TEACHER RETENTION IN SOUTH CAROLINA: EXPLORING SCHOOL-LEVEL FACTORS

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COLLABORATOR ORGANIZATIONS

Research, Evaluation, and Measurement Center

South Carolina Teacher Education Advancement Consortium Though Higher Education Research
INTRODUCTION

• Studies have found relationships between teacher turnover rates and student achievement

• Retaining effective teachers is a challenge in the United States (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019)
  • Overall turnover rate in the U.S. is about 16%
  • Turnover rates are in the lowest in the Northeast and highest in the South
  • Turnover rates are higher in cities and suburbs than in towns and rural areas

INTRODUCTION

• School poverty has been found to be associated with teacher retention (Hughes, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019)

• School administration appears to plan an important role in teacher retention (Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Boyd et al., 2010; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019)
METHODS - DATA SOURCES

Participating Schools:
• 1,100 public schools in 82 school districts in South Carolina

School Level Variables:
• Teacher retention
• School poverty
• Principal's years at schools
• Other (teacher salary, climate, safety, enrollment, student teacher ratios, total PPE)

METHODS - RESEARCH QUESTIONS & ANALYSIS

• What is the relationship between teacher retention and school level variables?
• How do teacher retention rates differ among elementary, middle, and high schools?
• How do teacher retention rates differ among schools of different poverty levels?
• How do teacher retention rates differ among schools with principals who have different years at the school?
• How do teacher retention rates differ between urban schools and rural schools?

Quantitative analysis (descriptive, t-test, ANOVA, correlation)
RESULTS - TEACHER RETENTION BY SCHOOL TYPE

Teacher Retention by School Type

The average 1-year teacher retention rate was significantly higher at high schools than at both elementary and middle schools, while the average 3-year teacher retention rate at middle schools was significantly lower than that at both elementary and high schools.

Results - Teacher Retention by School Poverty Levels

Teacher Retention by School Poverty Levels

- Elementary Schools
- Middle Schools
- High Schools

- 1-year retention rate
- 3-year retention rate
RESULTS - TEACHER RETENTION BY PRINCIPAL TENURE AT THE SCHOOL

Teacher Retention by Principals' Years at School

Elementary Schools
1-year retention rate: 75, 82, 82
3-year retention rate: 80, 84, 84

Middle Schools
1-year retention rate: 78, 82, 84
3-year retention rate: 78, 83, 85

High Schools
1-year retention rate: 80, 85, 87
3-year retention rate: 81, 85, 87

RESULTS - TEACHER RETENTION BY LOCALE

Teacher Retention by Urban and Rural Setting

Elementary Schools
1-year retention rate: 80, 80
3-year retention rate: 82, 82

Middle Schools
1-year retention rate: 80, 80
3-year retention rate: 80, 81

High Schools
1-year retention rate: 83, 82
3-year retention rate: 83, 83
RESULTS - CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation Coefficients of Teacher Retention Rates and School Level Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Elementary Schools</th>
<th>Middle Schools</th>
<th>High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1 Year)</td>
<td>(3 Years)</td>
<td>(1 Year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Satisfaction with Learning Environment</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Satisfaction with Social Physical Environment</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Satisfaction with School Home Relations</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers Feel Safe</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
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<td>Teacher Salary</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>0.45**</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Enrollment</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
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<td>Principal Years at School</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>0.17**</td>
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<td>Student Teacher Ratio</td>
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<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
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<td>School Poverty Index</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>-0.38**</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Per Pupil Expenditure</td>
<td>-0.25**</td>
<td>-0.30**</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

CONCLUSIONS

• High schools had the highest teacher retention rates, and middle schools had the lowest teacher retention rates.

• High-poverty schools had the lowest teacher retention rates.

• Schools where principals had one to three years at their current school had the lowest teacher retention rates.

• Teacher retention rates were very similar for schools in urban areas and rural areas.

• Teachers’ satisfaction with school home relations, teacher salary, and school poverty, tended to have relatively higher correlations with teacher retention rates.
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Build a positive school community that actively involves and engages families.
• Consider school type and poverty in policy making, high poverty middle schools need particular attention.
• Develop strong administrative leadership through retaining principals and shared leadership.
• Increase teacher salary and provide incentives to effective teachers.
• Provide mentoring and certification opportunities for teachers.
• Build strong collaboration with teacher preparation programs at higher education institutions.

THANKS!

Paper available at sc-teacher.org/resources/

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