

4-2023

An Exploration of Teacher Attrition Factors in Oregon Christian Schools

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AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER ATTRITION FACTORS IN OREGON CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS

By

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the
Doctor of Educational Leadership Department
in partial fulfillment for the degree of

Doctor of Education

George Fox University

April 202



GEORGE FOX
UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION | EdD

AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHER ATTRITION FACTORS IN OREGON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, a Doctoral research project prepared by ZACHARY DAVIDSON in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership.

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Abstract

This study sought to determine factors for attrition rates among Christian school teachers in Oregon by using an adaptation of the *2021-2022 Private School Survey* created and distributed by the Department of Education. The quantitative study was distributed to 31 Christian schools in Oregon. Relationships and trends were examined among teachers who expressed a high desire to remain teachers and those who expressed a desire to quit the teaching profession. Results from this study identified three strategies to improve teacher retention. First, an increase in compensation was the primary factor in improving teacher retention. Second, mentorship was significant in decreasing teacher attrition. Finally, improving teacher satisfaction was instrumental in reducing teacher turnover. Future studies should consider increasing the sample size, conducting a longitudinal study of participants, and following up with participants who demonstrated a high propensity for retention and attrition to increase the validity and reliability of the results. The results of this study will inform future school boards and school leadership to seriously contemplate compensation increases, investments in effective mentorship and induction programs, and strategic initiatives to improve teacher satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

A project of this magnitude is only accomplished through the collective support and efforts of several individuals. First, I would like to acknowledge my limitation in taking on a program of this magnitude, and only through God's grace and the generous efforts of several people am I able to complete this project.

My amazing and talented wife Rachel has been essential throughout this entire process. She is an excellent educator in her own right in addition to running our house. Not only is her encouragement and patience invaluable, but her skills as an editor are also invaluable to me. Next, I would like to express my gratitude to my three children—Esther, Elijah and Ezra, who were often unaware of the details of my work but afforded me the time and space required for this program. I love you all and am eternally thankful for you.

I would also like to thank George Fox University, which has been my academic home for my entire post-secondary education. During my years as both an undergraduate and graduate student, I have developed as an educational leader because of the investment of several excellent and caring professors. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. Dane Joseph's high standards and support; they both challenge and encourage me throughout this program. I am a better leader, educator, researcher and writer as a result of his efforts.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the teachers whose willingness to participate in my survey enabled me to conduct this research. I hope my efforts and research will promote strategic initiatives in Christian schools in Oregon to increase the retention of their teachers and improve the quality of education in their respective schools.

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Chapter 1: Purpose and Significance of Study

Purpose of Research

This exploratory survey study attempted to identify factors underlying the attrition rates of Christian school teachers in the state of Oregon. In regard to rate of turnover, smaller private school teachers have the highest average attrition at a staggering 23% per year (Ingersoll, 2003). This makes the concern over teacher retention even more frightening for Christian school leaders, who have seen a statewide student enrollment increase of over 40% since the 2021-2022 school year. In my observations and conversations with over twenty Christian school administrators in the state, this enrollment change is a result of parents seeking Christian school education for their children because of four factors. These include: (1) the quick response private schools took to maintain schooling during COVID-19; (2) the support of traditional values; (3) the focus on academic integrity; and (4) the freedom from political agenda. As enrollment rates increase among these small private schools, the analysis of teacher retention rates needs to become a priority.

Problem Statement

Headlines across the country communicate a concern over teacher attrition rate. One CNN article from February of 2022 was titled “Teachers are leaving, and few people want to join the field” (Maxouris & Zdanowicz, 2022). Unfortunately, concerns over teacher attrition is nothing new and has plagued the U.S. for decades. Continuing to ignore this problem and merely responding to it with previously failed policies and initiatives is reckless. Although it seems like journalists are over sensationalizing the issue, decades of peer-reviewed research substantiate their hyperbolic headlines.

The teaching profession continues to have one of the highest attrition rates and has

generated a significant number of research studies to document the reduction. Years ago, Charters (1970), Mark & Anderson (1978), and Murnane (1981) identified high attrition rates among teachers in the post-Vietnam era. At that time, these authors reported 25% of all people earning teaching certificates left teaching within a few years. After the 5-year mark, however, only 50% remained in the profession. The present-day statistics are no better, with 36% of new teachers leaving the profession in Oregon within the first three years (Gezelter, 2022). Moreover, the “Teacher Standards and Practices Commission reports a total of 66,000 active teaching licenses in its system. However, current employment figures indicate that only about 34,000 teachers are working in Oregon’s schools” (Gezelter, 2022). These studies point to a long-term decline in the ability of the education system to retain teachers. This should be an alarming concern as the viability of our education system is at stake if retention is left unaddressed.

Recent social issues are making the retention of teachers more challenging. Factors compounding the problem include retirement of baby boomers, the COVID-19 pandemic, and polarizing politics. First, the concern over a teacher shortage began to emerge in the 1980s, due to the anticipated retirement of a large portion of the teacher workforce associated with the boomer generation (Ingersoll, 2003). Although educator attrition rates have always followed a U-pattern—where the attrition of teachers is high at the beginning and the end of a career—the large exodus of retiring baby boomers has significantly exacerbated this issue (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Second, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed many experienced teachers into unfamiliar territory as they had to teach from technological platforms and had considerable new requirements placed on them. Many exhausted teachers, who were already on the brink of leaving the profession, are unfortunately planning premature retirements or career changes. Third, recent political agendas are creating division in schools, which has led to additional

attrition (Barnum, 2003). School board meetings across the nation are making headlines regarding critical race theory, transgender education, and other polarizing issues. Teachers feel conflicted on both sides of the political spectrum; they face ethical dilemmas about what and how they should teach.

Consequently, teachers are choosing their personal values over their districts' changing views and are leaving their teaching positions. In the end, the combination of baby retiring boomers, the stressful pandemic, and contentious political agendas are creating a dire situation. American schools are struggling to fill the large number of open teaching positions.

It is imperative school leaders identify and implement a solution to address these attrition rates, for it is the students who will be most impacted by the revolving door of educators. Like retention rate, the impact on students created by these high teacher attrition rates has also been well documented. Understandably, experienced teachers are more effective educators. More specifically, experienced teachers have a quantifiable impact on student achievement (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Rivkin et al., 2005). Within a given school year, the disparity between a highly capable teacher and a less capable one translates into a full grade level difference in student achievement (Borman & Dowling, 2006). Research has also identified that the influence can last two years or longer after a student exits a classroom (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Sadly, the perpetual cycle of effective teachers leaving the profession is associated with lower student achievement rates.

In addition to the negative outcome in student achievement, the loss of sound teachers poses a financial burden. The annual costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers are \$2.2 billion per year nationally (Borman & Dowling, 2006). Districts and buildings are spending both hours and dollars to on-board new staff. These precious financial resources are being

diverted away from programs that enhance student achievement. Instead, money is repetitively spent on preparing new staff in the simple daily operations of a school. Thus, the havoc created by high teacher attrition rates is significant in its economic and logistic scope and will continue to harm student achievement if not addressed.

Teacher retention within Christian schools has always been an area of concern for leadership. Small private schools employ about 7.5% of the K-12 teaching force but account for nearly 13% of all teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2003). On average, small private schools lose one-fourth of their faculty each year, most of whom are full-time employees. In such cases, an entire staff can experience turnover within five years. Hiring, mentoring, and training teachers is also a significant investment of time and finances on an already stretched staff and limited budget. Since experienced veteran teachers have a tremendous impact on academic growth and the social-emotional health of students, retaining teachers is essential for the welfare of the school.

Demographic Factors Explored

Fortunately, a large and thorough collection of data has been collected over multiple decades. Surveys have been the primary tool, consistently focusing on the teacher's perspective. They include the following factors: gender, race, socioeconomics, urban-rural school classification, education and academic acumen, subject and grade level taught, compensation, administrative support, student behavior, working conditions, parental support, and personal reasons. These factors each play a role in attrition and will be examined in the following paragraphs. However, studies point to gender, age, race, socio-economic status, and education/achievement level as the top five demographics shown to most influence the retention of educators.

Gender

Are men or women more likely to remain in the education field? Unfortunately, the data is unclear. Willett and Singer (1991) use survival function plots to identify trends. They notice the median teaching career as 6 years for women and 12 years for men. Research by Willett and Singer (1988), Charters, (1970) and Murnane and Olsen (1989a) all corroborate the research findings indicating men stay in the profession longer. However, closer analysis by Murnane and Olsen (1989a) shows that the median duration for younger women was five years shorter than the figures for men and all other women age-categories. This is a significant finding. The evidence supports that young women may leave education to raise children but then often return once their children are of school age. Most research does not reflect the reentry into a profession (Murnane & Olsen, 1989a). Thus, merely looking at attrition rates based on gender can be misleading.

A closer examination of the causation for male and female teachers leaving the profession is interesting. Grissmer and Kirby (1997) agree that women had higher rates of attrition in comparison to men during their first 5 years in the profession. During the middle and later years of their careers however, they find the rates between genders became equal. Interestingly, Beaudin (1993) supports these findings but adds women are more likely than men to return to teaching because of limited career options. For instance, elementary and specialist teachers may lack opportunities due to their specialized trade. Teachers in these fields are unlikely to find careers with higher compensation and choose to return to their previous teaching positions. Beaudin (1993) further details that one-third of elementary teachers who leave teaching return. This rate for elementary teachers is significantly higher than any other group of educators. With women making up the majority of elementary teachers, the data reinforces that

women leave but later return to a career in education. In contrast, men who are employed in secondary mathematics and science positions have higher-paying opportunities outside the education field. Men in these situations often leave the teaching profession to pursue higher-paying careers. As a result of gender roles and social constructs, the attrition and retention rates of male and female teachers can be better understood.

Race

Does race play a role in attrition? To begin, research defines minority teachers as being non-white. The disparity between minority and non-minority retention rates has widened. In the 2004–2005, 2008–09, and 2012–13 school years, minority turnover has grown 18%, 24%, and 25% higher, respectively, than non-minority attrition rates (Ingersoll, 2019). The disparity appears to be expanding. However, empirical research on minority turnover rates has been limited, which causes inconsistencies in the data to surface (Achinstein et al., 2010; Albert Shanker Institute, 2015). According to Borman and Dowling (2006), white teachers are 1.36 times more likely to leave teaching than non-white teachers. Decades ago, Gottlieb (1964) similarly concluded that minority teachers are more likely to remain in teaching than are white teachers. Other researchers reported similar findings of higher retention rates for minority teachers (Adams, 1996; Ingersoll, 2001; Kirby et al., 1991; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009). Contrary to the previously mentioned research, Henke et al. (2000) finds no relationship between race and attrition rates. Clearly research on race and attrition is not conclusive and prompts additional research and further examination of already gathered data.

When examined closer, the reasons minority teachers leave the teaching profession are similar to non-minority teachers. According to Ingersoll (2019), job dissatisfaction is the leading factor for teacher attrition. Teachers link their turnover to how well systems are administered

within a school. Such systems include how students are assessed, how school accountability affects teaching, student discipline problems, a lack of input in decision-making, and a lack of classroom autonomy over their teaching. Family and personal issues are only slightly behind job satisfaction, which typically is related to child rearing, relocation, or professional advancement by transferring to another school or district. Fortunately, the percentage of minority teachers entering the workforce is increasing, but they are statistically more likely to teach in socio-economically disadvantaged schools. These positions allow minority teachers the opportunity to serve as role models and help students identify with someone who may look like them. On the other hand, these teaching positions are also burdened with greater academic, behavior and leadership obstacles, which are primary contributing factors for teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2019). Consequently, race does not appear to currently have a strong correlation with retention rate.

Age

The third demographic factor related to teacher attrition is age. Data consistently identifies younger teachers as having the highest attrition rates (e.g., Bobbitt et al., 1994; Boe et al., 1998; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987, 1992, 1997; Hafner & Owings, 1991; Murnane et al., 1988). There is also consensus among the researchers that teachers close to retirement age are likely to leave the profession. This agrees with the U-shaped trend observed in teacher attrition models. Although it is easier to point to why retirement-age teachers exit the profession, younger teachers exit education at a rate of 44% for a variety of reasons. They experience burn out quickly because of stress, exhaustion, isolation, finances, strain on one's personal life, lack of support, mental health or fear that a teaching-grade or course switch may not bring the needed change (Gomez, 2022). Although most professions see higher attrition rates during the first few years

into a career, teaching attrition is disproportionately higher at this stage than any other profession. Indeed, teaching is a difficult job and not the right fit for everyone. Younger teachers decide early on in their career to leave at a rate of two and a half times more than their older counterparts (Gomez, 2022). They merely see career opportunities outside the teaching profession and choose a different occupation.

Socio-economic Status

How does a teacher's socio-economic status influence attrition rates? Research initially shows that teachers from a middle-class background were more likely to quit than those from a lower socio-economic status (Adams, 1996). These observations might be explained as teachers who come from more affluent backgrounds often have additional career opportunities available to them. These same opportunities may be unavailable or unknown to teachers from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Although this area needs further analysis, initial research suggests that teachers who have greater professional and economic mobility will pursue such opportunities and will often exit the teaching profession.

There is considerable data on how the socio-economic status of a school influences the retention rate of the teachers who work in them. Unfortunately, research data is not in complete agreement with the impact of a school's socio-economic status on teacher retention rates. Hughes (2012) surprisingly revealed teachers in low socio-economic schools are more likely to remain in teaching until retirement in comparison to those in high socio-economic schools. Many feel they can provide better support for learners than just academic instruction. In contrast, several surveys pointed to inadequate facilities and resources, which are typically characteristics of low socio-economic schools, as to the reason for attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Lankford et al., 2002; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Other research

supported the notion that good teachers avoid working in poor schools with higher rates of student poverty (Rivkin et al., 2005; Borman & Dowling, 2006; Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Although there is some disagreement in the research conducted, the majority of data supports the conclusion that schools of low socio-economic status experience high turnover rates, and their lack of resources and inadequate facilities are often cited as reasons for leaving.

More research needs to be conducted, but current research does demonstrate a relationship between financial mobility and pursuing more lucrative professions as opposed to education. While financial incentives should not be the sole motivation for pursuing a profession, it is having an impact on those who desire to work in education. The data is more conclusive on the negative impact of lower socio-economic schools on retaining teachers. Higher attrition rates in these schools may contribute to the cycle of poor performance often experienced by lower socio-economic schools and the demands placed on teachers due to the high level of student need.

Education/Achievement

How does one's education or achievement level impact their desire to stay in the education field? Linked to socioeconomics, the area of instruction a teacher pursues and their academic achievement earned at the university is influenced by social class. Higher academic achievement and particular areas of studies do provide career opportunities with higher compensation. With regards to teacher attrition, research has shown a strong correlation between opportunities for competitive jobs outside of education and high attrition rates (Grissmer & Kirby, 1992; Murnane & Olsen, 1989, 1990). For instance, secondary teachers are less likely to remain in the field than elementary teachers (Guarino et al., 2006; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Murnane et al., 1989). More specifically, math and science teachers have more high-paying

career opportunities available to them outside teaching due to their field of expertise, so they are less likely to remain in education (Borman & Dowling, 2006; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Podgursky et al., 2004). As the grade-level taught lowers, attrition decreases. Middle school teachers leave at higher rates than elementary-level, but the problems associated with adolescence at that stage is the determining factor—not career opportunities (Brill & McCartney, 2008). As a result, education-level and area of focus does impact teacher choice to remain in the profession. Teachers are most likely to return to education when their subject area or specialty limits opportunities for better paying employment outside of public schools (Beaudin, 1993).

Other academic or personal achievement factors can also foretell attrition—even scores on standardized achievement tests. Guarino (2006) concludes, “A preponderance of evidence suggests that teachers with higher measured ability have a higher probability of leaving and that retention rates vary by level of education and field, as well” (p. 186). For example, “teachers with high ACT scores are less likely to remain in teaching; more specifically, those with college entrance exam scores in the top quartile were twice as likely to leave teaching within the first five years than those in the bottom quartile” (Hughes, 2012, p.246). Interestingly, teachers who score well on the National Teacher Exam are more likely to leave teaching, even with several years of experience (Murnane et al., 1989). The research clearly reveals teachers with higher scores on standardized exams are more likely to leave teaching.

Moreover, in a meta-analytic review of the research, Borman and Dowling (2006) conclude teachers with graduate degrees are also more likely to leave teaching because higher degrees often open more career opportunities. However, findings on these issues are mixed because Latham and Vogt (2007) find no significant correlation between retention and teachers’

achievement indicators. Perrachione et al. (2008) also finds no relationship between graduate degrees and teacher retention. This discrepancy in research could be traced back to a change in state and district policy encouraging teachers to hold a Master of Art in teaching (MAT) degree. Most secondary educators must hold this degree along with a bachelor's degree in a specific field, while elementary education undergraduate programs are still prevalent among universities. Although discrepancy exists, most research indicates the same point. Teachers remaining in the profession are those who score lower on college entrance exams or teacher tests and who do not hold graduate degrees.

The demographics extrapolated above from countless surveys are helpful in identifying the internal factors among teachers who have higher levels of attrition. Conclusive research does support the idea that high levels of attrition are related to a teacher's age or stage in one's career. Data also supports the impact higher education, higher academic proficiency and specific areas of expertise have in providing greater opportunity and compensation outside the education profession. At this time, studies on race are inconclusive as related to attrition. Although demographic data is valuable in looking for correlation, the mentioned studies also provide significant information as to the external factors influencing the causation of attrition.

Exploring External Factors

Salary, administrative support, working conditions, culture, student behavior and parental involvement are all identified as attributing external factors for high teacher attrition rates. Interestingly, these demographics possess the potential to identify schools or districts with troubling practices that lead to higher attrition rates. However, this data is rarely gathered or analyzed in a manner that would permit this. Inconsistently, studies use different terms and vary the significance of certain factors, yet the data identifies the same primary indicators. Often these

factors are not found in isolation but are typically grouped together as reasons for teachers leaving. In the subsequent paragraphs, external factors will be presented. These factors will be placed under three generalized categories: compensation, working conditions, and school culture as it relates to students and parents.

Compensation

First, salary has been the single most-often cited reason for quitting among beginning teachers, migrating teachers and those leaving the profession (Wynn et al., 2007 and Guarino et al., 2006). In fact, research by Wynn et al. identifies compensation as a factor for attrition by 82% of teachers (2007). Interestingly, most research cites significant raises are required to motivate teachers to stay because moderate raises have little to no impact on attrition rates (Hanushek et al., 1999). For example, an increase of just \$1,000 has only a 3% impact on teachers choosing to stay in their current position (Guarino et al., 2006). Unfortunately, the salary rates required to alleviate attrition are crippling to districts, with raises of up to 20% being required to decrease attrition rates (Brill & McCartney, 2008). In the end, this study data does associate dissatisfaction with salary with a decrease in employee motivation. When teachers are unmotivated, they typically begin to rethink their profession.

Since teacher retention is unresponsive to moderate salary increases, most researchers recommend school leadership focus on other initiatives to decrease turnover by addressing the working environment or focusing on professional development (Hanushek et al., 2004). Nevertheless, salary increases still have a measurable impact on decreasing teacher attrition rates according to studies and should still be factored as a strategy for reducing attrition (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Imazeki 2005). For example, several studies illustrate measurable decreases in attrition rates with salary increases. In Texas, a study of a cohort of teachers between 1987 to

1995 discovered a \$1,000 salary increase was associated with 2.9% reduction in attrition and was even higher among minority teachers with a 5% and 6% reduction among Hispanic and Black teachers respectively (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Furthermore, a study of a cohort of Washington teachers from 1981 to 1992 discovered white female teachers were less likely to leave if their salaries were at least competitive with neighboring school districts. However, white male teachers made their decision based on the competitiveness of their salaries with other occupations (Gritz & Theobald, 1996).

Compensation has a significant impact on teacher attrition. Despite the challenges with providing compensation packages to resolve high attrition rates, salary increases still have a measurable impact on reducing attrition. Data supports school leaders making it a priority to continue to increase school compensation packages in addition to other initiatives, which would improve teacher satisfaction and improve retention rates.

Leadership and Working Conditions

Second, according to Wynn (2007), 50% of the reasons teachers leave the profession are related to poor leadership and working conditions. This is a large category that includes workload, facility, resources, collegiality, and leadership. Although these internal factors are influenced by funding, they are ultimately under the guidance of a school. Consequently, they are not individually controlled by the teacher. When teachers feel unsatisfied with their working conditions or unsupported by a school's programs, teacher attrition becomes a problem.

Specifically, according to Kersaint (2005), teachers who choose to transfer schools cite a lack of planning time (65%) and a very heavy workload (60%). Similarly, public school teachers cite inadequate support from administration (15.3%) as the main reason for dissatisfaction. In contrast, schools that provide teachers with more autonomy and administrative support have

lower levels of teacher attrition and migration (Guarino et al., 2006). Similarly, data from Washington, D.C. indicates that the perceived quality of school facilities is strongly associated with the likelihood of teachers remaining at their schools. Teachers feel supported when the cleanliness and upkeep of the building is a priority (Guarino et al., 2006).

The results of the above studies demonstrate the tremendous impact school leadership can have on teacher turnover, for leadership is responsible for creating a climate which values teachers as professionals. By giving educators more voice and providing them with classroom resources required for the job, school leadership can greatly influence the retention of their teachers—particularly the newer teachers. In addition, teachers view the quality of their administrative leadership by how they allocate finances, purchase resources or materials, choose programs and hire additional staff to diminish workload. As a result, proactive and responsive leadership can improve working conditions within a school and decrease attrition rates among teachers.

One method of proactively supporting new teachers is to provide mentoring and induction programs. Schools with these initiatives experience lower turnover rates among beginning staff (Guarino et al., 2006). In California, one mentoring program has reduced attrition by 26% in just two years (Brill & McCartney, 2008). A survey of over 3,000 new teachers showed similar data. Teachers who are supported with onboarding and mentoring programs during their first year of teaching are less likely to leave teaching or change schools (Guarino et al., 2006). Outside of significant salary increases, research supports effective mentoring programs as the greatest strategy for reducing teacher attrition rates.

School Culture

Finally, school culture is an external factor that can significantly impact teacher attrition. It is predominantly based on student behavior and engagement levels but is influenced heavily by parent involvement. Wynn (2007) identifies disruptive students (58%) and a lack of parental involvement (42%) as the second and fourth highest factors for teacher attrition. Other research cites student discipline problems (17.9%) and poor student motivation to learn (17.6%) as the greatest contributors (Guarino et al., 2006). In a similar study, Hanushek et al. (2004) stated attrition could be lessened by addressing issues of discipline and safety in the classrooms. Ingersoll (2019) also cites student behavior and a lack of parent engagement as contributing factors among teachers leaving the profession. In one study that compares the impact of pay, facility quality, and relationships with parents and the broader community on teacher retention, parent and community relationships prove to have the strongest effect on retention due to the community built and support felt by the staff (Buckley et al., 2005). The impact school culture has on teacher satisfaction and attrition is clear. As a result, the focus on positive school culture should be front and center when leadership evaluates the success of a building or district and its ability to retain teachers.

Although some discrepancies between the data and analysis exist, much of the research corroborates the work of others on the same topic. There are three conclusions that can be drawn from the research conducted by others. First, teacher attrition is a highly researched topic. Two, the data collected shows a great deal of consensus and supports the notion that teachers face an astounding attrition rate. Third, salary, leadership and school culture are the primary influences contributing to teacher retention. Despite knowing this information, schools and districts

continue to struggle with the highest attrition rate of any other profession, which consistently inhibits the ability for educational institutions to progress and students to thrive.

Significance

Paired with an ever-increasing teacher shortage, the retention of teachers is critical for the viability and future of Christian schools. Despite the vast research on teacher attrition, gaps exist. First, little research outside of Ingersoll's studies has been conducted on Christian schools in America. Few have focused specifically on Oregon Christian educators. Second, little research has been conducted on the impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, no research has yet been published on the influence of recent political fractionalization in Oregon's education system. In 2020, several Christian schools, and students' families, strongly opposed the government's response to COVID-19 with regards to mandates for shutting down schools, socially distancing individuals, and wearing protective facemasks. As a result, the public grew frustrated over public-school education.

When families sought alternatives, Oregon public schools saw an enrollment loss of over 6%, a loss of more than 30,000 students in one year (Silverman, 2022). At the same time, small Oregon private schools experienced a jump of nearly 40%. Similarly, a resurgence of interest in Christian education has increased enrollment in private schools to the point that most have waiting lists. Although this bodes well for Christian private schools, the ensuing strain on these institutions has created an unknown stress on staff. Since Christian private schools highly value the education they provide their students and families, many struggle to maintain their programs—small class sizes and community, accreditation status, college and career readiness, rich extra-curricular offerings, and religious instruction. As these institutions are challenged to maintain the quality of their programs, private school teachers may be experiencing more demand and feeling

burnout at perhaps greater rates than their public-school counterparts. Consequently, the future attrition of current Christian school teachers is unknown.

In my K-12 school alone, we lost 10% of staff in 2022, who specifically moved to other states that were less restrictive in their COVID-19 response. Economic factors may also predict whether private school teachers will leave their positions. Oregon currently holds a record-low unemployment rate but is also experiencing a recession. In addition, public school teaching positions are being vacated and are sought after by lower-compensated private school teachers. This combination—an ever-increasing teacher shortage and better compensation packages—lure many to leave their private teaching positions. Any one of the factors mentioned could lead to higher attrition rates among Christian school teachers specifically. This is alarming. Ingersoll reinforces the concern by stating that high staff attrition poses a threat to a cohesive school community and harms student performance (Ingersoll, 2003).

Clearly, gaining an accurate picture of teacher attrition in Christian schools is pivotal in securing the existence of Christian schools. The current lack of data on Christian schools and especially Oregon Christian schools, render educational leaders and other researchers uncertain whether Ingersoll's hypothesis is simple conjecture and speculative or reliable and founded. Additionally, the recent changes to the landscape of education are potential factors for reframing teacher satisfaction and therefore impacting the retention of Christian school teachers. This work can provide administration and school boards with strategies to increase the retention of Christian school teachers in Oregon.

This exploratory survey study addresses a specific demographic—teachers in Oregon's Christian schools. Although this group is rarely highlighted in previous research, historical data on teacher attrition rates is informative to attrition rates of teachers in Christian schools in

Oregon. Empirical research has often examined teacher turnover as a function of the characteristics of individual teachers rather than a function of the schools (Ingersoll, 2003). Although correlations between both functions should be explored, most data gleaned is from the perspective or function of the teacher by means of teacher-based surveys. The perspective of teachers is used to identify trends, causation, and correlations regarding retention.

Prior to examining previous research, one key piece of data needs to be better clarified, for it is often inaccurately misconstrued. Specifically, attrition rates for teachers are inflated because studies only consider when one leaves the profession. When studies omit an individual's decision to return to the profession or pursue another teaching opportunity, the data falsely depicts that the teacher left the profession altogether. In actuality, 33% of those who quit the teaching profession eventually return (Adams, 1996). Some teachers leave temporarily to raise their children before reentering the profession. Others leave to pursue teaching positions for advantageous reasons like higher pay, proximity to home, and promotion. Research unfortunately deemphasizes the number of teachers who transfer or move to different teaching positions or other districts. Adams concluded that up to 40% of a district's attrition is career progression like this (1996). Career progression is also labeled as teacher migration (Ingersoll, 2003). To flesh this out, more longitudinal studies should be conducted over longer periods of time. However, the data clearly shows that many leave one teaching job to eventually pick up another somewhere else.

There is a second piece of data that erroneously inflates attrition rates among teachers—the U-shaped trend of attrition. In short, the pattern depicts newer and older teachers more likely to leave the profession at higher rates. Researchers have consistently found younger teachers experience high departure rates like teachers in retirement years. Yet, data shows a stark decline

in turnover rates throughout the mid-period of a teacher's career (Guarino et al., 2006). It is common for a new employee to become disenchanted with the reality of their profession, while a teacher's long-term commitment might be strengthened after spending five years in the profession.

Unfortunately, the U-pattern leads many to a misconception that teachers today are leaving the profession in droves. In reality, America is facing a large number of baby boomers retiring, which is adding to the already high attrition rates. The number of new or incoming teachers is just too small to fill the vacancies left behind. The problem is exacerbated when a 50% attrition rate in the first five years is experienced by the new teachers. Clinton (1999), Feistritzer (1997), Kopp (1992), and Hirsch et al. (2001) predicted a dramatic increase in the demand for new teachers because of two converging factors –an increase in student enrollment and an increase in teacher attrition due to an aging teaching force (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003, p. 30). As a result, organizations like Teach for America have lowered standards to attract new teachers. Government policy and school district leadership have likewise created incentives like loan forgiveness and signing bonuses. Factors such as the U-trend should be more thoroughly explored because the causation and correlation to teacher retention is paramount. This study will attempt to gather data about a teacher's total years of experience in comparison to teacher satisfaction in their current position. Factors like mentorship programs, leadership support, and working conditions will also be evaluated to see what better influences both beginning and more experienced teachers to maintain their positions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have been adhered to during the entirety of this study. This includes both the collection and analysis of the data. As a safeguard, participation has not been

compulsory but completely based upon the discretion of individual teachers. A brief letter and video preceding the distribution of the survey has explained the study's purpose and voluntary participation.

The data collected by participating members has been collected anonymously and is only accessible to the researcher to ensure the content is kept confidential. The resulting spreadsheet of information is solely stored on the researcher's Google Drive in a password-protected file. Data is kept secure along with all other materials to guarantee the confidentiality of all involved in the research.

Definition of Terms

- *Attrition:* This is the loss of teachers from the work force into other professions.
- *Retention:* This includes the teachers who continue at their schools and return after a year or more of teaching.
- *U-Shaped Teaching Attrition Trend:* This pattern demonstrates the variation between high and low attrition rates over the course of a teaching career. Attrition is the highest upon entry into the teaching profession and again during the conclusion of a teaching career.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Findings

Methods

The survey participants consisted of teaching staff from 31 accredited private Christian schools across Oregon with most of these schools situated within the Willamette Valley. These K-12 grade schools have enrollments between 50-800 and the majority were started in the 1970s. To collect the appropriate amount of data, the entire population of teaching staff from each school was invited to participate through email. I solicited the support of administration at these schools to ensure the survey was going to participants who met the criteria; I also asked administration to support this survey by providing staff time to complete it. Furthermore, consenting teachers were entered into a raffle for seven prizes—five \$50 gift cards and two 1-day leaves with sub coverage. A single electronically submitted survey through Google Forms obtained information from participants during November of 2022 and January of 2023. This simple survey invited all these educators to participate in order to increase the reliability of the results. Participating teachers answered 99 survey questions, which took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

This specific survey was titled Factors Contributing to the Attrition among Christian Schools in the State of Oregon: An Empirical Survey Study. It was based on the Private School survey created by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and distributed by the U.S. Department of Education. Composed of nine sections, the survey assessed demographic information, job assignment, education and training, certification, career history and teacher preparation, working conditions, COVID-19 factors, school climate and teacher attitudes, employment, and background information. Likert scale, multiple choice and drop-down style questions were used. A brief description of each survey section is included below.

1. After an initial six questions about the school the participant currently works at, the first section collected 11 pieces of factual demographic information from the participants. These concerned gender, race, ethnicity, age, position, education work history and experience as an educator.
2. Information regarding specifics related to the participant's current job assignment was found among six questions that formed the second section of the survey. Such information included the number of students taught, subjects, grade level and class composition.
3. The third section of information included 19 questions that continued to collect factual information. These inquiries included the colleges attended, degrees earned, additional training received, and student teaching experienced by the participants.
4. Similarly, the fourth section included four questions related to certification and licensure.
5. Several Likert scale, independent variable questions were used in the fifth section. Composed of 16 questions, this section evaluated prior work history and preparation and training for teaching.
6. Section six was composed of five questions concerning working conditions and additional duties and responsibilities of the participant.
7. Due to the significant impact COVID-19 had on education, the seventh section contained three questions addressing logistics and operations in the context of teaching during the pandemic.
8. Ten questions in section eight asked a series of Likert scale independent, variable questions centered on school climate and teacher attitudes. These questions identified the emotional, physical, and psychological perception of the respondent related to students, staff and leadership.

9. Finally, section nine collected 17 questions on employment history, which predated employment in the educational field and current supplemental employment. This section also contained dependent variable questions around finances, debt, and student loans.

The NCES's 2020-21 Public and Private School Teachers in the United States survey was used for comparative analysis. The NCES survey assessed 8,000 private school participants and 68,300 public school participants across the country. Comparing this study of Oregon private schools to a larger pool of teachers throughout the country was used to highlight any unique trends that may exist. In addition to the NCES research, data collected in the Oregon Report Card and Oregon Educator Equity Report was presented along with previously mentioned survey results. This provided both greater context and comparison for the data collected through this survey. Similarly, it provided an opportunity to compare private Christian school teachers in Oregon to teachers in both public and private schools across the nation.

Summary of the Findings

The survey responses included 62 participants from more than ten different Christian schools in Oregon. Participants represented a third of Oregon's private K-12 Christian Schools and approximately 8% of the teachers employed at these schools. Unfortunately, four respondents were removed from the results as they did not meet the study's requirements. Three of these respondents served primarily as administrators and another as a librarian. Consequently, 58 respondents participated in this study. The survey results were organized into four categories: demographics, experience and employment, education and training, and culture and climate.

Demographics

Statistically, there was a small variance when comparing the demographics of Oregon's private Christian school teachers to the staff of national private Christian schools and Oregon

public schools. Table 1 summarizes the gender, race, and age demographics of the respondents. Among this study's participants, 80.6% were female and 93.4% were white. In addition, 80.5% were born prior to 1990, and shared an average age of 46. These numbers proved less diverse than state or national statistics. According to the 2022 Oregon Report Card and Oregon Educator Equity Report, 73.4% of teachers in the state are women, and 88.7% are white ("Oregon Report Card and Oregon Educator Equity Report," 2022). The average age for teachers in the state is 43. Across the nation, private school staff are 77.2% female and 83.2% white. They have an average age a couple years higher at 45.4. While private schools in Oregon are less diverse than the national statistics, private and public schools across the U.S. are primarily staffed with white, female teachers in their mid-forties.

Table 1*Demographics: Gender, Race, and Average Age of Survey Participants*

Gender		
	<i>Female</i> <i>n (%)</i>	<i>Male</i> <i>n (%)</i>
Oregon Christian Schools	46 (80.6)	12 (19.4)
U.S. Christian Schools	77.2	22.8
Oregon Public Schools	74.3	25.7
Race		
	<i>White</i> <i>n (%)</i>	<i>Non-white</i> <i>n (%)</i>
Oregon Christian Schools	54 (93.4)	4 (6.6)
U.S. Christian Schools	83.2	16.8
Oregon Public Schools	88.7	11.3
Average Age of Participants		
	<i>Age in Years</i>	
Oregon Christian Schools	46.0	
U.S. Christian Schools	45.4	
Oregon Public Schools	43.0	

Note. Only the number of participants (n = 58) were included for the current study. Items were taken directly from The National Teacher and Principal Survey by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Experience and Employment

When considering the years of experience in their current school, private Christian school teachers have an average of 14.5 years compared to 14.8 years for public and 14.2 years for national Christian school teachers. Table 2 details the respondents' years of experience at their current school and in addition provides their total years of experience. It is surprising to see the large number of newer teachers in the last 3 years. In Oregon's private Christian schools, only

12% of teachers were hired within the last three years. In comparison, the state (36.7%) and national (42%) values were radically higher. These figures are an astounding three times higher than the private Christian schools in Oregon. Despite a dramatic increase in student enrollment in Oregon's private Christian schools, a significant increase in new staffing was not observed.

Table 2*Respondents' Teaching Experience at Current School and Total Years of Experience*

Percent of Staff by Years at Current School			
	<i>Private Schools in Oregon n (%)</i>	<i>Private Schools in the U.S. %</i>	<i>Public Schools in Oregon %</i>
0-3 years	7 (12)	42	36.7
4-9 years	22 (39)	28.2	27.6
10-14 years	9 (15.5)	11.7	13
15 or more years	20 (33.5)	18.1	22.7
Average Years of Experience			
	<i>Private Schools in Oregon</i>	<i>Private Schools in the U.S.</i>	<i>Public Schools in the U.S.</i>
Average Years in the Profession	14.5	14.2	14.8

Note. Only the number of participants (n = 58) were included for the current study. Items were taken directly from The National Teacher and Principal Survey by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Exploring the area of teaching experience reveals other interesting details about the respondents. As years of teaching experience increase, a teacher's commitment to stay in their current position also increases. The data revealed a disparity between those educators who desired to teach as long as they are able and those who were not as resolute about their future in the profession. Specifically, 41.4% of teachers responded they would teach as long as they are

able. Of those, 91.6% were aged 40 or older; this is an average of 5 years older than the other participants. Similarly, teachers who stated they would teach as long as they are able had 19.4 years of teaching experience, while the rest of the participants only had an average of 13.2 years of experience. Statistically, the responses this same sample of educators gave on several follow up questions proved significant when compared to those who answered as unsure if they would continue teaching or planned to leave teaching at a specific milestone. This will be explored more in the following sections.

Education, Training and Mentorship

The third category explores the education levels achieved by the survey participants as shown in Table 3. When compared with private and public schools across the nation, areas of disparity begin to surface. For example, teachers in Oregon Christian schools are more educated than their national counterparts with 55.4% holding a master's degree compared to 34.1% nationally. However, 75% of Oregon public school teachers hold a master's degree. There are large gaps between all three demographics. It is wise to note that private Christian school teachers are not held to the same requirements as public schools with regards to education, licensure, and certification. This alone may explain this statistical difference. It is surprising however to see how highly educated many Oregon Christian school teachers are, although they are not on par with their public-school counterparts. According to a study of the NCES census in 2017-2018, 68.1% of Oregon public school teachers held a master's degree compared to 59.1% of public school teachers throughout the U.S. This parallels the disparity we see between Oregon and the rest of the nation when examining the degrees earned in either public or private education (Taie, Lewis & Spiegelman, 2023).

In the area of licensure and certification, the data in Table 3 reveals the variety in types and levels of certifications that exist in Christian schools. This makes it difficult to compare survey responses. From this study, 25% of respondents do not hold any current certification or licensure, 53.3% hold state certification, and 59% hold another certification beside state certification. In many cases, respondents have dual certification (e.g., state license and national ACSI certification) or only non-state certification, since it is not required for their employment. Of the participants, 93.4% of the participants work in accredited schools, which do not require state certification. The disparity in the number of teachers holding licenses is evident when Oregon private Christian schools (53.3%) are compared with Oregon public schools (98.8%). Despite an increase in emergency teacher licenses being issued, nearly all public school teachers—again 98.8 %—are working under a state issued license.

Table 3*Education and Certification of Survey Participants*

Comparing Degree Earned by Participants with Other Studies			
	<i>Christian Schools in Oregon n (%)</i>	<i>Public Schools in Oregon %</i>	<i>Christian Schools in the U.S. %</i>
Associates	1 (1.9)	0.7	8.9
Bachelors	25 (42.7)	23.6	50.8
Masters	32 (55.4)	75.0	34.1
Doctorate	-	0.7	6.1

Percent of Participants Based on Their Level of Certification/License (n, %)	
No Certification of License	14 (25.0)
State License	31 (53.3)
ACSI National Certification	32 (51.7)
Emergency Certificate	1 (1.7)

Note. Respondents could hold more than one license. Only the number of participants (n = 58) were included for the current study. Items were taken directly from The National Teacher and Principal Survey by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The disparity in education level and training is further illustrated in Table 4. In addition to degrees, licensure and certification, Christian school teachers in Oregon and nationally take fewer educational classes prior to graduating from college. In fact, private school educators across the nation cite they have received 10-20% less educational training in seven specific areas than their public-school counterparts. (See Table 4.) For example, in the area of classroom management techniques, 65.2% and 62.9% of Christian schools nationally and in Oregon respectively received training prior to graduating, while 74.3% of public school teachers received training. In lesson planning and learning assessments, 67.2% and 65.5% of Christian schools nationally received training and Christian schools in Oregon lagged slightly behind at 66.1% and

61.3%. However, 78.8% of public school teachers received training in lesson planning and 77.6% in learning assessments. In the training to serve marginalized students, the percentage goes down for Christian schools in Oregon, nationally and public schools, but the gap between Christian educators and public school educators remains around 10%. This is reflective of the education, certification and licensing of private Christian school educators compared to public school educators. Based on the data, public schools have more educated staff and a higher percentage of certified and licensed staff.

Table 4*Percent of Participants Who Received Specific Education or Training to Support Learners*

	<i>Private Christian Schools in Oregon n (%)</i>	<i>Christian Schools in the U.S. %</i>	<i>Public Schools in the U.S. %</i>
Classroom Management Techniques	39 (62.9)	65.2	74.3
Lesson Planning	41 (66.1)	67.2	78.8
Learning Assessment	38 (61.3)	65.5	77.6
Using student performance data to inform instruction	29 (46.8)	50.6	60.6
Serving students from diverse economic backgrounds	-	49.1	64.4
Serving students with special needs	32 (51.6)	50.8	72.2
Teaching students who are limited English proficient (LEP) or English language learners (ELL)	23 (32.1)	29.1	44

Note. Respondents could hold more than one license. Only the number of participants (n = 58) were included for the current study. Items were taken directly from The National Teacher and Principal Survey by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

The information above clearly outlines the fact that public school teachers nationwide receive more education and training before they enter the classroom compared to their private school counterparts. To investigate the level of support or mentorship received after being hired, Table 5 depicts whether the survey participants received such support. Sadly, most of them received no formal mentorship or training as new teachers. Specifically, 75.8% did not participate in any formal program for new teachers when they were hired; 61.3% did not receive classes or seminars for new teachers, and 33.9% felt they did not receive support from their principal in their first year of teaching beyond the required observations and evaluations.

Table 5*Levels of Onboarding and Classroom Support Received as New Teachers*

	<i>No n (%)</i>	<i>Yes n (%)</i>
Student Teaching	17 (29.5)	41 (70.5)
Mentorship	37 (64.5)	21 (35.5)
In your FIRST year of teaching, did you participate in a FORMAL school wide or district wide program for beginning teachers aimed to enhance teachers' effectiveness by providing systematic support	45 (75.8)	13 (24.2)
Common planning time with teachers in your subject	36 (62.3)	22 (37.7)
Seminars or classes for new teachers	35 (61.3)	23 (38.7)
Extra classroom assistance (e.g., teacher aides)	46 (78.7)	12 (21.3)
Regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair	21 (35)	37 (65)
Observation and feedback on your teaching aimed at helping you develop and refine your teaching practice BEYOND any formal administrative observation and feedback you may have received	31 (54.8)	27 (45.2)
Release time to participate in support activities for new or beginning teachers	48 (82)	10 (18)

Note. Respondents could hold more than one license. The number of participants (n) in the study was 58.

Similarly, Table 6 shows that 52.2% never met with a master teacher, while 26.1% met with a master teacher once a week. Those who met with their mentor teacher once a month or

more all identified the experience as having a moderate to great influence on improving their teaching during their first year. Unfortunately, those who claimed to have benefited from a mentorship program are split between elementary and secondary levels and are from six different schools. As a result, no one school or program can be attributed with having an effective mentoring program.

Table 6

Mentorship and Support for New Staff

How Often Did You Meet with Your Mentor? n (%)

Never	24 (52.2)
A Few Times a Year	4 (8.7)
Bi-Monthly	6 (13)
Weekly	12 (26.1)

When responses from several survey areas are evaluated together, the data reveals that supportive environments create lasting teachers. Table 7 uncovers the characteristics of teachers committed to teaching as long as they are able. Statistically, the areas of education, student teaching, mentorship and teaching experience significantly influence a teacher's longevity. A surprising 83.3% of those who entered the education field right out of college or were working in the area of education but not as a teacher noted that they wanted to teach as long as they were able. In comparison, only 61.1% of the rest of the participants who came right out of college into a profession outside of teaching or transferred over from some other educational related field wanted to teach as long as they are able. Education speaking, 70.8% of those desiring to teach as long as they are able had earned a master's degree compared to only 47.2% of the rest of the participants. Clearly, those who initially entered education out of school and invested in

furthering their education while in the profession possess a 20% greater commitment to remaining in teaching.

A similar disparity occurred in student teaching. Of those who did not respond by stating that they wanted to teach as long as they could, only 63.8% were involved in a student-teacher experience versus 87.5% of those who are committed to teaching as long as they are able. Furthermore, 46.2% of teachers committed to the profession had a mentor teacher and described the experience as having a moderate or significant impact on their growth as an educator compared to 0% of the other participants who did not have a mentor.

Table 7

Training Level of Teachers Who Desire to Teach As Long As They Are Able

	Those Committed to Teaching As Long As They Are Able (%)	Those Who Are Unsure, Until a More Desirable Job Comes around, Until I Get Married Or Have a Child Or Am Eligible for Social Security Or Retirement (%)
Went Straight into Education Out of College	83.3	61.1
Holds a Master's Degree	70.8	47.2
Had Student Teaching Experience	87.5	63.8
Had a Mentor Teacher and Described the Experience as Having a Moderate or Significant Impact on Their Growth as an Educator	46.2	0

Note. Respondents could select all options that applied.

Culture and Climate

The survey results for the third category on culture and climate were the most surprising. Table 8 indicates a high level of satisfaction felt among Oregon Christian school teachers based on the culture and climate they teach in. When participants were asked if they fell into the category of “teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group”, 46.5% strongly agreed, and 46.5% somewhat agreed. This is an impressive 93%. When asked if they like the way things are run at this school, 34.5% strongly agreed and 50% somewhat agreed—a noteworthy sum of 84.5%. These numbers are significant and reinforce that Oregon Christian school teachers experience a very good culture and climate. When asked if they are thinking about transferring to another school, 56.9% strongly disagreed and 15.5% somewhat disagreed. This means at minimum 72.4% are content with their current school and would not seek employment elsewhere. Table 9 captures similar data. When asked which statement best describes how long you plan to remain in teaching, 42.9% wanted to stay in teaching as long as they are able; 6.9% want to teach until they can retire; 24.1% are undecided if they will return to teaching; 19% chose until marriage, children, or the retirement of a spouse, and 8.6% selected until a better opportunity presents itself. Only 1.7% (one person) stated they would be leaving after the current year.

Table 8*Percent of Respondents Evaluating Factors Which Influence Satisfaction Levels*

	<i>Strongly Agree n (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree n (%)</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree n (%)</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree n (%)</i>
The teachers at this school like being here. I would describe us as a satisfied group.	27 (46.5)	27 (46.5)	4 (6.9)	0 (0)
I like the way things are run at this school.	20 (35)	29 (50)	9 (15)	0 (0)
I am thinking about transferring to another school.	2 (3.4)	14 (24.1)	9 (15.5)	33 (56.9)
The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.	46 (62)	22 (38)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.	31 (53.4)	23 (39.7)	4 (6.9)	0 (0)
There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.	22 (37.9)	29 (50.0)	7 (12.1)	0 (0)
In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.	17 (32.8)	32 (51.7)	7 (12.1)	2 (3.4)

Note. Respondents could select all options that applied.

Table 9*Reasons Influencing Participants' Future Plans to Continue or Discontinue Teaching*

	<i>Available Options to Select</i>	<i>Number and Percent of Respondents n (%)</i>
Which statement best describes how long you plan to remain in teaching? (%)	Definitely plan to leave as soon as I can	1 (1.7)
	Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job	1 (1.7)
	Until I am eligible for social security benefits	3 (5.2)
	Until a more desirable job opportunity comes along	5 (8.6)
	Until a specific event occurs (e.g., marriage, parenthood, retirement of spouse or partner)	11 (19)
	Undecided at this time	14 (24.1)
	As long as I am able	23 (42.9)

Note. Respondents could select all options that applied. The number of participants (n) was 58 for this study.

The data presented in Tables 8 and 9 is in stark contrast to the *Merrimack college teacher survey: Merrimack College* (2022), which identified teacher job satisfaction at an all-time low in 2022. Their national research indicated 44% of teachers are likely to leave the profession in the next two years. In addition, only 12% of their respondents stated they were very satisfied and 44% were somewhat satisfied (a total of 56% nationally). This value is far below the combined

93% of Oregon Christian school teachers, who selected very satisfied and somewhat satisfied. Merrimack reports, “The survey results suggest a deep disillusionment of many teachers who feel overworked, underpaid, and under-appreciated, with potential implications for a once-in-a-generation shift in the teaching profession” (*Merrimack college teacher survey: Merrimack College*, 2022, p.1). This is significantly different from the private Christian school teachers surveyed in Oregon. Their satisfaction rate is four times higher than their public-school counterparts.

A further examination of both push and pull factors among Christian school teachers provides greater insight into why they choose to leave or stay at their current school. Table 10 summarizes these reasons. When asked what factors push them to leave their current school, 75.5% of participants claim salary is the greatest factor that would drive them to leave their job. Other determining factors were benefits (32.1%), parents (30.2%), and students (70%). These factors impact financial security, stress, and levels of exhaustion.

When teachers feel satisfied at their job positions, however, it shows up in several response categories. Interestingly, 93.1% of respondents were drawn to stay at their current school because of the mission and vision alignment between them and their institution. In addition, 46.7% voiced school leadership as a determining factor. According to Table 8, 100% of the teachers surveyed in this study strongly agreed or somewhat agreed their current administration is supportive and encouraging. Similarly, when talking about their colleagues, 93.9% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that their colleagues shared beliefs and values about the central mission of the school. Likewise, 87.9% agreed their colleagues share a great deal of cooperation. Finally, 89.5% of respondents felt they were recognized for a job well done. As Table 8 shows, 93% of the survey’s participants expressed general satisfaction about their

position. The data highlights a strong sense of support, encouragement, and alignment among Christian school teachers in Oregon, which translates to them experiencing higher job satisfaction.

Table 10

Factors Pushing and Pulling Teachers to Stay in Their Current Positions

	<i>Available Options to Select</i>	<i>Number and Percent of Respondents, n (%)</i>
What factors pull you to stay at this school?	Facilities	5 (6.9)
	Benefits	10 (17.2)
	Parents	15 (25.9)
	Collegiality	24 (36.2)
	Working Conditions	25 (39.7)
	Leadership	28 (46.7)
	Students	42 (70.0)
	Alignment with the mission, vision, and values	55 (93.1)
What factors push you to leave this school?	Facilities	9 (17.0)
	Benefits	17 (32.1)
	Parents	16 (30.2)
	Working Conditions	7 (13.2)
	Leadership	7 (13.2)
	Students	6 (11.3)
	Resources	13 (24.5)
	Salary	40 (75.5)

Note. Respondents could select all options that applied. The number of participants (n) was 58 for this study.

In addition to satisfaction levels, teachers in Christian schools across the nation also express having more influence over school policies and having more autonomy than their public-school counterparts. Data in Table 11 shows Oregon Christian school teachers are ranked high in many categories when it comes to the voice they have in selecting and using curriculum. These indicators are attributed to satisfaction and in turn retention rates. Although this data is significant, the trend may be related to the smaller size of private Christian schools. For instance, smaller schools depend on staff to take on multiple roles, giving them a stronger voice in the mission and functions of the school. In addition, communication within a smaller population is simpler.

The numbers exhibited by Christian schools in Table 11 can most closely compare to responses from rural public schools, where cultures and staffing are more homogenous. The only exceptions between these two school types would be in the budget and professional development opportunities. For example, only 38.7% of Christian school teachers in Oregon identify as having a voice in the tight school budget process in comparison to 48.7% of staff at Christian schools in the U.S. and 53.7% of public school teachers. This may be attributed to the financial model of tuition-funded Christian schools, which possess a financial dynamic unlike public education.

When looking at influence in the professional development they receive, 71% of Oregon Christian school educators expressed they do have a say in the training they receive. This number is approximately 10% lower than national Christian schools and public schools. Outside of the budget and professional development, Oregon Christian school teachers identified as having a strong voice and a lot of autonomy in their respective schools as presented in Table 11. These simple but often profound opportunities provide teachers with a sense of worth and value in a school.

Table 11*Percent of Participants Who Feel They Have a Voice in Specific School Directives*

	<i>OR Christian Schools %</i>	<i>US Christian Schools %</i>	<i>US Public Schools %</i>	<i>US Rural Public Schools %</i>
Selecting Textbook/ Other Instructional Materials	94.7	90.3	84.1	88.4
Selecting Content, Topics, and Skills to Be Taught	93.5	96.3	88.6	89.3
Selecting Teaching Techniques	100.0	99.3	97.7	98.5
Evaluating and Grading Students	100.0	99.2	98.1	98.6
Disciplining Students	93.5	98.3	96.1	97.0
Determining Amount of Homework Assigned	98.9	93.5	96.7	97.5
Selecting Teaching Techniques	100.0	99.3	97.7	98.5
Setting Performance Standards for Students	92.0	94.5	81.3	84.0
Establishing Curriculum	95.1	96.1	84.7	88.1
Determining In-service and PD Content	71.0	84.7	80.9	81.4
Evaluating Teachers	53.2	63.3	49.9	54.4
Hiring New Full-time Teachers	67.7	61.4	62.7	64.0
Selecting Content, Topics, and Skills to Be Taught	85.4	83.5	70.7	73.0
Setting Discipline Policy	85.4	83.5	70.7	73.0
Deciding How the School Budget Will Be Spent	38.7	48.7	53.7	53.4

Note. Items were taken directly from The National Teacher and Principal Survey by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Specific questions addressing teacher voice, influence and satisfaction are very effective for examining a school's culture (as seen in Table 11). However, a few indicators illuminate teacher satisfaction. Consistently, insufficient salaries are identified as the primary factor for teachers leaving the profession; however, working conditions are also paramount. Additional factors are average class size and number of hours worked a week, which can contribute to teacher stress and lower satisfaction (Kersaint 2005; Allred & Smith, 1984; Chapman & Hutcheson, 1982; Brill & and McCartney, 2008).

There is a significant compensation disparity between public and Christian educators. For example, Oregon Christian school teachers earn much lower wages compared to other teachers, despite holding comparable jobs. They receive 56% of the wages their public-school counterparts make and 86% of the wages Christian school teachers across the nation earn. A similar trend is present in the reported number of hours worked a week. The disparity is less significant, but Christian school teachers in Oregon worked a reported 53.7 hours a week in comparison to 51.1 hours for Christian school teachers nationally, and 51.9 hours a week for public teachers nationally. Unfortunately, Christian school teachers according to this data work more and are the least compensated.

It is only in class size where we observe a more favorable working condition for Christian school teachers. Surprisingly, Christian schools in Oregon averaged 18 students per classroom. According to research however, public school classrooms averaged 19-22 students, while private Christian schools in the U.S. averaged 12-17 students. It is important to note the numbers reported for class size can often be misconstrued, especially in public schools, where all licensed staff are calculated into the ratio—not just classroom teachers. In addition, Oregon's

Christian schools have seen an unprecedented growth as students are exiting the public schools, which leads to larger classloads for teachers.

Teacher satisfaction remains critical to retaining teachers, and data from this survey and others clearly demonstrate significantly higher levels of satisfaction among Christian school and private school teachers in comparison to public school teachers. However, in addition to more robust compensation packages, investment in effective teacher mentorship and onboarding programs demonstrate the greatest measurable yield in retaining teachers. Secondly, implementation in professional development and additional education with teacher engagement on school wide decision making are critical to demonstrating value in the growth, improvement, experience, and opinions of teachers.

Chapter 3: Discussion of Findings and Implications

Discussion of Findings

This exploratory survey study identified what factors lead to teacher attrition among Christian school teachers in Oregon. Specifically, the survey was adapted from the NCES survey to identify primary factors influencing teacher attrition. The results of the survey responses from Christian school teachers in Oregon were compared to the 2021 NCES survey and previous research to illuminate where there is convergence and divergence in the data. This information provides valuable insight for the leadership of Christian schools in Oregon to develop strategic initiatives, which could reduce teacher attrition rates. The findings were organized into four categories—first, areas where the data converges, second where the data diverges, recommendations for future practices and finally recommendations for future research and action.

Areas of Convergence

Data collected from the Christian schools in Oregon echoed what previous research identified as factors of attrition among teachers. Problems with leadership, students, parents, culture, climate and of course salary and benefits are primary factors for teacher attrition across all schools. However, the factors with the greatest correlation between studies include salary, demographics, and mentorship programs.

Salary was the single most often-cited reason for quitting among teachers (Wynn et al., 2007; Guarino et al., 2006). Wynn et al. identified compensation as the greatest factor for attrition for 82% of teachers (2007). Similarly, 75.5% of Christian school teachers in Oregon surveyed selected compensation as the greatest catalyst for attrition. The relative similarities of these statistics and the fact that both public and private school teachers cite salary as the single

greatest cause for attrition is surprising considering Oregon Christian school teachers only make 56% of their public-school counterparts.

Demographic information was similar. For example, the average age of teachers ranges between 43-46 with the average age of public school teachers in Oregon being 43 and Oregon Christian schools being 46. Similar numbers are also observed in years of experience. Private Christian school teachers average 14.5 years of experience, while national public school teachers average 14.8 years of experience. While the rest of the demographic data is not statistically identical, it is still very similar. Middle age white women still dominate the teaching field. Private schools are less diverse than their public-school counterparts, but the numbers are still very similar as observed in Table 1. For example, females compose 80.6% of the teaching staff in Christian schools in Oregon in comparison to 74.3% of Oregon public schools. Race is similar with 93.4% of Christian school teachers identified as white in comparison to 88.7% of Oregon public schools. This data presents significant similarities in demographics between public and Christian school teachers.

A final area where data is aligned is in the impact of effective mentorship programs. In the survey of Christian school teachers in Oregon, respondents were almost five times more likely to remain in education if they had participated in a mentorship program. Note that these observations were based on descriptive statistics and not inferential tests using odds ratios. Similarly, results from previous studies confirm the value of mentorship programs increasing retention rates. (Guarino et al., 2006; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Beginning teachers who were assigned mentors from the same grade level or subject field and who participated in onboarding, planning and collaboration were more likely to be retained. For example, Brill and McCartney (2008) discovered a mentoring program in California was able to reduce teacher attrition by 26

percent in just two years. Furthermore, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that among more than 3,000 beginning teachers, those who experienced induction and mentoring in their first year of teaching were less likely to leave teaching or change schools. They also discovered the more types of support teachers received, the lower the likelihood of their leaving or changing schools.

Areas of Divergence

Despite significant similarities in the data between Oregon Christian schools and public schools on some points, many areas show prominent divergence between the studies. For example, teacher satisfaction levels are surprisingly much higher among Oregon Christian school teachers than their public-school counterparts. According to the *Merrimack college teacher survey: Merrimack College*, many teachers feel “overworked, underpaid, and under-appreciated, with potential implications for a once-in-a-generation shift in the teaching profession” (*Merrimack college teacher survey: Merrimack College*, 2022, p.1). Based on this study, Christian school teachers surveyed in Oregon are four times more satisfied than their public-school counterparts. Students, parents, leadership, culture and climate all contribute to teacher satisfaction. It could be hypothesized that higher satisfaction significantly contributes to their willingness to work for 56% of the compensation their public-school counterparts earn. Alignment among students, families and staff in Christian schools could be another factor influencing teacher satisfaction. For instance, 93.1% of Christian school teachers surveyed stated alignment with the mission, vision and values is a primary factor anchoring them to stay employed at their current school. Looking closer, 33.5% of Christian school teachers have been at their school for over 15 years in comparison to 22.7% of public school teachers. A natural outcome of teacher satisfaction is the number of years teachers are employed at their current place of employment.

Among the factors contributing to satisfaction of teachers, the perception of students and parents is very different between prior research and the response of Oregon Christian school teachers. Public school teachers often identify students as a reason for them quitting the profession (58%) in comparison to 11.3% among Oregon Christian school teachers (Wynn et al., 2007). Prior research ranks students as the second greatest reason for teacher attrition. Interestingly, this study shows Oregon Christian school teachers rating students as the lowest contributing factor to attrition. A similar contrast is observed with parents. In this survey of Oregon Christian school teachers, parental pressure and expectations are the second leading contributor to teacher attrition at 30.2%, while it is fourth according to the research done by Wynn et al at 42% (2007).

In addition to significant differences in teacher satisfaction, a statistical difference separates public and Christian schools in Oregon regarding education and training. Public school teachers consistently report more education and training than their Christian school counterparts as illustrated in Tables 4 and 5. Specifically, Oregon Christian schools are two times more likely than Oregon public schools to have teachers on staff who have not earned a bachelor's degree. Similarly, 75% of public school teachers in Oregon have earned master's degrees in comparison to 55.4% of Oregon Christian school teachers. Interestingly, 25% of Oregon Christian school teachers also carry no license or certification, which is radically different from Oregon public school teachers, where only 1.5% are teaching under an emergency license (Baumhardt, 2022). Salary, benefits, and limited budget to invest in further education among Christian schools attribute to this significant difference in education, licensure and certification among Christian schools in Oregon.

This disparity can also be observed in training and additional education. On average, public school teachers have received 10% more training than Oregon Christian school teachers in classroom management techniques, lesson planning, learning assessments and using student performance data to inform instruction. This difference only increases in training and education for English language learners and students with special needs. It could be hypothesized funding and demographics play a significant role in these numbers. Christian schools receive limited Title funding for professional budgets and typically do not have the finances to bring in experts to conduct professional development or send staff away to receive professional development. Additionally, due to the lack of resources and staffing to respond to students with academic or behavior needs and English language learners, it is safe to conclude Christian schools may not invest in training for these needs.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The results of this study, combined with the numerous studies conducted by my predecessors, prompt two strategic initiatives. First, compensation for teachers must be increased to reflect the responsibilities of the profession and to retain and recruit teachers. Second and more importantly, teacher satisfaction must be improved by investing in mentorship, valuing their voice, and ensuring excellent building leadership.

Overwhelmingly, every survey and study identified compensation, benefits, and salary as the primary factors for attrition among teachers. At least sixteen studies spanning four decades have confirmed compensation has and continues to be the most cited reason for leaving teaching (Allred & Smith, 1984; Borman & Dowling, 2006; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Hall et al., 1992; Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kelly, 2004; Kersaint et al., 2007; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; Murnane et al., 1989; Podgursky et al.,

2004; Stinebrickner, 2002; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Wynn et al., 2007). Unfortunately, the salary increases must be sizable enough to make an impact. Some research suggests salary increases of 10% or greater are required to significantly stem attrition rates, while other studies have countered 20% is a more realistic number (Hanushek et al., 1999; Brill & McCartney, 2008). Clearly, significant salary increases will dramatically reduce attrition and should be pursued by school boards and leadership.

But since there is no data of a school providing a 20% or greater compensation increase, we lack evidence for this potential solution. Hanushek and Rivkin (2007) conclude that overall salary increases for teachers would be both expensive and ineffective. Although evidence exists confirming significant salary increases would translate into greater retention of teachers, this solution unfortunately is unrealistic and untenable provided the current method of funding public education and the financial limitations of Christian education. Brill and McCartney (2008) recommend investing in teachers' work environments and improving teacher satisfaction. This may be much more cost effective for reducing teacher attrition. Currently, this is speculation, and a true cost analysis must be carried out. An investigation of the cost of improving salaries against the cost of recruiting, mentoring, and improving teacher satisfaction needs to occur to achieve reliable data.

With parent expectations and pressure serving as the second highest factor in Christian school teacher attrition rates (both in Oregon and beyond Oregon), it is imperative to create transparent communication, healthy boundaries, and attainable expectations. The transactional relationship between parents and Christian schools creates consumer expectation, which both the consumer and producer must keep realistic. Policies around enrollment process and conflict resolution will aid in improving alignment and providing a structure to navigate areas of conflict.

Finally, it is imperative best practices, sound teaching, and established policies drive decision making instead of personal vendettas, fear, over funding or nepotism.

Improving the support new teachers receive in a building may create the greatest return for investment. A well-established induction and mentorship program will have the highest yield for teacher satisfaction, which is verified by surveys and studies. Guarino et al. (2006) confirmed a decrease in attrition rates with mentoring and induction programs highlighting collegial support. Brill and McCartney (2008) researched a mentorship and induction program in California, which observed a 26% decrease in attrition in just two years. Furthermore, “a study of the California New Teacher Project—which focuses on new teacher support, including mentoring and professional development workshops—found that districts saved an average of 31 cents after the 1st year for every dollar spent on the program and 68 cents after the 2nd year because of decreased recruitment and hiring costs” (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and California Department of Education, 1992; Curran & Goldrick, 2002). This study demonstrated similar results. Teachers who met with a mentor teacher at least every other week identified the support as having a moderate to significant impact on their development as a teacher. It similarly influenced the longevity and satisfaction of those teachers. This reinforces that mentorship is both financially beneficial and decreases attrition rates. As a result, it would be prudent for schools and districts to invest in established and successful mentoring and induction programs.

Although not as significant as mentorship, a relationship between increased teacher voice and autonomy with teacher satisfaction can be made. In this study, Oregon Christian school teachers identified having both greater autonomy and satisfaction compared to their public-school counterparts, who expressed less autonomy and lower satisfaction. Borman and

Dowling's research (2006) demonstrated teachers with more autonomy were less likely to leave the profession or migrate to another school. Specifically, "teacher influences over school policy can mitigate first-year teachers' propensity to leave the profession, with a predicted decrease from 19% to 4% as teacher influence increases" (Liu, 2007, p. 13). Additionally, teacher leadership programs, which promote teacher decision-making and autonomy incentivize new teachers in committing to their school (Smylie, 1995). Strategic initiatives to engage teachers in the decision-making process place trust in them as professionals. This boosts morale and provides them with more autonomy, which is connected to improving retention rates for teachers.

Finally, effective leadership is required for successful mentorship programs and entrusting teachers with more autonomy. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) list leadership among the top three causes for teacher attrition. Wynn et al. (2007) proposes that a beginning teacher's decision to remain at their school is most strongly associated with school climate and principal leadership. Among other things, a solid school leader has a clear vision for their school, builds a nurturing community among staff, motivates teachers to try new strategies, encourages teachers to take on leadership roles and leads by example. It is no wonder a clear relationship can be drawn between leadership and teacher satisfaction. Among Oregon Christian school teachers, perception of leadership and teacher satisfaction were both proportionally higher than their public-school counterparts. This data further illustrates the essential role leadership plays in both the satisfaction and retention rates of teachers. This information further reinforces the value of leadership in mitigating teacher attrition because of their direct impact on school climate and culture.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research and Action

Further research needs to be conducted to substantiate the conclusions of this study.

There are three primary weaknesses in the simple survey, which may undermine the validity and reliability of the results. They include (1) a lack of sample size, (2) the need for a longitudinal study, and (3) follow up with participants who demonstrated a high propensity for retention and attrition.

First, the quantity of participants was insufficient. The survey responses included 62 participants from more than ten different Christian schools in Oregon. Participants represented a third of Oregon's private K-12 Christian Schools and approximately 8% of the teachers employed at these schools, but four of these participants did not meet the requirements for the study and their responses were eliminated. Unfortunately, these numbers fail to reach the threshold for validity. Most research studies recommend a threshold of 30% or greater to establish validity of the data. An increase of participants would improve the probability that the participants would better reflect the demographics of the population. Besides having a greater sample size, stratified and systematic sampling are two methods that could be used to enhance the data's validity. Stratified or systematic sampling would ensure a more accurate cross section of participants are surveyed to reflect the actual population. Neither an increased sample size nor a different form of sampling will fully rectify the concerns over validity.

Second, a longitudinal study would be necessary to eliminate outliers and establish more reliable trends among participants. Furthermore, analyzing relationships between data over time will eliminate anomalies and reinforce trends. Especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, participating answers may have been influenced by this generational global event, which changed the methods and platforms used to teach students for over a year. Only a longitudinal

study will reveal if the stress and anxiety of teaching during COVID-19 impacted the responses of the participants.

Finally, the ability to follow up with participants who demonstrate a high propensity for retention and attrition is essential. Following up on previously collected data would permit the study to gain more insight into the raw numbers provided in the quantitative results from the survey. Teachers would be able to express their qualitative thoughts and reasons for staying or leaving, which would allow data to be more accurately evaluated.

Christian schools in Oregon are experiencing a tremendous boom in enrollment and have high satisfaction rates among their teachers. Despite these encouraging statistics, Christian schools in Oregon cannot stay complacent or content. There are significant needs which must be addressed. First, Christian schools must be creative in improving compensation packages for their teaching staff to reduce the profession-leading attrition rate. This cannot be ignored and has remained the leading source of attrition among Christian schools in Oregon. Second, Christian schools in Oregon must invest professionally in their teachers in three additional areas. Leadership must implement a successful induction and mentorship program to improve teacher retention rates through accelerating their growth as an educator and minimizing areas of frustration, confusion, and hardship. They must also seek to decrease the disparity in educational training and professional development among Christian school educators and public school educators. Investment in this area will communicate value in your teachers as professionals and improve their skill set. Last, leadership should engage Christian school teachers in decision making, which will demonstrate the importance of their perspective and opinion. By honoring teachers through their compensation and investing in them as professionals, Christian schools

across Oregon will observe a decrease in attrition rates. This will ultimately result in more highly qualified teachers on staff, greater school stability and ultimately higher student outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

This specific survey was titled Factors Contributing to the Attrition among Christian Schools in the State of Oregon: An Empirical Survey Study. It was based on the Private School survey created by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and distributed by the U.S. Department of Education

<https://forms.gle/SWVU6ninzeuUMre56>

Teacher Survey:

1) Select your School

Dropdown

3) School Organization

Church Sponsored

Independent

4) Enrollment

Open Enrollment (Any student is permitted to enroll as long as the student and family will abide by our mission, vision, value and policies)

Alignment Only Enrollment (Only families and student aligned with our faith value are permitted enrollment and they must abide by our mission, vision, value and policies)

5) Accreditation

Not Accredited

ACSI

Cognia

Other

6) How many years has the school operated?

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

10-20 years

20-30 years

30-40 years

40-50 years

More than 50 years

More than 75 years

Continue to next section

Section 2 of 10

Section 1: Demographics

7) Are you male or female?

Male

Female

8) Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

Yes

No

9) What is your race?

White

Black or African American

Asian

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

American Indian or Alaska Native

10) What is your year of birth?

11) How do you classify your position at THIS school?

Regular full-time teacher (in any of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels)

Regular part-time teacher (in any of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels)

Itinerant teacher (i.e. your assignment requires you to provide instruction at more than one school)

Long-term substitute (i.e. your assignment requires that you fill the role of a regular teacher on a long-term basis, but you are still considered a substitute)

Administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal, director, school head)

Library media specialist or Librarian

Other professional staff (e.g., counselor, curriculum coordinator, social worker)

Support staff (e.g., secretary)

12) How much time do you work as a TEACHER in any of grades K-12 or comparable ungraded levels at THIS school?

Full time

$\frac{3}{4}$ time or more, but less than full-time

$\frac{1}{2}$ time or more, but less than $\frac{3}{4}$ time

$\frac{1}{4}$ time or more, but less than $\frac{1}{2}$ time

Less than $\frac{1}{4}$ time

13) During the LAST school year (2021-22), what was your MAIN activity?

Teaching in this school

Teaching in another private elementary, middle, or secondary school IN THIS STATE

Teaching in a private elementary, middle, or secondary school IN ANOTHER STATE

Teaching in a PUBLIC elementary, middle, or secondary school

Teaching in a preschool

Teaching at a college or university

Student at a college or university

Working in a position in the field of education, but not as a teacher

Working in a position outside the field of education

On leave (e.g., maternity or paternity leave, disability leave, sabbatical)

Caring for family members, but not on leave (e.g., homemaking, childrearing)

Military service

Unemployed and seeking work

Retired from another job

14) When did you begin teaching, either full-time or part-time, at THIS school?

Select calendar date

15) When did you FIRST begin teaching, either full-time or part-time, at the K-12 or comparable ungraded level?

Select calendar date

16) Excluding time spent on maternity/paternity leave or sabbatical, how many school years have you worked, either full-time or part-time, as a K-12 or comparable ungraded level teacher in public, public charter, or private schools?

Dropdown

17) In how many schools have you taught, either full-time or part-time, at the K-12 or comparable ungraded level?

Dropdown

After section 2

Continue to next section

Section 3 of 10

Section 2: Class Organization

18) Do you currently teach students in any of these grades at THIS school?

Prekindergarten

Kindergarten

1st Grade

2nd grade

3rd Grade

4th Grade

5th Grade

6th Grade

7th Grade

8th Grade

9th Grade

10th Grade

11th Grade

12th Grade

19) Are you intentionally assigned to instruct the same group of students for more than one year (e.g., looping)?

Yes

No

20) Which statement best describes the way YOUR classes at THIS school are organized?

You instruct several classes of different students most or all of the day in one or more subjects.

You are an elementary school teacher who teaches only one subject to different classes of students.

You instruct the same group of students all or most of the day in multiple subjects.

You are one of two or more teachers, in the same class, at the same time, and are jointly responsible for teaching the same group of students all or most of the day.

You instruct a small number of selected students released from or in their regular classes in specific skills or to address specific needs.

21) During your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching at THIS school, what is the total number of students enrolled in the class you taught?

Short answer text

22) During your most recent FULL WEEK of teaching at THIS school, what is the average number of students you taught at any one time?

Short answer text

23) How many separate class periods or sections do you currently teach at THIS school?

Short answer text

After section 3

Continue to next section

Section 4 of 10

Section 3: Education and Training

24) Highest Degree Earned

Associates

Bachelors

Masters

Doctorate

25) What was your field of study for your bachelor's degree?

Short answer text

26) If you had a second major of study, which was it?

Short answer text

27) If you had a second minor of study, which was it?

Short answer text

28) When did you earn your bachelor's degree?

Select calendar date

29) What was your field of study for your master's degree

Short answer text

30) When did you earn your master's degree?

Select calendar date

31) What was your field of study for your doctorate's degree?

Short answer text

32) When did you earn your doctorate's degree?

Select calendar date

33) Vocational Certificate

Short answer text

34) Associates Degree

Short answer text

35) Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies

Short answer text

36) Have you ever taken any undergraduate or graduate courses that focused SOLELY on teaching methods?

Yes

No

37) How many undergraduate or graduate courses focused SOLELY on teaching methods?

1-2 courses

3-4 courses

5-9 courses

10 or more courses

38) Did you take any of these courses before your first year of teaching?

Yes

No

39) BEFORE your first year of teaching, did you take any graduate or undergraduate courses which taught you — Yes or No

Classroom management techniques

Lesson planning

How to assess learning?

How to use student performance data to inform instruction?

How to serve students with special needs?

How to teach students who are English-language learners (ELLs) or limited-English proficient (LEP)?

40) Did you spend time student teaching (sometimes called practice teaching)?

Yes

No

41) In how many different classrooms did you student teach?

1

2

3 or more

42) How long did your student teaching last?

4 weeks or less

5-7 weeks

8-11 weeks

12 weeks or more

After section 4

Continue to next section

Section 5 of 10

Section 4: Certificate

43) Did you enter teaching through an alternative route to a certification program?

Yes

No

44) Do you currently hold regular or full certification by an accrediting or certifying body
OTHER THAN THE STATE you currently teach in?

Yes

No

45) Which of the following describes this current teaching certificate you hold in THIS state?

Regular or standard state certificate or advanced professional certificate

Certificate issued after satisfying all requirements except the completion of a
probationary period (in some states this is called a probationary certificate)

Certificate that requires some additional coursework, student teaching, or passage of a test before regular certification can be obtained (in some states this is called a temporary or provisional certificate)

Certificate issued to persons who must complete a certification program in order to continue teaching (in some states this is called a waiver or emergency certificate)

ACSI Certification

I do not hold any of the above certifications in THIS state

46) What areas does this certification permit you to teach?

Short answer text

After section 5

Continue to next section

Section 6 of 10

Section 5: Early Career Experience

47) What was your MAIN activity the year before you began teaching at the K-12 or comparable ungraded level?

Student at a college or university

Working as a substitute teacher

Teaching at a college or university

Working in a position in the field of education, but not as a teacher

Working in an occupation outside the field of education

Caring for family members

Military service

Unemployed and seeking work

Retired from another job

48) In your FIRST year of teaching, how well prepared were you to – Not at all prepared or Somewhat prepared or Well prepared or Very well prepared

Handle a range of classroom management or discipline situations?

Use a variety of instructional methods?

Teach your subject matter?

Use computers in classroom instruction?

Assess students?

Differentiate instruction in the classroom?

Use data from student assessments to inform instruction?

Teach to state content standards?

Teach students who are limited-English proficient [LEP] or English-language learners [ELLs]?

Teach students with special needs?

49) In your FIRST year of teaching, did you participate in a FORMAL schoolwide or districtwide program for beginning teachers aimed to enhance teachers' effectiveness by providing systematic support (sometimes called a teacher induction program)?

Yes

No

50) Did you receive the following kinds of support during your FIRST year of teaching?

Yes

No

51) Common planning time with teachers in your subject

Yes

No

52) Seminars or classes for beginning teachers

Yes

No

53) Extra classroom assistance (e.g., teacher aides)

Yes

No

54) Regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair

Yes

No

55) Regular supportive communication with your principal, other administrators, or department chair

Yes

No

56) Observation and feedback on your teaching aimed at helping you develop and refine your teaching practice BEYOND any formal administrative observation and feedback you may have received

Yes

No

57) Release time to participate in support activities for new or beginning teachers

Yes

No

58) In your FIRST year of teaching, were you ASSIGNED a master or mentor teacher by your school or district?

Yes

No

59) How frequently did you work with your assigned master or mentor teacher during your first year of teaching?

At least once a week

Once or twice a month

A few times a year

Never

60) Had your assigned master or mentor teacher ever instructed students in the same subject area(s) as yours?

Yes

No

61) Did your assigned master or mentor teacher provide the following types of support during your FIRST year of teaching? Yes or No

Helped with paperwork or record keeping

Demonstrated lessons

Helped you prepare lessons that address learning standards

Helped you develop student assessment tools

62) Overall, to what extent did your assigned master or mentor teacher improve your teaching in your first year of teaching?

Not at all

To a small extent

To a moderate extent

To a great extent

After section 6

Continue to next section

Section 7 of 10

Section 6: Working Conditions

63) How many hours does your contract require you to work during a typical FULL WEEK at THIS school?

Short answer text

64) Of the hours you are CONTRACTED to work, excluding time spent on planning, lunch, break/recess, arrival/dismissal of students, and otherwise NOT delivering instruction, how many hours during a typical full week do you DELIVER INSTRUCTION to students in THIS school?

Short answer text

65) Including contract hours, and hours before and after school, and on the weekends, how many hours do you spend on ALL teaching and other school-related activities during a typical FULL WEEK at THIS school?

Short answer text

66) During this school year, do you or will you do the following for this school? Yes or No?

Coach a sport?

Sponsor any student groups, clubs, or organizations?

Serve as a department lead or chair?

Serve as a lead curriculum specialist?

Serve on a schoolwide committee or task force?

Serve as an assigned mentor or mentor coordinator for teachers?

67) In the LAST SCHOOL YEAR (2021-22), how much of your own money did you spend on classroom supplies, without reimbursement?

Short answer text

After section 7

Continue to next section

Section 8 of 10

Section 7: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND TEACHER ATTITUDES DURING COVID-19 LAST YEAR

68) During the 2021-22 school year, how did the coronavirus pandemic affect how you delivered instruction in this school?

I was not a teacher at this school during the 2021-22 school year

There was no change in how my classes were taught because of the coronavirus pandemic

All or some of my classes normally taught in person at the school were canceled

All or some of my classes normally taught in person moved to a distance-learning format using online resources, either self-paced or real-time online resources, either self-paced or real-time

All or some of my classes normally taught in person moved to a distance-learning format using paper materials sent home with students

All or some of my classes normally taught in person changed in some other way

69) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I had the support and resources I needed to be effective as a teacher at this school during the coronavirus pandemic in the 2021-22 school year.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

70) During the coronavirus pandemic in the 2021-22 school year, what kinds of real-time interactions, if any, did you have with your students at this school?

I had no real-time interactions with students during the coronavirus pandemic in the 2021-22 school year

I taught scheduled real-time lessons to classes who could ask questions during the lesson through a video or audio call

I held scheduled sessions with groups of students to provide support through a video or audio call

I held scheduled one-on-one sessions with individual students to teach lessons or provide support through a video or audio call

I held scheduled office hours where students could ask questions through a video or audio call

I had unscheduled sessions with students as needed through a video or audio call

After section 8

Continue to next section

Section 9 of 10

Section 8: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND TEACHER ATTITUDES

71) How much actual influence do you think teachers have over school policy AT THIS SCHOOL in each of the following areas? No influence or Minor influence or Moderate influence or A great deal of influence

Setting performance standards for students at this school

Establishing curriculum

Determining the content of in-service professional development programs

Evaluating teachers

Hiring new full-time teachers

Setting discipline policy

Deciding how the school budget will be spent

72) Teacher voice in decision making: No control or Minor control or Moderate control or A great deal of control

Selecting textbooks and other instructional materials

Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught

Selecting teaching techniques

Evaluating and grading students

Disciplining students

Determining the amount of homework to be assigned

73) Teacher Support: Strongly disagree or Somewhat disagree or Somewhat agree or Strongly agree

The school administration's behavior toward the staff is supportive and encouraging.

I am satisfied with my teaching salary.

The level of student misbehavior in this school (such as noise, horseplay or fighting in the halls, cafeteria, or student lounge) interferes with my teaching.

I receive a great deal of support from parents for the work I do.

Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies, and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.

Routine duties and paperwork interfere with my job of teaching.

My principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.

Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.

Most of my colleagues share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.

The principal knows what kind of school he or she wants and has communicated it to the staff.

There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.

In this school, staff members are recognized for a job well done.

I worry about the security of my job because of the performance of my students or my school on state and/or local tests.

State and/or content standards have had influence on my satisfaction with teaching. a positive

I am given the support I need to teach students with special needs.

The amount of student tardiness and class cutting in this school interferes with my teaching.

I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.

I make a conscious effort to coordinate the content of my courses with that of other teachers.

74) To what extent is each of the following a problem in THIS school? Not a problem or Minor problem or Moderate problem or Serious problem

Student tardiness

Student absenteeism

Student class cutting

Teacher absenteeism

Students dropping out

Student apathy

Lack of parental involvement

Poverty

Students come to school unprepared to learn

Poor student health

75) To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Strongly disagree or Somewhat disagree or Somewhat agree or Strongly agree

The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it.

The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group. I would describe us as a satisfied group.

I like the way things are run at this school.

If I could get a higher paying job, I'd leave teaching as soon as possible.

I am thinking about transferring to another school.

I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching.

I think about staying home from school because I'm just too tired to go.

76) Which statement best describes how long you plan to remain in teaching?

As long as I am able

Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from this job

Until I am eligible for retirement benefits from a previous job

Until I am eligible for Social Security benefits

Until a specific life event occurs (e.g., parenthood, marriage, retirement of spouse or partner)

Until a more desirable job opportunity comes along

Definitely plan to leave as soon as I can

Undecided at this time

77) In general, would you say that your physical health is:

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

78) In general, would you say that your mental health is:

Excellent

Very good

Good

Fair

Poor

79) On average, how many hours of sleep do you get in a typical school night?

Short answer text

80) What factors pull you to stay at THIS school?

Salary

Benefits

Alignment with mission, vision and values

Leadership

Parents

Students

Working conditions

Collegiality

Facilities

Resources

81) What factors push you to leave THIS school?

Salary

Benefits

Alignment with mission, vision and values

Leadership

Parents

Students

Working conditions

Collegiality

Facilities

Resources

After section 9

Continue to next section

Section 10 of 10

Section 9: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

82) DURING THE SUMMER OF 2022, did you have any earnings from working another job?

Yes

No

83) How much was made working that other summer job?

Short answer text

84) How many days are covered by your contract, per contract year?

Short answer text

85) DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, what is your base teaching salary for the entire school year?

Short answer text

86) DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, do you, or will you, earn any additional compensation from this school system for extracurricular or additional activities such as coaching, student activity sponsorship, mentoring teachers, or teaching evening classes?

Short answer text

87) How much do you, or will you, earn any additional compensation from this school system for extracurricular or additional activities such as coaching, student activity sponsorship, mentoring teachers, or teaching evening classes?

Short answer text

88) DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, do you, or will you, earn any additional compensation from this school system based on your students' performance (e.g., through a merit pay or pay-for-performance agreement)?

Yes

No

89) How much do you, or will you, earn any additional compensation from this school system based on your students' performance (e.g., through a merit pay or pay-for-performance agreement)?

Short answer text

90) DURING THE CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR, do you, or will you, earn additional compensation from working in any job OUTSIDE this school system?

Yes

No

91) How much will you earn additional compensation from working in any job OUTSIDE this school system?

Short answer text

92) Which of these best describes this job OUTSIDE this school system?

Teaching or Tutoring

Non-teaching, but related to the teaching field

Other

93) During the CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR do you, or will you, receive a retirement pension check paid from a teacher retirement system?

Yes

No

94) How much will you receive for a retirement pension check paid from a teacher retirement system?

Short answer text

95) Other than money you may have borrowed from family or friends, did you take out any type of student loans to help pay for your undergraduate or graduate education?

Yes

No

96) Do you still owe all, some, or none of the amount that you borrowed?

All

Some

None

97) How much do you typically pay each month on your student loans?

Short answer text

98) Please indicate your level of stress regarding your student loan debt. Would you say your level of stress is:

Very Low

Low

Moderate

High

Very High

99) Please indicate whether your student loan debt has influenced your employment plans and decisions in any of the following ways. Did you — Yes or No

Have to work at more than one job at the same time because of your student loan debt?

Take a less desirable job because of your student loan debt?

Appendix B: IRB Approval From

2221042

Title: Factors contributing to attrition among Christian schools in the state of Oregon: A survey study of Christian schools in Oregon.

Principal Researcher(s): Zachary Davidson

Date application completed: 9/22/2022

(The researcher needs to complete the information above on this page.)


COMMITTEE FINDING:

✓ (1) The proposed research makes adequate provision for safeguarding the health and dignity of the subjects and is therefore approved.

_____ (2) Due to the assessment of risk being questionable or being subject to change, the research must be periodically reviewed by the HSRC on a basis throughout the course of the research or until otherwise notified. This requires resubmission of this form, with updated information, for each periodic review.

_____ (3) The proposed research evidences some unnecessary risk to participants and therefore must be revised to remedy the following specific area(s) on non-compliance:

_____ (4) The proposed research contains serious and potentially damaging risks to subjects and is therefore not approved.



Chair or designated member

9/24/22

Date