teachers were identified for any factor with the exception of Collegial Environment.

Table 9  
Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Gender

Factors	t value	df	Teachers	
			Male <u>M</u>	Female <u>M</u>
Facility	.315	240	4.08	4.06
Collegial Environment	2.420*	248	3.18	2.95
Professional Development	.800	260	3.90	3.80
New Teacher Support	.487	240	3.00	2.94
Resources	-.100	221	3.75	3.85
Teacher Empowerment	-.229	260	2.87	2.90

Note: \* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$

There was no statistically significant difference (unequal variances  $t = .315$ ,  $df = 240$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in regard to School Facility between males ( $\underline{M} = 4.08$ ) and females ( $\underline{M} = 4.06$ ). For Professional Development, no statistically significant difference was identified (equal variances  $t = .8$ ,  $df = 260$ ,  $p > .05$ ) between male ( $\underline{M} = 3.90$ ) and female teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.80$ ). There was no significant difference (unequal variances  $t = .487$ ,  $df = 240$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of male ( $\underline{M} = 3.0$ ) and female teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.94$ ) for New Teacher Support. The same was true for Resources and Teacher Empowerment where there was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers. There was, however, a significant difference (unequal variances  $t = 2.42$ ,  $df = 248$ ,  $p < .05$ ) in the means of male ( $\underline{M} = 3.17$ ) and female teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.95$ ) regarding their perceptions of the Collegial Environment. Both male and female teachers were in agreement as to the existence of all factors except for Collegial Environment in the school.

Table 10 displays the results of the analysis which sought to determine the differences in teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics factors based on their highest degree (bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral) completed. There was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(3,141)} = .770$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of teachers for the School Facility factor. Teachers with bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 4.03$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 4.0$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 4.5$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 4.38$ ) degrees did not differ significantly in their perceptions regarding the School Facility factor. School Facility accounted for only 1.6% of the variance in the scores of the teachers' perception. The occurrence of Collegial Environment did not vary based on the teachers' education. Only .7% of the

variances were reported for Collegial Environment based on education ( $F_{(3,141)} = .349$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and showed no statistically significant difference. The groups with bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 3.08$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 3.00$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 3.02$ ) degrees did not differ significantly regarding the Collegial Environment factor.

Table 10  
Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Education Degree

Factors	F	df	Eta squared	B.A. <u>M</u>	Masters <u>M</u>	Ed.S. <u>M</u>	Ed.D/ Ph.D <u>M</u>
Facility	.770	3,141	.016	4.03	4.00	4.50	4.38
Collegial Environment	.349	3,141	.007	2.92	3.08	3.00	3.02
Professional Development	.422	3,141	.009	3.89	3.79	4.12	4.08
New Teacher Support	.151	3,141	.003	2.93	2.93	3.13	3.17
Resources	.345	3,141	.007	3.77	3.84	4.25	3.96
Teacher Empowerment	1.800	3,141	.037	2.98	2.79	3.83	2.33

Note : \* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$

The perceptions of teachers in regard to the Professional Development factor did not differ significantly based on level of education. Only .9% of the variances were explained for the difference in perception for teachers with a bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 3.89$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 3.79$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 4.12$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 4.08$ ) degrees, and there was not a statistically significant difference observed ( $F_{(3,141)} = .422$ ,  $p > .05$ ) between groups.

Also, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(3,141)} = .151, p > .05$ ) in the perception of teachers regarding the factor, New Teacher Support, between groups with a bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 2.93$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 2.93$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 3.13$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 3.17$ ) degrees. The same was true for the Resources factor. There was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(3, 141)} = .345, p > .05$ ) between groups with bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 3.77$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 3.84$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 4.25$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 3.96$ ) degrees. For the Teacher Empowerment factor, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(3,141)} = 1.8, p > .05$ ) in the perceptions between groups with a bachelor's ( $\underline{M} = 2.98$ ), master's ( $\underline{M} = 2.79$ ), specialist ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ), and doctoral ( $\underline{M} = 2.33$ ) degrees. For New Teacher Support, only .3% of the variance was explained based on education. For Resources, education explained only .7% of the variances, and 3.7% of the variances could be attributed to Teacher Empowerment based on education.

Differences in teachers' perceptions regarding the six factors based on ethnicity are presented in Table 11. There was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of teachers regarding Professional Development and New Teacher Support. For Professional Development, the difference in means for the five groups varied between African Americans ( $\underline{M} = 3.90$ ), Caucasians ( $\underline{M} = 3.75$ ), Hispanics ( $\underline{M} = 4.13$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 3.54$ ). There was a statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = 3.08, p < .05$ ) between the perceptions of various ethnic groups. There was a statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = 1.11, p < .01$ ) in the perception of the ethnic groups regarding the New Teacher Support where African Americans ( $\underline{M} = 3.1$ ), Asians ( $\underline{M} = 2.31$ ), Caucasians ( $\underline{M} = 2.90$ ), Hispanics ( $\underline{M} = 3.32$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 2.54$ ) groups

differed in their opinions. When ethnicity was considered, 6% of the variances in New Teacher Support were explained along with 4.6% of the variances for Professional Development.

Table 11  
Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Ethnicity

Factors	F	df	Eta squared	African American <u>M</u>	Asian <u>M</u>	Caucasian <u>M</u>	Hispanic <u>M</u>	Other <u>M</u>
Facility	1.520	4,257	.023	4.20	3.75	4.03	4.12	3.72
Collegial Environment	1.440	4,257	.022	3.03	2.78	3.07	3.07	2.54
Professional Development	3.080 *	4,257	.046	3.90	4.00	3.75	4.13	3.54
New Teacher Support	1.110 **	4,257	.060	3.10	2.31	2.90	3.32	2.54
Resources	.663	4,257	.010	3.7	3.88	3.83	3.84	3.50
Teacher Empowerment	.702	4,257	.011	2.98	3.08	2.83	3.04	2.72

Note: \* =  $p < .05$  \*\* =  $p < .01$

For the School Facility factor, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = 1.52, p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of African American ( $\underline{M} = 4.20$ ), Asian ( $\underline{M} = 3.75$ ), Caucasian ( $\underline{M} = 4.03$ ), Hispanic ( $\underline{M} = 4.12$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 3.72$ ) groups. For the factor School Facility, only 2.3% of the variance could be explained by the ethnicity. For Collegial Environment, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = 1.44, p > .05$ ) in the perception of this factor between African American ( $\underline{M} = 3.03$ ), Asian ( $\underline{M} = 2.78$ ), Caucasian ( $\underline{M} = 3.07$ ), Hispanic ( $\underline{M} = 3.07$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 2.54$ ) groups. Only 2.2% of the variance could be explained for this factor based on the ethnicity. For

Resources, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = .663, p > .05$ ) in the perception of African American ( $\underline{M} = 3.88$ ), Asian ( $\underline{M} = 3.88$ ), Caucasian ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ), Hispanic ( $\underline{M} = 3.84$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 3.5$ ) groups. Based on ethnicity, this factor could explain only 1% of the variance. For Teacher Empowerment, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,257)} = .702, p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of African American ( $\underline{M} = 2.98$ ), Asian ( $\underline{M} = 3.08$ ), Caucasians ( $\underline{M} = 2.83$ ), Hispanic ( $\underline{M} = 3.04$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 2.72$ ) groups. Only 1.1% of this factor could be explained by the difference in ethnicity.

Table 12 presents the analysis of teachers' perceptions of the selected school characteristics factors when age was considered. For School Facility, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = .540, p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of teachers in various age groups: 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 4.12$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 4.06$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 4.02$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.93$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 4.0$ ). Only .8% of the variances were explained by age.

For the Collegial Environment factor, there was a statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = 3.783, p < .01$ ) when age was considered for teachers 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 2.95$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 3.38$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.20$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 1.66$ ). About 5.4% of the variance was explained by the age of the teachers in determining their perceptions of the Collegial Environment factor.

The Professional Development factor's analysis revealed there was a statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = 3.307, p < .05$ ) in the perceptions of teachers 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 3.91$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 3.75$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 3.97$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 2.25$ ). The eta squared of .048 explained 4.8% of the variances based on teachers' age in regard to their perceptions of Professional Development in their schools.

Table 12  
Differences in Teachers' Perceptions of School Characteristics by Age

Factors	F	df	Eta squared	Age Groups				
				21-30 <u>M</u>	31-40 <u>M</u>	41-50 <u>M</u>	51-60 <u>M</u>	61+ <u>M</u>
Facility	.540	4,263	.008	4.12	4.06	4.02	3.93	4.0
Collegial Environment	3.783 **	4,263	.054	2.95	2.92	3.38	3.20	1.66
Professional Development	3.307 *	4,263	.048	3.91	3.75	3.97	3.83	2.25
New Teacher Support	.671	4,263	.010	2.92	2.95	3.17	3.10	2.75
Resources	1.920	4,263	.028	3.90	3.67	4.00	3.73	3.00
Teacher Empowerment	1.824	4,263	.027	3.04	2.79	2.77	2.70	2.33

Note : \* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$

For the New Teacher Support factor, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = .671$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of teachers 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 2.95$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 3.17$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.10$ ), and age 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 2.75$ ). Only .1% of the variance for this factor was explained. For Resources, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = 1.92$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of school characteristics between teachers who were 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 3.9$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 3.67$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 4.0$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.73$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 3.0$ ) years of age. Only 2.8% of the variances in the perceptions regarding Resources were explained, based on age. For the sixth factor, Teacher Empowerment, there was no statistically significant difference ( $F_{(4,263)} = 1.824$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in the perceptions of teachers 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 3.04$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 2.79$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} =$

2.77), 51-60 ( $M = 2.70$ ), and 61+ ( $M = 2.33$ ). When age was considered, only 2.7% of the variances in teachers' perceptions were explained by the Teacher Empowerment factor.

#### Research Question 5

What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the same school?

Teachers were asked to indicate their intentions to continue teaching in their same school the following year (question 29). They were called on to respond “Yes,” “No,” or “Not sure” when asked, “Do you plan to teach in this school next year?” Table 13 displays information regarding teachers' intentions. Of the 276 who responded, a total of 188 (68.1%) responded affirmatively. In much smaller numbers, 42 (15.2%) teachers indicated they would not return and 46 (16.7%) teachers were not sure.

Teachers who indicated they did not intend to return or were undecided (question 30) shared their reason(s) for their intended departure. Table 14 presents the frequencies and percentages for the reasons, which were often multiple, provided by teachers in explaining their planned departures. Reasons most frequently cited for non-returning teachers were: Fourteen (10%) teachers cited dislike for assigned duties; 14 (10.2%) expressed job related stress; 13 (9.5%) mentioned lack of opportunity; 11 (8%) for family reasons; and 10 (7.3%) for relocation.

Table 13  
 Teachers' Intention to Teach Next Year (n = 276)

Intentions	n	%
Yes	188	68.1
No	42	15.2
Not sure	46	16.7
Total	276	100.00

Table 14  
 Not-returning Teachers' Reasons for Departure ( N = 292)

Reasons	n	%
Dislike for assigned duties	14	10.2
Job related stress	13	9.5
Lack of opportunity	12	8.8
Family reasons	11	8.0
Relocation	10	7.3
Salary	9	6.6
End of temporary contract	9	6.6
Retirement	8	5.8
Inadequate benefits	8	5.8
Dissatisfaction with supervisor	7	5.1
Resignation due to involuntary termination	6	4.4
Not a voluntary separation	6	4.4
Continuing education	2	.0
Other	22	16.1
Total	137	100.0

Note. Not all respondents provided reasons. Some respondents offered multiple responses

Research Question 5 also sought to predict the intention of the teachers to continue in their same school based on the six school characteristics factors using a regression analysis. For the prediction, the 46 teachers who chose “not sure” were

eliminated from the analysis. The codes used were Yes = 1 and No = 2. The analysis indicated that the presence of the six school characteristics factors was a statistically significant predictor of teachers' intention to remain in their school for the following year ( $F_{(6,223)} = 7.51, p < .01$ ).

A regression analysis was performed to predict the intention of teachers to return to their same school (question 29). Linear regression was used to model the value of a dependent scale variable based on its linear relationship to all the six predictors. In the analysis,  $R (.410)$  represented the correlation between the observed and predicated values of the dependent variable "Do you plan to teach in this school next year?"

The coefficients of the regression line, revealed that the intention to remain in the school is equal to  $2.061 - .163 * \text{PROFDEV (Professional Development)} - .083 * \text{NTS (New Teacher Support)}$ . The  $t$  statistics are also helpful in determining the significant importance of each variable in the model. For the  $t$  values to be useful, they should be below  $-2$  or above  $+2$ . For this analysis, the  $t$  value for the two significant and useful factors in the prediction were  $-4.687$  (Professional Development) and  $-2.646$  (New Teacher Support).

The regression analysis predicted that of the six factors, Professional Development and New Teacher Support were the statistically significant predictors of teachers' intent to continue teaching in the same school the following year. There was no statistically significant relationship between the other four factors (School Facility, Resources, Collegial Environment, and Teacher Empowerment) and the variable "intention to remain in the same school".

### Research Question 6

What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the teaching profession?

Research Question 6 queried teachers (question 31) about their longer range intentions. They were asked, in an open ended question, to respond as to the number of years they planned to remain in teaching. Table 15 displays the responses from the 214 teachers who responded to this question. On the average, teachers wanted to remain in the teaching profession for 15 years. Of the 214 respondents, 58 (27%) teachers indicated they intended to teach from 0-5 years. A total of 42 (19.6%) teachers indicated they anticipated teaching between 6 and 10 years, and 64 (30%) planned on teaching 11-25 years. Another sizable group of 50 (23.4%) teachers expressed their intent to remain in teaching for 26-35 years. This indicated a wide variability in teachers' intentions to remain in the teaching profession.

Teachers were also requested to express their overall level of satisfaction with their current school by indicating a percentage ranging from 0% to 100%. These data are displayed in Table 16. A total of 252 teachers responded, and 20 (7.9%) teachers indicated they were 100% satisfied. The highest satisfaction frequencies and percentages were observed between 70% and 90% with 170 (67.5%) of the teachers indicating that their levels of satisfaction fell within this range.

Table 15  
 Teachers' Intention to Remain in the Teaching Profession (n = 214)

Expected Years to Teach	n	%
0-5 Years	58	27.0
6-10 Years	42	19.6
11-25 Years	64	30.0
26-35 Years	50	23.4
Total	214	100.0

Table 16  
 Teachers' Overall Satisfaction with their Current School (n = 252)

Satisfaction Percentage	n	%
0%	2	.8
20%	6	2.4
30%	16	6.3
40%	14	5.6
50%	20	7.9
60%	2	.8
70%	42	16.7
75%	2	.8
80%	70	27.8
90%	56	22.2
95%	2	.8
100%	20	7.9
Total	252	100.0

Respondents were also afforded the opportunity to express their thoughts, concerns, and perceptions regarding their school. Teachers related their dissatisfaction to multiple reasons. Cited were lack of support from the administration, inadequate resources like copy machines and other supplies, unsatisfactory facility condition due to

renovation, pressure from the administration to adjust the curriculum to cover the standardized test, and poor discipline. One female, history teacher wrote,

I love my school because I am able to teach the subject I want and I love my students. I do not think my school has a good administration team. I also don't think we get near enough time to call parents, grade papers, or other after school necessities. I think we need to hold teachers more accountable for what they are teaching. We also need to take attendance out of their hands and find a better way to deal with truancy.

Another male science teacher wrote, "My compensation and benefits are not enough for me to be the sole income earner for my family." Numerous teachers expressed their displeasure in their current school with the lack of opportunities for advancement, no consistency in discipline procedures, and absence of any acknowledgement of their hard work. Another respondent wrote,

Administration need to do more "little" things to help keep morale up. Perhaps a fundraiser to raise money and work on morale. The happier the people are-- better they work. Maybe administration can have a pancake breakfast-- anything they can do to be more visible. We desperately need to have a day during pre-planning to review procedures. Too much is left untold and we have to learn the hard way.

Some inexperienced teachers articulated their views regarding the provision of training to deal with common classroom practices. Another female language arts teacher wrote,

By December of my first year, I was ready to quit. I felt I had been thrown into things too quickly and was totally overwhelmed. I stuck it out, taught again this year and will again next year but do not plan to return the following year.

Most new teachers were very dissatisfied with the administration for not providing them adequate resources such as mentors and proper training to handle tough students. They expressed their frustration with lack of guidance regarding procedures to handle behavior problems. At least seven teachers wrote about the need for stricter rules

regarding school discipline and narrated their views regarding back-up assistance from administrators. One female science teacher wrote, "I find that behavior problems are the greatest problem in the classroom of 1<sup>st</sup> year teachers. If you ask for help you will get help 50% of the time, that's if you ask!" Another female social studies teacher felt that there was good support from grade level administrators but very little support from the Principal. Most teachers reinforced previously stated reasons for not continuing as being related to stress and being over worked.

Having a clean school and having a set standard was another concern of teachers. One female ESE teacher wrote, "A school should be clean and run by the book as far as dress code and student behavior. Students must be aware of the standards and be held to that (those) standards." Teachers wanted to take part in the decision making process and needed to be heard. Another male technology teacher wrote, "I submitted a number of improvement recommendations with my PDP [Professional Development Plan] in April, 05, but I have not and don't expect to receive any feedback or discussion on them at this school."

The plight of first year teachers was very apparent in their responses regarding lack of support from the administration. One female geometry teacher wrote,

My personal opinion is that first year teachers at my school are given tremendous loads of classes/work. Not all but some Blacks in particular. I personally was about [able] to handle it, yet it took an enormous amount of organization and personal time.

As had been the trend in Florida schools, there were numerous teachers who were hired from business and industry in order to deal with the large demand for teachers.

Another Hispanic female science teacher expressed her frustration,

My 1st year was absolutely terrible. The school hired me and then just left me. I have no education degree so it was a huge learning experiment. I had to break everyone's arms to help me. As a 2nd year teacher I've learned that NO ONE will help you. No wonder teachers quit. Also, my class load was insane this year. At the beginning of school year it was 36 per class, now it is 30.

A similar sentiment was expressed by an exceptional education teacher. This teacher said, "There is not enough support for new teachers. ESE department is grossly underpaid and overworked."

Another Caucasian male mathematics teacher who had been teaching for one year cited social isolation as another cause of his desire to quit. He wrote,

The amount of work (50-70 hours a week) and the level of stress led to my decision to leave within a year. One factor that is not commonly discussed is social isolation. I rarely saw other teachers and this has been a very lonely year for me. Increased social interaction would have definitely increased my job enjoyment.

Another female geography teacher who has been teaching for 2 years felt that teachers were ill-prepared to deal with stress and job related trauma with which they must deal. She wrote, "The hours we work (at least 60 hours a week), the disrespect we get (from students, administration, and parents), and the discipline problems faced overwhelm many new teachers."

Lack of benefits and advancement were cited multiple times by teachers. One young social studies teacher, a Hispanic male, wrote, "Teaching is a great profession, but I feel that the dedication required and the responsibility we have are not up to par with our pay and advancement opportunities." One male mathematics teacher used the space provided to formulate his own question as to whether he would recommend teaching as a career to his own children. His answer was a negative one.

One female science teacher of two years wrote about the negative influence of parents on the school system. She felt that her school used unethical procedures to adjust students' grades in order to appease parents. She wrote,

I am, unfortunately, disgusted with the Florida education system. Parents at our school have more say in the decisions about students than teachers do. There are unethical and immoral things that go on here (i. e, changing grades to allow students to pass) that make me embarrassed and angry to be a part of the teaching profession at this school. I don't know if it's other schools too, but our school has lost sight of doing what's important for and in the best interest of the kids. It's all about looking good in the community at our school. Sickening!

Another reason for discontent was that the teachers did not feel they were fully involved in decisions regarding the curriculum. Some teachers expressed feelings that the biggest problem that teachers face in Florida had not originated in the schools but rather with the school board and the federal government. One male English teacher considered the No Child Left Behind legislation to be in need of reform so as to meet the needs of ESOL (English Speakers of Other Language) students. He felt that students were being forced by the federal government to pass a state comprehensive examination when they could barely speak English. He also spoke to discipline issues in citing a need to eliminate student trouble makers who deprive other students from getting an education.

### Summary

This chapter consisted of the analysis of data obtained from surveys of teachers and administrators in eight public high schools in central Florida. The characteristics of the respondents were presented and used in examining differences discovered among the various groups by age, gender, ethnicity, highest level of education, and length of

experience as teachers and administrators. The results of the statistical analysis for five research questions were reported. The sixth research question called for a qualitative review of open ended comments and was structured to enrich the quantitative results already presented regarding the perceptions of the teachers as to the presence of the selected school characteristics factors in their schools.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the findings, conclusions drawn by the researcher based on the findings as well as related research. Implications for practice and recommendations for further research are also presented.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Problem Statement

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of currently employed high school teachers and administrators regarding the extent to which a positive school environment, comprised of six school characteristic factors, was present in their schools. Differences in teachers' perceptions, based on selected personal and professional variables, were also explored in order to determine which, if any, of the school characteristic factors influenced their desire to remain in the teaching profession and in their school.

#### Methodology

##### Population and Data Collection

The population of this study consisted of teachers with less than 4 years of teaching experience and school administrators with more than 1 year of experience in 8 high schools in the Orange County Public School District, Orlando, Florida. A total of 292 teachers and 14 administrators in 8 high schools in the Orange County Public School district participated in the study for a 76.4% usable return from teachers and 93.3% from administrators. Data were collected during spring of 2005.

## Instrumentation

The School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers, consisted of 36 questions that included 25 questions for assessing the school's characteristics and 11 additional questions which provided demographic information. The 25 questions addressed school characteristics and were configured into 6 factors (School Facility, Collegial Environment, Resources, Professional Development, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment) that related to the research questions. The School Facility factor focused on the provision of professional space, technology, assistance of school personnel, and access to school personnel. The Collegial Environment factor addressed the time set aside to collaborate with experienced teachers, adequacy of time to grade papers, attend parent conferences, attend school related activities, and have opportunities to visit other classrooms. The Resources factor elicited information regarding administrative strategies used to provide orientation for teachers and respond to concerns regarding a well-maintained facility. The Staff Development factor examined the administrator's provision for staff to attend workshops, conferences, and involvement in advanced training, as well as, accessibility to educational personnel: tutors, counselors, and social workers. The New Teacher Support factor sought information regarding the reasonableness of class size, frequency of administrative visits, and administrative guidance to new teachers. The Teacher Empowerment factor was focused on teacher involvement with in-service education, school budget disbursement, and opportunities to share ideas in mini-professional development sessions. The School Characteristics

Survey for Administrators contained the same 25 questions along with 10 questions requesting demographic information.

### Summary of Findings

Six research questions guided this study. They are discussed and summarized as follows:

#### Research Question 1

To what extent do currently employed teachers agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?

In order to determine the extent to which currently employed teachers agreed that the selected school characteristics were present in their schools, they were asked to respond to questions regarding each of the 6 factors. Teachers were in agreement regarding the presence of the School Facility factor. About 240 (82.2%) teachers agreed or strongly agreed concerning the availability of adequate professional space; technology such as computers, projectors; and opportunities to communicate effectively with the school personnel through fax and e-mail. Only 6 (2%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the opportunity to benefit from these facilities in their school. Approximately 46 (15.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed indicating that teachers did not feel strongly either positively or negatively in this regard.

In regard to the Resources factor, 216 (73.9%) teachers agreed to their presence in their schools; however, 64 (21.9%) teachers were neutral as to the presence of adequate resources, and 12 (4.2%) teachers disagreed with the presence of adequate resources as

indicated by such characteristics as having a well maintained school ground, and having an appropriate setting to provide instruction.

The presence of a Collegial Environment within their schools was noted by 76 (26%) teachers. About 74 (25.4%) responding teachers assessed this factor as totally absent. This indicated that they did not feel they had avenues to express their concerns nor did they feel they were recognized for their worthwhile efforts. They also felt they did not have influence in implementing policies for student discipline and were not necessarily provided with time to collaborate with experienced teachers and attend school related activities. One hundred forty two (48.6%) teachers were not fully convinced about the presence of a Collegial Environment as evidenced by responses neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Professional Development was present in the views of 222 (76%) teachers. Only 8 (2.8%) teachers disagreed regarding the availability of opportunities to attend workshops and conferences, get encouragement to receive formal advanced training, and follow a guided and objective oriented goal. Sixty-two (21.2%) teachers remained neutral as to the presence of professional development opportunities.

Only 96 (32.9%) teachers felt strongly about the presence of New Teacher Support where teachers received tailored instructional guidelines from the administration, had a lower class size than that of the experienced teachers, and had the advantage of the informal presence of the school administrator. A total of 134 (45.9%) teachers neither agreed nor disagreed indicating that they were uncertain as to whether new teachers

received all the support they needed. An additional 62 (21.2%) teachers responded negatively regarding the presence of support for new teachers.

The sixth factor, Teacher Empowerment, related to elements associated with teacher input and involvement regarding student discipline, school budget, and sharing knowledge in professional development sessions. Only 70 (24.1%) teachers agreed as to the occurrence of this factor. Also, 122 (42.1%) teachers remained impartial to this issue which could indicate that they were either not aware of this factor or it was completely absent in their school. Approximately 98 (33.8%) teachers felt that there was no provision to empower the teachers to make decisions regarding the school budget, student discipline procedures, or to be allowed to present views in staff development sessions.

In summary, analysis of teacher responses indicated that teachers were confident regarding the presence of the School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development factors in their schools. The responses of more than 30% of the teachers indicated little confidence in the presence of a Collegial Environment, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment.

## Research Question 2

To what extent do currently employed administrators agree that selected school characteristics are present in their schools?

Administrators (14) were also queried as to the presence of the six school characteristics factors in their schools. Their questions corresponded with the teachers' questions regarding the factors, School Facility, Resources, Collegial Environment, Professional Development, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment. A total of

12 (100%) responding administrators strongly agreed or agreed that they were providing adequate School Facilities to their teachers. A total of 10 (71.4%) administrators were in agreement and 4 (28.6%) expressed neutrality pertaining to the provisions for a positive Collegial Environment.

The entire population of administrators (14) strongly agreed or agreed that they provided adequate Professional Development opportunities for teachers. Regarding New Teacher Support, 10 (71.4%) administrators agreed and 4 (28.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed as to the adequacy of providing for new teachers. All 14 (100%) of the administrators agreed that teachers were provided with adequate Resources; however, 4 (28.6%) administrators agreed while 8(57.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed that Teacher Empowerment was a factor contributing positively to their school's environment.

Based on their responses, it would appear that administrators perceived that they were providing adequate support for teachers in regard to the School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development. The presence of factors such as New Teacher Support, Collegial Atmosphere, and Teacher Empowerment was not as apparent as the other three factors.

### Research Question 3

What is the difference, if any, between the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding the presence of selected school characteristics in their schools?

An Independent t-test procedure was conducted to compare the means for the two groups of teachers and administrators. If the significance value for the Levene test was high (greater than 0.05), the results assumed equal variances for both groups. If the

significance value for the Levene test was low, the results did not assume equal variances for both groups of teachers and administrators. A low significance value for the t test (less than 0.05) indicated that there was a significant difference between the two group means.

The difference between the perceptions of teachers and administrators varied significantly for all factors except School Facility. The School Facility factor included questions that focused on teachers' receiving adequate space to work productively, having access to technology, and ability to effectively communicate through the use of fax and e-mail. The data revealed that teachers and administrators were in agreement regarding this factor.

There was a substantial discrepancy between the teachers' and the administrators' perceptions in the area of Collegial Environment with means differing by almost a point between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.00$ ) and the administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.95$ ). The various facets that defined collegiality in the schools included assigning ample opportunity to collaborate with experienced teachers, being rewarded for effectively carrying out the responsibilities, having a platform for grievances or concerns, and being empowered to influence discipline and budgetary decisions. In this area, according to the data, there was disagreement between teachers and administrators. The same was true for the remaining three factors where the perceptions of teachers were far different from those of administrators. There was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.86$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 4.24$ ) in relation to Professional Development. The difference in perception between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.98$ ) and

administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.46$ ) for New Teacher Support varied by .48 points. Similarly, there was a difference in the perception regarding Resources between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 4.36$ ). The difference was significant for Teacher Empowerment between teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ) and administrators ( $\underline{M} = 3.39$ ). Overall, and based on the data analyzed, administrators, more than teachers, were observed to have a higher level of confidence regarding the presence of positive school characteristics factors in the schools.

#### Research Question 4

To what extent do teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics vary based on teacher's (a) age; (b) gender; (c) education and (d) ethnicity?

The relationship between teacher perceptions of selected school characteristics and gender was analyzed using the independent t-test procedure; and perceptions based on age, education, and ethnicity were analyzed using the analysis of variance.

In the case of gender, there was no significance in perceptions for five of the six factors. Perceptions of male teachers ( $\underline{M} = 3.18$ ) and female teachers ( $\underline{M} = 2.95$ ) varied slightly regarding the collegiality aspect of the schools. The male teachers had a higher opinion of the school's Collegial Environment than did the female teachers. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the male teachers and female teachers regarding the perception of School Facility, Professional Development, New Teacher Support, Resources, and Teacher Empowerment.

Based on the level of education, there was no statistically significant difference in how teachers perceived the selected school characteristics. Although the mean for each group differed slightly, it was not enough to be significant. Based on ethnicity, there were

statistically significant differences for Professional Development and New Teacher support. The perceptions of the Hispanics ( $\underline{M} = 4.13$ ), Asians ( $\underline{M} = 4.00$ ), African Americans ( $\underline{M} = 3.90$ ), Caucasian ( $\underline{M} = 3.75$ ), and Other ( $\underline{M} = 3.54$ ) groups differed in their views regarding the provision of Professional Development.

The data showed that the Hispanic group was more positive in regard to the features of the Professional Development factor in comparison to the other groups. The Caucasians' mean rate of agreement was 3.75 (between neither agree nor disagree and agree) and implied a neutral view of the presence of Professional Development. Teachers classified as Other were not particularly appreciative of the staff development offerings as their choice was almost the same as that of Caucasian teachers. The average response of all the races ranged between 2.31 and 3.32 (where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). A statistically significant difference was identified in New Teacher Support with rankings between disagree to neither agree nor disagree.

The perceptions of groups between 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 2.95$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 2.92$ ), 41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 3.38$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.20$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 1.66$ ) years of age differed significantly regarding the provision of Collegial Environment. The perception regarding the environment that was present in the current schools was highest for the age group between 41 and 50 years of age, although the mean rate was only 3.38. The age group of teachers 61 years of age or more had a mean rate of only 1.66, indicating that group, in large part, strongly disagreed or disagreed.

There was a statistically significant difference in the perceptions regarding Professional Development between the age groups 21-30 ( $\underline{M} = 3.91$ ), 31-40 ( $\underline{M} = 3.75$ ),

41-50 ( $\underline{M} = 3.97$ ), 51-60 ( $\underline{M} = 3.83$ ), and 61+ ( $\underline{M} = 2.25$ ). Again, the 41-50 age group had the highest level of agreement and the teachers in the age group 61 years and older had the lowest level of agreement regarding Professional Development as a selected school characteristics factor. They presented the lowest level of conformity for five out of six factors. They did, however, agree with the presence of School Facility” ( $\underline{M} = 4.0$ ). There was no statistically significant difference for the factors, School Facility, New Teacher Support, Resources, and Teacher Empowerment based on the age of the participants.

#### Research Question 5

What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the same school?

In order to answer this question, teachers were first asked about their intentions to remain in the same school. Of the 276 who responded, a total of 188 (68.1%) indicated that they would be returning the following year. In much smaller numbers, 42 (15.2%) teachers indicated they would not return and 46 (16.7%) teachers were not sure. Those teachers who were not returning were also requested to indicate their reasons. Reasons most frequently cited for non return were: Fourteen (10.2%) teachers mentioned dislike for assigned duties; 13 (9.5%) teachers expressed job related stress; 13 (8.8%) mentioned lack of opportunity; 11 (8%) due to family reasons; and 10 (7.3%) teachers mentioned relocation.

The regression analysis indicated that the factors, Professional Development and New Teacher Support, were statistically significant predictors of a teacher’s intent to continue in the same school. There was no statistically significant relationship between

the other four factors (School Facility, Resources, Collegial Environment, Teacher Empowerment) and the variable “intention to remain in the same school.”

### Research Question 6

What is the relationship, if any, between teachers' perceptions of selected school characteristics and their intention to remain in the teaching profession?

Of the 292 participants, 50 (23.4%) teachers expressed their interest in continuing to teach until they had between 26 and 35 years of experience; however, 58 (27.1%) teachers wanted to teach for no longer than 5 years. A total of 42 (19.6%) indicated they anticipated teaching between 6 and 10 years, and 64 (29.9%) planned on teaching 11-25 years. This research question also addressed teachers' overall satisfaction in the school of their employment. Only 20 (7.9%) teachers were 100% satisfied in the overall school experience. The highest satisfaction frequencies and percentages were observed between 70% and 90% with 170 (67.5%) of the teachers indicating that their levels of satisfaction fell within this range.

### Discussion

The present study was modeled after the Charlotte Advocates of Education (2004) study of North Carolina teachers and school administrators. The results of that study, therefore, were found to be particularly relevant and useful in the discussion of findings for this study conducted in the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS). While the key findings of the Charlotte study were related to working conditions, those working conditions were grouped into larger factors in the OCPS study. In both, however, the

views of administrators were more positive than those of teachers in regard to the presence of working conditions or the six school characteristics factors. There was a significant difference in the perception of working conditions between teachers and administrators on every question. Similarly, there were differences in perceptions between teachers and administrators for five of the six factors in this OCPS study. Administrators' views of working conditions were far more positive than those of teachers.

In the Charlotte study (2004), responding teachers were particularly positive about the areas where administrators were described as strong and supportive, held teachers to high standards, and provided a strong shared vision for the schools. On the other hand, respondents were less positive regarding principals' efforts to minimize concerns regarding leadership and disruptions due to student discipline. In the OCPS study, only one fourth of the teachers felt strongly that they were empowered and shared in decision making in their schools (Teacher Empowerment). In the Charlotte study, educators were least positive about the availability of time to work on curriculum, classroom management, and time to collaborate with colleagues to do their job well. In this study, Collegial Environment addressed the issues of collaborating with experienced teachers, receiving adequate time to carry out instruction, and recognition for their efforts. In this study, it was recognized positively by one-fourth of all teachers as being present in their school.

In the Charlotte study (2004), teachers' views on facilities, resources, empowerment, and professional development were mixed. Educators were positive about

the cleanliness of their school, avenues for parent involvement and the provision of professional development. Yet, they were less positive about their roles in decision making, lack of access to clerical assistance and resources for instructional supplies, resources for professional development, and the provision to various types of professional learning. In the OCPS study, approximately three-fourths of all high school teacher respondents perceived that Resources and Professional Development were adequate and present in their schools. Over 80% perceived the School Facility as a factor that was present in the school's environment. The OCPS findings indicated a greater level of satisfaction with the School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development than existed for the remaining three factors of Collegial Environment, New Teacher Support, and Teacher Empowerment.

In the Charlotte study (2004), the teachers and administrators expressed differences of opinion in regard to working conditions. Principals were more satisfied than teachers in every category. In this study of Orange County high school teachers and administrators, a statistically significant difference was identified for every factor with administrators having stronger perceptions than did teachers of the presence of the six selected school characteristics factors.

### Conclusions

1. School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development were the three factors which were present and were strongest in contributing positively to the school environment in Orange County high schools. Collegial

Environment, New Teacher Support and Teacher Empowerment were factors which contributed to a lesser degree.

2. Administrators, more than teachers, perceived positive school environment to exist in their schools as evidenced by the statistically significant differences identified for each of the six factors.
3. Male and female teachers, for the most part, did not differ in their perceptions of school characteristics factors. Only in regard to Collegial Environment did their views differ significantly. Teachers' level of education revealed no differences in views as to the existence of the six factors. Some significant differences for ethnic groups were identified with regard to Professional Development and New Teacher Support. Professional Development and Collegial Environment revealed differences in perception for different age groups.
4. It was concluded that teachers' perceptions of Professional Development and New Teacher Support were useful in predicting the intentions of teachers to continue in the same school. Since teachers participating in this study had between 1-4 years of experience in teaching, it was logical that these two factors would be important considerations in decisions to continue in their present school. There was no statistically significant relationship between the other four factors (School Facility, Resources, Collegial Environment, Teacher Empowerment) and teachers' intention to remain in the same school. Thus, they were not useful as predictor variables.

5. Due to the numbers of teachers who did not plan to remain in teaching, retention was an area of concern. Though approximately 25% of all responding teachers indicated they intended to teach for more than 25 years, thus making a long-term commitment to the profession, a similar number intended to leave prior to completing five years and an additional 20 % indicated planned departures prior to 10 years of service. Another indicator in considering retention as an area of concern was the overall satisfaction teachers expressed with their school. Though close to 10% of teachers indicated a 100% satisfaction level, almost one-fourth expressed lower levels (50% and lower) of job satisfaction in their current positions.

#### Implications and Recommendations for Practice

This study was conducted to investigate the perceptions of high school administrators and teachers in the Orange County Public Schools in Florida regarding six selected school characteristic factors and the extent to which these factors influenced teachers' intentions to remain in their current schools and in the profession. Findings indicated that three of the factors, School Facility, Resources, and Professional Development were present and strong in contributing positively to the school. It was encouraging to determine that for the most part the physical facility and needed resources were adequate and that professional development was in place and valued by school personnel.

In contrast to the perceived presence of these three factors, three other factors were not so apparent. Teachers indicated that they did not experience a high level of collegiality or a sense of empowerment in their positions, and new teachers did not perceive that they were receiving needed support in their new roles. Improving perceptions regarding these factors would appear to be worthy goals that could be attained by administrators willing to invest time and energy in ways of working with staff, sharing responsibilities and decision making authority and concentrating resources where needed on new teachers.

It was also noteworthy that for all the factors, administrators, more than teachers, perceived positively the presence of the six school characteristics factors in their schools. It would be prudent for administrators to work toward narrowing the gap in perceptions. Royal & Rossi (1999) suggested that experiencing a sense of community at work may benefit teachers personally and advance their instructional efforts. Sense of community was linked to teachers' well being, enhancing their feelings of efficacy and satisfaction with their work. Goodlad (1984) discussed working conditions and collegiality that provided satisfaction with the assigned duties and involved teachers in problem solving, thus influencing school wide decisions. Though high schools have traditionally been structured to foster independence through department structures and the diversity of school schedules, teachers' working conditions could be enhanced by fostering an atmosphere of collegiality, shared decision making and administrative support.

Given the number of teachers that will be needed in the future, it is clear that any efforts to retain a core of experienced teachers and provide support for new teachers is a

worthy investment in a district's future. Merrow (1999) stated that 30% of beginning teachers leave the teaching field within five years. Teachers in this study who expressed their dismay at the lack of administrative support are the teachers who wanted to leave within 0-5 years. Teachers who did not receive support often experienced a sense of isolation (Ruenzel, 1998) and were inclined to consider leaving the profession. This study revealed findings similar to those of Viadero (2003) in regard to the climate of schools and teacher turnover, whereby teachers expressed frustration at the lack of a proper beginning teacher orientation and supportive guidelines.

Along with New Teacher Support, teachers' perceptions of Professional Development were determined to be useful in predicting the intentions of teachers to continue teaching in their schools. The development of staff and the opportunity to grow professionally is important for all teachers. Darling-Hammond (1997) has discussed the complexities of public secondary schools as large organizations with diverse populations and needs. In states such as Florida, the unprecedented student growth along with smaller class size mandate and the constraints of No Child Left Behind legislation have exerted tremendous pressures on administrators and teachers. Although great efforts have been made by states and universities to train and certify only the best teachers, public schools have experienced shortages of teachers and have continued to hire underprepared teachers. Since it does not appear likely that this circumstance will improve, it is imperative that energy be directed not only at hiring highly qualified teachers, but also to fostering a culture of support that will retain those teachers in their respective schools.

These findings raise an important issue for high schools in Orange County and across the state. Administrators are encouraged to reexamine the structures they have in place in their schools and to make appropriate changes that support both new and experienced teachers and work toward building an environment where teachers thrive and look forward to rewarding careers. Since factors “New Teacher Support” and “Professional Development” were good predictors for teachers’ intentions to continue in the teaching profession, it would be worthwhile to invest resources in building a strong foundation for new teachers and providing appropriate training. The administrators who create this collaborative environment with their teachers will create conditions that will encourage growth and development of teachers and a desire to remain in the profession.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the summary of findings and conclusions, as well as the review of related literature and research, the following recommendations for further study are offered.

1. The literature review, as well as the findings in this study, revealed a lack of research regarding discrepancies in administrator and teacher perceptions regarding the existence of a positive school culture. The importance of common understanding of both groups regarding administrative strategies used and how teacher morale is impacted is a topic for future research.

2. This study could be replicated to include all high school teachers of Orange County in determining the presence of the selected school characteristic factors.
3. This survey could be modified for use with a group of teachers who have left the teaching profession to determine the reasons for their departure.
4. This survey might be modified for use as an on-line instrument in order to obtain the perceptions of the broader teaching population throughout Florida.
5. A follow-up longitudinal study could be conducted to further validate the findings of this research and to investigate the individual factors as the teachers continue their teaching career.
6. Six school characteristics factors comprising the school's culture served as the basis for this study. Consideration should be given to investigating other factors or constraints imposed on teachers that may affect their perceptions of their school such as restricted curriculum input, ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) certification requirements and No Child Left Behind.
7. Conduct a more detailed study of administrator perceptions involving a larger and more diverse group of administrators so that the views of administrators who served as classroom teachers for a longer period of time versus those who became administrators early in their careers could be examined for differences.
8. Salary has been central to the career decisions of many young individuals. Further research could be conducted into the impact of higher teacher salaries

as salary relates to the willingness of new graduates to join and remain in the teaching field.

9. A similar study could be conducted in private schools to determine the differences in culture and teachers' career decisions.
10. A study could be conducted in selected elementary schools in the Orange County Public Schools to determine the extent to which elementary teachers' and administrators' responses were similar to those of their secondary counterparts.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

## School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>Directions:</b> The following questions reflect issues at your current school. Please circle one answer for each statement below based on your agreement.         </div>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
<b>START HERE:</b>							
1	You have a reasonable class size that allows you time to meet the educational needs of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2	You have time that is set aside specifically to collaborate with experienced teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3	Your school administrator informally visits classrooms of new teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4	You are given adequate time to grade papers, attend parent conferences, and attend school-related activities.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5	Your school administrator creates goals, objectives, and priorities for school and actively maintains urgency in meeting them.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6	You are provided with an avenue to express your concerns and their solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7	You are provided with ways to be recognized for a “job well done” – both formally and informally.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8	You are provided with opportunities to visit other classrooms both within school and at other schools.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9	You are provided with opportunities to attend workshops, conferences, etc. – <i>in addition to the ones required by district.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10	You are encouraged to be actively involved in formal advanced training.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11	Your school administrator has special orientation for new teachers prior to the opening of school.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12	New teachers in your school have a different class size or work load than the experienced teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13	Your school administrator personally provides one-on-one guidance and assistance to teachers enabling them to improve instruction and student learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

## School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <p><u>Directions:</u> The following questions reflect issues at your current school. Please circle one answer for each statement below based on your agreement.</p> </div> <p><b><u>Continue here</u></b></p>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
14	You have adequate professional space to work productively.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15	You have the opportunity to communicate effectively with the school personnel, and parents using the phone, fax, and e-mail.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16	You have technology (such as computers, projectors, and TV/VCR) available to you to facilitate instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17	Your school administrator makes every effort to respond to your concern regarding facility and resources.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18	You have access to educational support personnel, including tutors, counselors, and social workers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19	Your school is clean and well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20	Overall, you feel your school provides adequate facilities and resources to do a good job in teaching students.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21	You are allowed to implement policies for student discipline.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
22	You are allowed to assist in determining contents of the in-service training.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
23	You have a role in deciding how the school budget will be spent.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
24	A sustained effort is made in the school to empower teachers and parents and other stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
25	You are provided with the opportunities to share your knowledge in mini professional development sessions.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

## School Characteristics Survey for High School Teachers

**CONTINUE HERE:**

<b>Please answer the following questions in the space provided.</b>	
26. How long have you been teaching?	_____ years.
27. How long have you been teaching in this school?	_____ years.
28. What subject (s) do you teach ?	
29. Do you plan to teach in this school next year? (circle one please)	Yes          No          Not sure
<p>30. If you answered “No” to question # 29 and your separation is voluntary (resignation), please indicate the reason(s) by checking as many boxes that fits your situation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate salary</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relocation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Retirement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunity for advancement</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfaction with supervisor</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> End of temporary assignment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dislike/unsuitability for assigned duties</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Resignation in lieu of involuntary termination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family/personal reasons</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Return to continuing education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate benefits</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Job related stress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable/Not a voluntary separation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, Specify please _____</p>
31. Number of years you plan to remain in teaching.	_____ year/years

**PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE**



APPENDIX B

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS SURVEY FOR ADMINISTRATORS

## School Characteristics Survey for School Administrators

<p><b>Directions:</b> The following questions reflect issues at your current school. Please circle one answer for each statement below based on your agreement.</p> <p><b>START HERE:</b></p>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
1	The teachers at your school are provided with a reasonable class size that allows them time to meet the educational needs of all students.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
2	The teachers at your school are provided time to specifically collaborate with experienced teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
3	You informally visit classrooms of new teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4	The teachers at your school have adequate time to grade papers, attend parent conferences, and attend school-related activities.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
5	You create goals, objectives, and priorities for your school and actively maintain urgency in meeting them.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
6	The teachers at your school are provided with an avenue to express their concerns and their solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
7	The teachers at your school are recognized for a “job well done” – both formally and informally.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
8	The teachers at your school are provided with opportunity to visit other classrooms both within school and at other schools.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
9	The teachers at your school are provided with opportunity to attend workshops, conferences, etc. – <i>in addition to the ones required by district.</i>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
10	The teachers at your school are actively encouraged to be involved in formal advanced training.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
11	New teachers at your school are provided with a special orientation prior to the opening of school.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
12	New teachers in your school have a different class size (or workload) than the experienced teachers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
13	The teachers at your school are provided with personal one-on-one guidance and assistance from an administrator enabling them to improve instruction and student learning.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

## School Characteristics Survey for School Administrators

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>Directions:</b> The following questions reflect issues at your current school. Please circle one answer for each statement below based on your agreement.         </div>		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
<b>CONTINUE HERE:</b>							
14	The teachers at your school are provided with adequate professional space to work productively.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
15	The teachers at your school are provided with the opportunity to communicate effectively with the school personnel, and parents using the phone, fax, and e-mail.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
16	The teachers are provided with technology (such as computers, projectors, and TV/VCR) to facilitate instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
17	You make every effort to respond to teacher concern regarding facility and resources.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
18	The teachers at your school have access to educational support personnel, including tutors, counselors, and social workers.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
19	The school is clean and well maintained.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
20	Overall, you feel the school provides adequate facilities and resources for teachers to do a good job in teaching students.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
21	The teachers at your school are allowed to implement policies for student discipline.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
22	The teachers at your school are allowed to assist in determining contents of the in-service training.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
23	The teachers at your school play a role in deciding how the school budget will be spent.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
24	A sustained effort is made in the school to empower teachers and parents and other stakeholders.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
25	You provide the teachers the opportunity to share their knowledge in mini professional development sessions.	1	2	3	4	5	N/A



**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

**Please share any additional comments you have in the box provided.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a double black border, intended for additional comments.

APPENDIX C  
QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

## Questionnaire Evaluation Checklist

**Directions:** Please answer the attached questionnaire School characteristics survey for teachers/principals. After you complete the questionnaire, please respond to the following questions. Your comments and suggestions are very valuable for this research.

### **Appearance of the questionnaire**

1. Is it easy to read? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Is the spacing adequate? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you think the title of the questionnaire is appropriate?
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Did the questionnaire take you more than 15 minutes? If so, how long did it take?
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Were the questions easy to comprehend? If not, which question?  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Cover letter of the questionnaire**

1. Did you understand the purpose of the survey? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did you understand the importance of the survey? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did you feel motivated to respond to the survey? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you feel comfortable with the process of filling out the survey? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you understand what to do with the completed questionnaire? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did the introduction address the issue of confidentiality? \_\_\_\_\_

Please share any additional comments and suggestions you have in the box provided.

APPENDIX D  
INITIAL CONTACT LETTER

April 5, 2005

Dear Educator,

A few days from now you will receive a packet of questionnaires to be filled out by you. These are to be used for an important research project conducted by the researcher as a doctoral student at University of Central Florida. The purpose of this research is to collect data on the leadership strategies of your school leader. The results of the survey will be used to assist Principals and Assistant Principals to be more aware of the teachers' perception in providing a favorable working condition.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. With the generous assistance from qualified educators like you, this study would be possible.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

APPENDIX E  
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER COVER LETTER

April 29, 2005

Dear Educator,

As a doctoral student at University of Central Florida, I am requesting your help in filling out this survey for my dissertation research project.

My research indicates that according to Florida Department of Education (2003), 39.5% of the teachers leave teaching in the early years of their careers. Also, leadership strategies used by the school administrators play a vital role in teachers' job satisfaction and retention. The purpose of this study is to comprehend the leadership strategies used at this school and how it affects the decision of teachers who have been there for less than 3 years to remain in this school.

The answers received will be completely confidential and will be utilized only as summaries in which no answers can be identified. When I receive your response survey back, your name will be deleted from my list leaving only your status. Although this survey is voluntary, I earnestly count on your help to take few minutes of your class time to share with us the experiences you receive in your school. If you prefer not to respond to the survey please let me know by returning the blank survey in the enclosed envelope.

The results of this survey will be provided to you at your request. There are no direct benefits or compensations to participants.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this study, please don't hesitate to contact me at 407-657-6423 or write to me at [mohapaj@ocps.net](mailto:mohapaj@ocps.net). You also may contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. George Pawlas, at 407-823-1472. Questions or concerns about research participant's rights may be directed to the UCFIRB Office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, FL 32826. The phone number is (407) 823-2901. I realize this survey will take ten to twelve minutes of your valuable time, but the result will be very useful to provide a better organizational structure for high school teachers. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope in which to return the survey. To be useful, your survey must be returned by May 27, 2005.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

P.S. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but your response will be highly appreciated for this research. If you are not a classroom teacher or you do not intend to take part in this study, please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive a copy of the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would not like to receive a copy of the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Date

APPENDIX F

HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR COVER LETTER

April 12, 2005

Dear Administrator,

As a doctoral student at University of Central Florida, I am requesting your help in filling out this survey for my dissertation research project.

My research indicates that according to Florida Department of Education (2003), 39.5% of the teachers leave teaching in the early years of their careers. Also, leadership strategies used by the school administrators play a vital role in teachers' job satisfaction and retention. The purpose of this study is to comprehend the leadership strategies used at this school and how it affects the decision of teachers who have been there for less than 3 years to remain in this school.

The answers received will be completely confidential and will be utilized only as summaries in which no answers can be identified. When I receive your response back, your name will be deleted from my list leaving only your status. Although this survey is voluntary, I earnestly count on your help to take few minutes of your time to share with us the experiences you provide in your school. If you prefer not to respond to the survey please let me know by returning the blank survey in the enclosed envelope.

The results of this survey will be provided to you at your request. There are no direct benefits or compensations to participants.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this study, please don't hesitate to contact me at 407-657-6423 or write to me at [mohapaj@ocps.net](mailto:mohapaj@ocps.net). You also may contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. George Pawlas, at 407-823-1472. Questions or concerns about research participant's rights may be directed to the UCFIRB Office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, FL 32826. The phone number is (407) 823-2901. I realize this survey will take ten to twelve minutes of your valuable time, but the result will be very useful to provide a better organizational structure for high school teachers. I have enclosed a self-addressed envelope in which to return the survey. To be useful, your survey must be returned by May 27, 2005.

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

P.S. Your participation in this survey is voluntary, but your response will be highly appreciated for this research. If you are not an administrator or you do not intend to take part in this study, please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive a copy of the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would not like to receive a copy of the procedure described above.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Date

APPENDIX G

THIRD TEACHER CONTACT LETTER

May 10, 2005

Dear Educator,

Last week, sets of questionnaires were sent to you to be filled out by you. This was in reference to a study being conducted for a doctoral research from the University of Central Florida, which focuses on various leadership strategies used by your administrator.

If you have already completed and returned the questionnaires to me, my sincere thanks to you. If not, please do so today. With your help, we can gain valuable knowledge on providing an ideal organizational structure and how it can help other teachers and administrators.

If you did not receive the questionnaires or they are misplaced, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-657-6423 or e-mail at [mohapaj@ocps.net](mailto:mohapaj@ocps.net) and I will send another set to you today.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

APPENDIX H  
FOURTH TEACHER CONTACT LETTER

May 16, 2005

Dear Educator,

I sent you a set of questionnaires about 3 weeks ago to be filled out by you. To the best of my knowledge, those have not yet been returned. Dear Educator, your response is of utmost importance for this study of leadership strategies and how it affects teacher retention.

Other teachers I have heard from are stating various types of perceptions they have of their organization. It is comforting to learn about the active interaction that goes on in the schools. I am writing again to emphasize how valuable this information is to assist teachers who are committed to teaching and would continue to teach.

For your assurance, your name will remain strictly confidential. Only the summary of your response will be revealed for analyzing the data. I am including a new set of questionnaires in case you have misplaced the previous ones inadvertently.

If for any reason you choose not to take part in this survey, kindly return the blank questionnaires in the enclosed envelope. Thank you very much for a prompt response.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

APPENDIX I  
FIFTH TEACHER CONTACT LETTER

May 23, 2005

Dear Educator,

You must have received several mailings regarding a research study on leadership strategies of your school administrator. The objective of this research is to study the leadership strategies used by your site administrator in creating an organizational structure. This study would serve as an important guideline for the administrators to retain teachers in their schools.

I am at the final stage of compiling all the data in order to summarize the finding. You are getting this letter again so that you may not miss the opportunity to add your input, which is very important to this study. The survey results are a vital part of this research that would make the conclusion more accurate and precise. However, your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. If for any reason you prefer not to participate in this study, kindly return the blank questionnaires with a note.

Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude for your part in this survey as I come to the conclusion of this study of teacher experiences in the school and the part an administrator plays in providing it.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Jhunu Mohapatra  
Doctoral student  
University of Central Florida

APPENDIX J

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL APPROVAL

Submit this form and a copy of your proposal to:  
 Accountability, Research, and Assessment  
 P.O. Box 271  
 Orlando, FL 32802-0271

**Orange County Public Schools**  
**RESEARCH REQUEST FORM**

Your research proposal should include: Project Title; Purpose and Research Problem; Instruments; Procedures and Proposed Data Analysis

Requester's Name Jhunu Mohapatra Date 2/15/05  
 Address: Home 3927 muzante, orlando, 32817 Phone 407-657-6423  
 Business Stonewall Jackson middle Phone 407-249-6438  
 Project Director or Advisor Dr George Paulas Phone 407-823-1474  
 Address Department of Ed. Research, Technology and Leadership, VCF  
Orlando, 32816

Degree Sought: (check one)  Associate  Bachelor's  Master's  Specialist  
 Doctorate  None

Project Title Organizational characteristics based on leadership strategies and its effect on high school teacher retention.

ESTIMATED INVOLVEMENT			
PERSONNEL/CENTERS	NUMBER	AMOUNT OF TIME (DAYS, HOURS, ETC.)	SPECIFY/DESCRIBE GRADES, SCHOOLS, SPECIAL NEEDS, ETC.
Students	None		
Teachers	350	15-20 minutes	
Administrators	7	15-20 minutes	
Schools/Centers	attached		
Others (specify)	X		

Specify possible benefits to students/school system: Attached.

**ASSURANCE**

Using the proposed procedures and instrument, I hereby agree to conduct research in accordance with the policies of the Orange County Public Schools. Deviations from the approved procedures shall be cleared through the Senior Director of Accountability, Research, and Assessment. Reports and materials shall be supplied as specified.

Requester's Signature Jhunu Mohapatra 2/15/05

Approval Granted:  Yes  No Date: 2-18-05

Signature of the Senior Director for Accountability, Research, and Assessment Lee Bueloni

NOTE TO REQUESTER: When seeking approval at the school level, a copy of this form, signed by the Senior Director, Accountability, Research, and Assessment, should be shown to the school principal.

Reference School Board Policy GCS, p. 249

APPENDIX K  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

*IRB Committee Approval Form*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): **Jhunu Mohapatra**

IRB #: **05-2447**

PROJECT TITLE: **Organizational Characteristics Based on Leadership Strategies and Its Affect on High School Teacher Retention**

- New project submission
- Continuing review of lapsed project # \_\_\_\_\_
- Study expired \_\_\_\_\_
- Initial submission was approved by full board review but continuing review can be expedited
- Suspension of enrollment email sent to PI, entered on spreadsheet, administration notified \_\_\_\_\_
- Resubmission of lapsed project # \_\_\_\_\_
- Continuing review of \_\_\_\_\_
- Initial submission was approved by expedited review

**Chair**

Expedited Approval  
 Dated: MARCH 5, 2005  
 Cite how qualifies for expedited review: minimal risk and #7

**IRB Co-Chairs:**

Signed:   
 Dr. Sophia Dziegielewski

Exempt  
 Dated: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cite how qualifies for exempt status: minimal risk and \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Jacqueline Byers

Expiration  
 Date: MARCH 4, 2006

- Waiver of documentation of consent approved
- Waiver of consent approved

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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APPENDIX L  
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS SCALE

## RELIABILITY ANALYSIS SCALE (ALPHA)

### Item-total Statistics

Item-total Statistics	Mean if item deleted	Scale variance if item deleted	Scale item-total correlation	Corrected squared multiple correlation	Alpha if item deleted
FACILITY	16.7023	8.7781	.4275	.3065	.7781
COLLEGIA	17.7593	7.5586	.6581	.4673	.7237
PROFDEV	16.9221	8.0829	.6244	.4204	.7363
NTS	17.8037	8.0172	.4865	.2811	.7673
RESOURCE	16.9485	7.8849	.5923	.4127	.7408
TE	17.8580	7.8374	.4654	.2431	.7761

Reliability Coefficients 6 items

Alpha = .7865      Standardized item alpha = .7915

APPENDIX M

CHARLOTTE ADVOCATES FOR EDUCATION PERMISSION

Jhunu Mohapatra  
3927 Muzante Court, Orlando, Fl. 32817  
407-657-6423  
mohapaj@ocps.net

October 12, 2004

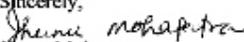
To: Cheryl Pulliam  
Director, Research and Administration  
Charlotte Advocates for Education  
Two Wachovia Center  
301 S. Tryon Street, suite 1725  
Charlotte, North Carolina. 28282

Dear Ms. Pulliam,

This letter will confirm our recent electronic mail transaction. I am completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of Central Florida entitled "organizational characteristics based on leadership strategies and its effect on high school teacher retention". I would like your permission to replicate in my dissertation excerpts from the "Principal survey" questionnaires that was used in Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) "Role of Principal Leadership in increasing teacher retention" study that appears in page numbers 35-42.

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the publication of my dissertation by UMI. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that your organization owns the copyright to the above described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,  
  
Jhunu Mohapatra

---

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

By:   
Cheryl Pulliam, Director of Research and Administration

Date: 10/21/04

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