PREPARING AND RETAINING QUALITY TEACHERS:

WHAT PUBLIC EDUCATION LEADERS SHOULD KNOW

A Doctoral Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of the College of Education
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Professional Leadership

by

Shirley D. Dupree

December 2015

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Acknowledgment

I must acknowledge my family's unwavering support while on my journey through life. Thank you to my three beautiful daughters, Kayde, Alex, and Libby, for your never ending love, support, and inspiration. You are *truly* the wind beneath my wings. A special thank you to my mother and father, Nel and Buck Dupree, for helping me begin my journey in education in 1981. You have inspired me to be who I am today. To my two sisters, Gayla and Sharon, a special thank you for your constant encouragement and for making me laugh. Gayla, you have taught me the meaning of survival. Continue to let your inner strength and love for life shine light onto others around you. To my brother-in-law Harlan, I love you and am grateful that you are in our lives. You, too, have been a true inspiration in my life. And, finally, to my very special son-in-law Lloyd, I appreciate your love, support, and encouragement.

I love you all.

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Dupree, Shirley D. "Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers: What Public Education Leaders Should Know." Unpublished Doctor of Education Thesis, University of Houston, December, 2015.

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study placed a focus on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. Traditional educator preparation program practices were investigated through literature reviews and through the lenses of the participants of this study via guided interviews. A guided interview process was used for this study to collect views of k-12 teachers who had one, two, three, or four years' experience in the classroom and who had graduated from a traditional educator preparation program. The interview questions were designed to include probing questions that allowed exploration of teacher attitudes about their own preparation, needs, and experiences of their first year of teaching. In addition to teacher input, the views of a focus group comprised of four campus principals were documented via the same guided interview process used for teacher participants. The purpose for interviewing campus principals was to identify possible gaps that may exist in teacher needs and principals' perceived teacher needs.

Overall, this study found that participating teachers stepped into their first year of teaching with mixed emotions, including excitement, hope, anxiety, and frustration. They entered the classroom generally excited about teaching, but quickly became frustrated and stressed when the realities of teaching set in. Participants reported feeling unprepared for many of the day-to-day realities of teaching. Three themes emerged

regarding new teacher preparation and first-year teacher needs: 1) the lack of preparation

for the realities of everyday teaching; 2) the significance of clinical experiences; and, 3)

the importance of new-teacher support systems.

The overall goal of this study was two-fold. The first goal was to gather

considerable information that would be pertinent to school districts in their efforts to

develop and retain high-quality teachers for their classrooms. The second goal was to

gather valuable data that would benefit universities seeking to improve their educator

preparation programs.

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Chapter I

Introduction

In today's world of education, selecting quality teachers is much more critical than ever. One common thread in education goals across the country is to better prepare America's students for an ever-changing world. As the economy grows more complex, global, and competitive, students are expected to achieve at higher levels of performance than ever before (Hanusheck, Peterson, & Woessmann, 2012). However, America's schools are falling short in this preparation due in large part to a shortage of high quality, well prepared teachers - a very real crisis in education today. Study after study concludes that teacher quality is the single most influential school-based factor in improving student learning (Berry, 2004). The most effective teachers produce, on average, one-and-a-half grade levels of growth each year, a level sufficient to close the achievement gap for low-income students (Perry, 2011). It is imperative that educational leaders from across the nation recognize this growing crisis and take necessary measures to ensure that teachers are recruited, trained, and retained in a manner that gives all students access to the most effective teachers possible.

It would be easy to assume that the teacher shortage is a result of a decrease in the number of those interested in becoming a teacher. After all, education has been given a negative reputation over the past few decades with the increased focus on accountability, increased workloads, relatively low pay, and a general lack of respect for the profession. To the contrary, colleges are producing more teachers than ever (Ingersoll, 2012). In 1988, America had about 65,000 first-year teachers; by 2008, the numbers had grown to over 200,000, and, surprisingly, one quarter of the teaching force had only five years or

less of experience (Ingersoll, 2012). Yet, education in America is still faced with a teacher shortage. One wonders why this is so when between the late 1980s to 2008 total k-12 student enrollment increased by 19 percent and the teaching force increased by 48 percent (Ingersoll, 2012).

The answer, according to scholars, is what is referred to as teacher *dropout* (The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 2012). While America is producing a plethora of teachers, school districts are losing them at a staggering rate. Research shows that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave, or drop out of, the education workforce within the first five years of entry into teaching, and the attrition rates for first-year teachers have increased by about one-third in the past two decades, showing that both the number and instability of beginning teachers have been increasing in recent years (Ingersoll, 2012). Studies show that new teachers enter the profession with a set of expectations that very seldom match their classroom realities; disparities exist between what they learn in their teacher training programs and what they actually experience when they enter the "real world" of teaching (Nahal, 2010). The disparities, or gaps, are the precursors to decisions made by new teachers to leave the profession (Nahal, 2010). The disparities must be identified and addressed in order to better prepare and retain quality teachers in the nation's classrooms.

Background of Problem

There was a time throughout the late 1940s and 1950s when America was considered the world leader in education. Countries looked to America for models and guidance in developing their own education systems. Policymakers in the United States (U.S.) have long recognized that creating a top-notch education system is important to the

nation's future (Flattau, Bracken, & VanAtta, 2006). Immediately after the Soviet Union launched the *Sputnik* satellite, the U.S. Congress passed the *National Defense Education Act* in 1958 to ensure the security of America through the "fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women" (Flattau et al., 2006). Concerns about the quality of American schools intensified in 1983 with the *Nation at Risk* reporting, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future" (Klein, 2011). Then, again, in 1989, President George H.W. Bush, together with the governors of all 50 states, set goals to bring the U.S. education to the top of the world rankings by the year 2000, the precursor to *Goals 2000* (Flattau et al., 2006). In 1993, President Bill Clinton urged the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* so that all Americans would be able to reach internationally competitive standards. Shortly thereafter, in 2006, President George W. Bush announced his competitive initiative and observed that "the bedrock of America's competitiveness is a well-educated and skilled workforce" (Bush, 2006).

Today, the U.S. government remains focused on educational improvement, but now adds to that focus the ability to compete in global markets. A 2012 independent task force for the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations inquired into the extent to which U.S. schools were competitive with those in other countries (Hanushek et al., 2012). The task force concluded that "The United States' failure to educate its students cripples their capacity to compete in the workforce and threatens the country's ability to thrive in a global economy" (Hanusheck et al., 2012). The report further concludes that the country "will not be able to keep pace—much less lead—globally unless it moves to fix the [education] problems it has allowed to fester for too long" (Hanusheck et al., 2012).

Studies comparing academic achievement of American students to that of other nations show the gains within the United States as "middling, not stellar" (Hanusheck et al., 2012). While 24 countries trail the U.S. rate of improvement, another 24 countries appear to be improving at a faster rate; the current progress of the U.S. is not rapid enough to catch up with the leaders of the industrialized world (Hanusheck et al., 2012). *Education Week* recently published that a current report from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that in mathematics, 29 nations and other jurisdictions outperformed the United States by a statistically significant margin, up from 23 three years ago (Hanusheck et al., 2012). In science, 22 education systems scored above the U.S. average, up from 18 in 2009 (Hanusheck et al., 2012). American Education Secretary Arne Duncan (2010) called the PISA findings a "picture of educational stagnation" and urged that America needs to "do more to recruit and retain top-notch educators."

Studies continue to conclude that teacher quality is the single most influential school-based factor in improving student learning (Berry, 2004; Educate Texas, 2012; Feuer, 2013; Ingersoll, 2007; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 2007; Rubenstein, 2007). A caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the key ingredient in education reform (NCTAF, 1996). Unfortunately, America's schools are losing teachers to other professions or retirement at a rate greater than new teachers entering the field (Nahal, 2010). The current teacher workforce is younger, less experienced, and more likely now to leave the profession within the first three years (Ingersoll, 2012). Research shows that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave, or drop out of, the education workforce within the first five years of entry

into teaching, and the attrition rates for first-year teachers have increased by about one-third in the past two decades, showing that instability of beginning teachers has been increasing in recent years (Ingersoll, 2012).

One of the major reasons new teachers leave the field so quickly is lack of adequate preparation (Nahal, 2010). They enter the field confident and enthusiastic, only to find the job to be overwhelming, demanding, and stressful; they are often hit with a workload and expectations they were not prepared to handle (Nahal, 2010). Unfortunately, most traditional teacher preparation programs, i.e. college educator preparation programs, do a poor job of preparing teachers for the realities of what is expected from today's classroom teacher; alternative certification programs prove to be no better (Levine, 2006). School districts are left to the task of helping new teachers transition from college into the classroom.

American children need and deserve the very best and brightest teachers in the classrooms teaching and preparing them for the future. And, America needs those teachers to stay and continue to teach and touch young people's lives for years to come. The time is at hand for all educational leaders and government officials to address the teacher drop-out crisis. This is the first step, and likely the most important step, in addressing this growing crisis in America's education system. The answer begins with creating a well-prepared, high-quality, sustainable teacher workforce to send into the trenches, lead the battle, and emerge victorious in their efforts to give each child the quality education each deserves – the quality education that America's future depends on.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher training programs are sending new teachers into the field unprepared for and, worse, unaware of the realities of teaching, resulting in increasing teacher dropout rates, decline in student achievement, and added cost to school districts (Nahal, 2010). Even teachers who have completed a traditional teacher preparation program that includes classroom observations and student teaching experiences will most likely find that their preparation has fallen short in preparing them for the realities of being a classroom teacher today (Rubenstein, 2007). Disparities exist between what they were taught and prepared for in their teacher training programs versus what they actually experience when they enter the "real world" of teaching (Rubenstein, 2007). These disparities impact student achievement and are precursors to decisions made by new teachers to leave the profession (Nahal, 2010). By closely examining these gaps, policy makers and school leaders will be able to make critical decisions that will better prepare and retain quality teachers for the nation's classrooms today and in the years to come.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of new teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study placed a focus on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. Through the use of a guided interview process, this study collected views of teachers who have one, two, three, or four years of experience in the classroom and who graduated from a traditional educator preparation program. At the time of the research, all participants were teaching in the selected school district. In addition to teacher input, the views of a campus principal focus group were collected for

the purpose of identifying possible gaps that exist in teacher needs and principals'

perceived teacher needs. The campus principals participating in the study were also

employed in the same school district as were the teachers at the time of the interviews.

The overall goal was two-fold. The first goal was to gather considerable information that

would be pertinent to school districts in their efforts to develop and retain high-quality

teachers for their classrooms. The second goal was to gather valuable data that would

benefit universities seeking to improve their educator preparation programs.

Significance of the Study

This study provides public school leaders with critical information regarding the

skill sets and needs that new teachers are likely to bring with them to the classroom

during their first year on the job. This information is significant for school districts as

they plan for designing and implementing effective new-teacher mentoring and support

programs within the district and to help districts build and retain a high quality teaching

force for their students. Studies continue to conclude that teacher quality is the single

most influential school-based factor in improving student learning (Barry, 2010; Educate

Texas, 2012; Feuer, 2013; Ingersoll 2007; NTC 2007; Rubenstein, 2007). And, analysts

assert that the lack of high-quality, effective teachers is a major contributor to America's

achievement gap (Teacher Quality Q & A, 2006).

Research shows that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave or drop out

of the education workforce within the first five years of entry into teaching (Ingersoll,

2012). Additionally, the current teacher workforce is younger and less experienced than

ever before (Ingersoll, 2012). A major reason teachers leave the profession so quickly is

lack of adequate preparation (Nahal, 2010). Unfortunately, most traditional teacher

preparation programs do a poor job of preparing teachers for the realities of what is expected from today's classroom teacher (Levine, 2006). Retaining good teachers has actually become a greater problem in education than recruiting new ones (Education Innovation, 2011). Knowing that it takes about five years for a teacher to develop into an expert teacher, the system will soon be made up of mostly inexperienced teachers with little or no expert knowledge and experiences to help build and sustain capacity for a given campus (Ingersoll, 2012). New teachers identify lack of preparation, little or no campus support and guidance, and being given the most challenging classes during their first year as major reasons for leaving the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). New teacher support is a critical component of a comprehensive solution to achieving excellence in teaching quality (New Teacher Center, 2007). This study provides significant information to education leaders that may be used to develop and retain a high quality teaching force for their own districts. Additionally, universities are provided with data that can benefit them in their efforts to improve their educator preparation programs.

Primary Research Questions

This study examined the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better understand the task at hand for public schools and traditional educator preparation programs to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for America's classrooms. The primary research questions were designed to include probing questions that allowed exploration of teacher attitudes about their own preparation, needs, and experiences of their first year of teaching.

1. When entering the profession, what expectations and demands of teaching are new teachers most and least prepared for?

2. What should public school leaders know about teacher preparation programs in order to help new teachers meet the demands of the job?

3. How do teacher preparation and district support impact new teacher performance and their decision to leave or remain in the profession?

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study placed a focus on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. The study utilized a guided interview method to examine underlying themes that might reflect attitudes and beliefs of teachers and campus administrators regarding the needs of first-year teachers, the effectiveness of their preparation programs, and the reasons new teachers decide to remain in or leave the teaching profession during the first five years of teaching.

The participants in the study included 10 second, third, fourth, or fifth year teachers, grades k-12, who earned their teacher certifications through a traditional teacher education program. A principal focus group made up of four campus principals was also included in the study. Teacher participants were interviewed individually, and the principals were interviewed as a focus group. A guided interview was conducted with the individual teachers and with the campus principal.

Procedures of the study included the following: 1) obtained permission from a select school district to conduct the study (see Appendix B); 2) developed the interview

questions (see Appendix A); 3) obtained permission from the university's Human Subjects Committee (see Appendix B); 4) with the assistance of the district's human resources department, identified second, third, fourth, and fifth year k-12 teachers in the participating district; 5) obtained permission from campus principals to interview identified teachers (see Appendix B); 6) invited identified teachers to participate in the study (see Appendix B); 7) invited the principal focus group members to participate in the study (see Appendix B); 8) identified teacher participants and principal focus group participants; 9) scheduled interview meetings with the teachers and principal focus group; 10) interviewed participating teachers and principal focus group; interviews were audio recorded; 11) transcribed interview results; 12) compiled responses by questions; 13) reviewed responses three times looking for emerging themes, trends, commonalities; 14) color-coded related responses, terminology, and phrases to consider possible themes; 15) identified emerging themes; 16) organized responses with themes; 17) compared compiled teacher results with principal focus group results to identify significant gaps; and, 18) answered original research questions with results.

Assumptions

1. The purpose of evaluating teacher education programs is to improve the quality of teachers being sent into classrooms.

2. Improving teacher quality will have the greatest impact of all improvements on improving student learning.

3. There is a significant difference between a "highly-qualified" teacher (NCLB definition) and high quality instruction.

4. Teacher education programs have the resources and ability to prepare teachers for the most critical aspects of teaching.

Limitations

1. Current teacher preparation program evaluations may differ in purpose.

2. The interviews will not be "anonymous" in nature, therefore allowing for skewed responses.

3. The interviews must be conducted after participating teachers have completed one full school year in order for participating teachers to be able to respond to questions based on a full year of teaching.

4. No hard data such as student achievement results will be collected for each participating teacher.

5. Teacher preparation programs differ between colleges.

6. Data on teacher preparation program evaluations is limited.

Delimitations

1. Because the study will take place at the beginning of the participants' second, third, fourth, or fifth year of teaching, participants will have had at least one full year of experience, allowing them to have keener insight into the effectiveness of their programs.

2. The district selected does not have a sustained, high-quality, formal teacher induction program.

3. Participants will have completed a teacher education program and completed Texas teacher certification standards not more than six full years prior to their first teaching assignment.

Scope

The primary participants of the study were interviewed individually and were second, third, fourth, or fifth year teachers who completed a traditional teacher preparation program. The principal focus group participants included four campus principals and were all interviewed together.

Definition of Terms

1. **Core curriculum**: the academic subject areas: math, science, English/language arts, and social studies

2. **Effective teacher**: for the purpose of this study, teachers whose students consistently post gains in student achievement scores

3. **HQ (Highly Qualified teacher)**: based on the NCLB definition; a teacher who has obtained full state teacher certification and holds a license to teach in the state and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches. (Ed Source)

4. **Mentor**: a teacher who works with inexperienced teachers and new hires regarding their role in the school; mentors may serve as an advisor, confidant, guide, and role model

5. **New Teacher**: for the purpose of this study, a teacher with zero-1 year teaching experience; these terms will be used interchangeably

6. **New Teacher Induction Program**: a district program that provides a systematic structure of support for beginning teachers and involves those practices used to help new and beginning teachers become competent and effective professionals in the classroom

7. **PISA (Program for International Student Assessment)**: an international assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy

8. **Pre-service training**: teacher training received prior to stepping into the education workforce

9. **Student achievement**: a student's growth (or in academic areas such as reading, language arts, math, science and history as measured by achievement tests.

10. **Teacher attrition**: includes teachers exiting the teaching profession within the first five years of teaching

11. **Teacher dropout**: used interchangeably with teacher attrition

12. **Teacher migration**: those teachers who move to teaching jobs in other schools

13. **Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs**: college/university teacher preparation programs of study

14. **Alternative Certification Program (ACP)**: teacher preparation programs that are not considered a traditional teacher preparation program; teachers seeking certification through ACP has completed a bachelor's degree prior to entering the preparation program

Summary

Teacher attrition is impacting student achievement in America. Educational leaders must consider why so many new teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years. Studies show that new teachers are entering the education field less

prepared than ever for the demands of a 21st Century classroom teacher when the need for

quality education is greater than ever (Nahal, 2010). The lack of quality preparation

certainly factors into teachers' decisions to leave the profession. School districts are now

faced with a dilemma: a high need for quality teachers and a pool of inexperienced,

under-prepared novice teachers from which to make their selections. Colleges are failing

to adequately prepare new teachers for the expectations of the classroom, as are

alternative certification programs (Levine, 2006). Although research is being used to

restructure teacher preparation programs, it may take several years before school districts

reap the benefits. Until then, school leaders must take a hard look at their district

practices and consider their own roles in teacher preparation and training and consider

what steps they can take to train and retain these teachers. Offering strong teacher

induction and support programs are more critical than ever. But, new teachers are

reporting little or no support at the district level (Johnson, Birkeland, & Liu, 2001). As

many as 50 percent of beginning teachers do not participate in district induction programs

beyond a one-day orientation, and only one percent of the new teacher workforce

participates in a comprehensive program as recommended by research (Alliance for

Excellent Education, 2004; Johnson et al., 2001). And, while many districts do develop

and articulate outstanding induction and support programs, they fail to implement and

follow through with the program intentions. Education today is greatly impacted by this

recipe for disaster. The result is a continued climb in the teacher attrition rate and little to

no student progress/low student achievement scores, thus keeping America's state of

education in a mediocre state, threatening the ability to attain the status needed to keep

the United States competitive in the world markets now and for future generations.

<div style="text-align: center">**Chapter II**

Literature Review</div>

Background

There was a time throughout the late 1940s and 1950s when America was considered the world leader in education. Countries looked to the United States for models and guidance in developing their own education systems. Unfortunately, the U.S. is finding itself today looking to other countries for ideas on creating a high-achieving and competitive education system. Policymakers in the United States have long recognized that creating a top-notch education system is important to the nation's future (Flattau, Ebert, Bracken, Van Atta, 2006).

The United States has a long history of striving to create and remain a world class education system. Immediately after the Soviet Union launched the *Sputnik* satellite, the U.S. Congress passed the *National Defense Education Act* in 1958 to ensure the security of the Nation through the "fullest development of the mental resources and technical skills of its young men and women" (Flattau et al., 2006). Concerns about the quality of American schools intensified in 1983 with the *Nation at Risk* reporting, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future" (Klein, 2011). Then, again, in 1989, President George H.W. Bush, together with the governors of all 50 states, set goals to bring the U.S. education to the top of the world rankings by the year 2000, which served as the precursor to Goals 2000 (Flattau, et al., 2006). In 1993, President Bill Clinton urged passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* so that all Americans would be able to reach internationally competitive standards (Clinton, 1994). Shortly thereafter, in 2006, President George W.

Bush announced his competitive initiative and observed that "the bedrock of America's competitiveness is a well-educated and skilled workforce" (Bush, 2006).

Today, the U.S. government remains focused on educational improvement, but now adds to that focus the ability to compete in global markets. A 2012 independent task force for the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations inquired into the extent to which U.S. schools were competitive with those in other countries (Hanushek et al., 2012). The task force concluded that the United States' failure to adequately educate its students cripples their capacity to compete in the workforce and threatens the country's ability to thrive in a global economy (Hanusheck et al., 2012). The report further concluded that the country "will not be able to keep pace—much less lead—globally unless it moves to fix the [education] problems it has allowed to fester for too long" (Hanusheck et al., 2012).

Studies comparing academic achievement of American students to that of other nations show the gains within the United States as mediocre (Hanusheck et al., 2012). While 24 countries trail the U.S. rate of improvement, another 24 countries appear to be improving at a faster rate; and, unfortunately, the United States' current rate of progress is not rapid enough to catch up anytime soon with the leaders of the industrialized world (Hanusheck et al., 2012). *Education Week* recently published that a current report from The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that in mathematics, 29 nations and other jurisdictions outperformed the United States by a statistically significant margin, and that U.S. students' scores have been stagnant for the past decade (Hanushek et al., 2012). Since 2003, the United States has made virtually no gains in math, even as a range of other countries made substantial ones (Hanushek et al., 2012). In science, 22 education systems scored above the U.S. average, up from just 18 in 2009

(Hanushek et al., 2012). American Education Secretary Arne Duncan (2010) called the PISA findings a "picture of educational stagnation" and asserted that America needs to do more to recruit and retain top-notch educators.

American children need and deserve the very best and brightest teachers in the classrooms teaching them and preparing them for the future. And, America needs those teachers to stay in the classrooms and continue to teach and touch young people's lives for years to come. Mounting evidence points to teacher quality as the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve at their highest level (Berry, 2004). A caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the key ingredient in education reform (Berry, 2004).

Unfortunately, America's schools are losing teachers to other professions or retirement at a rate greater than new teachers entering the field (Nahal, 2010). The current teacher workforce is younger, less experienced, and more likely now to leave the profession within the first three years (Ingersoll, 2012). Research shows that between 40 and 50 percent of new teachers leave, or drop out of the education workforce, within the first five years of entry into teaching, and the attrition rates for first-year teachers have increased by about one-third in the past two decades, showing that both the number and instability of beginning teachers have been increasing in recent years (Ingersoll, 2012).

One of the major reasons new teachers leave the teaching field so quickly is lack of adequate preparation (Nahal, 2010). They enter the field confident and enthusiastic, only to find the job to be overwhelming, demanding, and stressful; they are often hit with a workload and expectations they were not prepared to handle (Nahal, 2010). Unfortunately, most teacher preparation programs do a poor job of preparing teachers for

the realities of what is expected from today's classroom teacher; alternative certification programs prove to be no better (Levine, 2006). Teacher training programs are sending new teachers into the field unprepared for and, worse, unaware of the realities of teaching, resulting in increasing teacher dropout rates, decline in student achievement, and added cost to school districts (Nahal, 2010). Levine (2006) asserts that the future is in the hands of the nations' educators and that the quality of tomorrow's workforce is no better than the quality of today's teachers. Improving teacher quality and teacher retention is critical to the nation's future.

The Significance of Teacher Quality

Research supports a significant correlation between teacher quality and student achievement (Berry, 2004). According to Perry (2011), teacher quality is the most influential school-based factor in improving student learning. Perry (2011) asserts that the most effective teachers produce, on average, 1.5 grade levels of growth each year. Such growth is significant enough to close the growing achievement gap for America's low-income students (Perry, 2011). The most significant gains in student achievement will likely be realized when students receive instruction from effective teachers over consecutive years (Teacher Quality, 2014). Analysts concur that the lack of high-quality, effective teachers is a major contributor to the achievement gap (Teacher Quality, 2014). Thus, the immediate plea for teacher preparation programs and school districts to address these needs.

Student achievement is more heavily influenced by teacher quality than by race, class, prior academic record, or the campus the student attends (Teacher Quality, 2014). A 2011 *Education Week* article (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011),

"Issues A-Z: Teacher Quality," focuses on the significance of teacher quality and states

that overwhelming evidence concludes that high quality teachers are capable of inspiring

greater learning gains in their own students than when compared to weaker colleagues in

the same building. Most of this evidence is based on a value-added analyses linking

individual students' test scores to their teachers (Editorial Projects in Education Research

Center, 2011). This method is used to determine the students' annual rate of

improvement, as measured by test scores and is currently being considered by many

states as a future method of evaluating teachers and teacher preparation programs

(Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

Although other outside factors contribute to learning and growth, scholars

generally agree that teacher quality is the most critical school-based factor effecting

student achievement (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011).

Researchers agree, too, that measuring and defining teacher quality can be challenging

(Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). The *No Child Left Behind Act*,

with its highly-qualified teacher requirement, attempts to define teacher quality, but does

so only as it relates to content preparation and certification testing, i.e., bachelor's degree,

adequate college coursework in content area to teach, and certification in teaching field.

Although important, teacher certification, degrees, and years of experience alone

explain only a fraction of what teacher quality really is (Editorial Projects in Education

Research Center, 2011). The most common characteristics selected to measure teacher

quality and effectiveness as related to student achievement include so much more:

teaching experiences (not just number of years), content-area knowledge and academic

ability, motivation and expectations, disposition, instructional practices,

mentoring/induction experiences, and content and pedagogy training (Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2011). When all is considered, it is easy to understand why teacher preparation and district mentoring programs are so critical to the development of high-quality teachers.

What the Literature Reveals About Teacher Quality

An attempt at the national level to develop a workforce of high quality teachers began with the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) which mandated that a highly qualified teacher be in all our nation's classrooms by the 2005-2006 academic year. The term "highly qualified teacher" is defined by NCLB and used for state implementation as a teacher who: (1) has, at minimum, a bachelor's degree; (2) has full state certification or licensure; and (3) demonstrates subject area competence in all the subjects that he or she teaches. If these three criteria were the complete recipe for quality teaching, the nation's education problems would be solved. Unfortunately, the equation is much more complex than this.

Highly-qualified and high-quality hold very different meanings with regards to teaching. NCLB requires all states to provide evidence that their schools' classrooms were staffed with *highly qualified* teachers by the start of the 2005-06 school year. It is left to the states to clarify the details of *highly qualified.* States were given some flexibility to define specific approaches to meeting these criteria, particularly in regard to how teachers demonstrate subject matter knowledge (Rothman, 2009). Most states did so using their own licensure requirements (Strong, 2006). The interpretation, or *mis*interpretation, of teacher quality in this context assumes that the teachers with the appropriate licensing credentials will provide high-quality instruction (Strong, 2006).

While certification or licensure may be one indicator of teacher quality, these factors alone do not result in quality teaching (Rothman, 2009). As stated by researcher and author Pamela Tucker (2005), "A 'highly-qualified' teacher is certainly a good starting point, but most of us would want our child to have a highly *effective* teacher whose teaching effort yields high rates of student learning" (p. 2). Clearly, preparing new teachers for high quality teaching in today's classroom goes well beyond the simplicity of the NCLB highly qualified criteria.

A variety of research exists on defining high quality teaching. Most recently, education leaders are attempting to develop teacher assessment tools based on high quality teacher research (Strong, 2006). Defining and understanding what is meant by teacher quality is critical to the development of a teacher assessment tool that attempts to measure teacher quality (Strong, 2006). Studies show that a range of personal and professional qualities of teachers directly impact student achievement such as verbal ability, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, certification status, ability to skillfully use a range of teaching strategies, and enthusiasm for the subject taught (Tucker, 2005). Narrowing the scope of the many characteristics of teacher quality and effectiveness may prove to be a daunting task (Tucker, 2005).

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) allowed the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to use their database to examine two questions in an effort to define quality teaching: 1) What characteristics define a well-qualified teacher; and 2) What teacher characteristics are related to instruction that improves student achievement (Frome, Lasaster, & Cooney, 2005) Out of 11 teacher quality measures linked to student achievement, four factors emerged as significantly related to student achievement: 1)

motivation and expectations; 2) instructional practices; 3) mentoring and induction

experiences; and 4) content and pedagogy training (Frome et al., 2005).

In addition to Frome's work, a 2004 report by the Education Testing Service,

"Where We Stand on Teacher Quality," suggests that competent, high quality teachers

possess the following four types of knowledge and skills: 1) basic academic reading,

writing, math skills; 2) thorough knowledge of content; 3) strong pedagogical practices;

and 4) actual hands-on ability and competence to use these characteristics and skills to

engage students in learning. Other research asserts that quality teaching must include the

logical (defining, demonstrating, explaining), the psychological (caring, motivating,

planning), and the moral (showing honesty, courage, respect) acts of teaching (Grayson,

2009)

Laura Goe and Leslie Stickler (2008) designed a framework for teacher quality

that consists of four distinct but related lenses of looking at teacher quality, grouped into

four categories, or "lenses": 1) inputs (teacher qualifications); 2) inputs (teacher

characteristics); 3) processes (teacher practices); and 4) outcomes (teacher effectiveness).

The framework is a result of their need to make sense of the multiple ways in which

researchers they were studying measured teacher quality. Most research on teacher

quality fits easily into Goe and Stickler's framework,

Lens One: Inputs: Teacher Qualifications.

Teacher qualification for this framework refers to: a) credentials, knowledge, and

experiences that teachers bring with them when they enter the classroom, such as:

coursework or content area knowledge in the subject to be taught; b) certification and test

scores; c) classroom pedagogy training; and, d) field experiences/student teaching (Goe

& Stickler, 2008). Teacher qualification are important for regulating entry into the classroom when performance outcome data are not yet available for a teacher, as is the case with new teachers (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

   Content-area Knowledge. There is consensus among researchers that adequate subject knowledge is necessary for teachers to be successful (Allen, 2003). Content-specific knowledge can serve as a predictor of teacher quality and student achievement, particularly in mathematics (Allen, 2003). According to ETS (2004), teachers who have majored in the subject matter they teach are better teachers of that subject than those who have not. ETS also asserts that content-based pedagogy has a positive impact on student achievement. According to the ETS *Where We Stand on Teacher Quality* report (2004), the NCLB requirement for subject matter competence is based on considerable and compelling research and solid professional judgment that effective teachers must *know* the subjects they teach. In their 2007 study, Goe and Stickler found that, across studies, teachers' knowledge of mathematics matters for student learning in mathematics at all school levels, but most particularly at the secondary level. Teachers with stronger mathematics knowledge produced better student achievement in mathematics compared with less knowledgeable teachers (Goe & Stickler, 2008). In addition, other studies by Daniel Aaronson, Lisa Barrow, and William Sanders (2007) indicate that teacher completion of an undergraduate or graduate major in mathematics is associated with higher student achievement in high school and middle school (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Strong correlations also exist between achievement of secondary students and their teacher's subject-area expertise in areas other than mathematics (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

However, the correlation is not as strong with that of elementary students and their teacher's subject knowledge (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

    Certification, Test Scores, and Verbal Ability. The relationship between certification and teacher quality has been investigated at various levels, including full standard certification, emergency certification, advanced or National Board Certification, and subject-area certification (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Teacher's subject-area certification or authorization is one of the teacher qualifications most consistently and strongly associated with student achievement, especially in middle and high school mathematics (Goe & Stickler, 2008). It has also been found that teachers with both full certification and demonstrated subject matter competency (NCLB definition) are associated with increased elementary and middle school achievement in reading, science, and social studies as well as in mathematics (Goe & Stickler, 2008). While teacher certification test scores may be considered by some as an indicator of teacher quality, the results of studies are mixed. Eric Hanushek et al. (2012) find no relationship between elementary and middle school teachers' certification/ recertification exam scores and their students' mathematics achievement. A 2007 study by Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor also finds that teacher certification test scores have a marginally positive relationship with middle school students' mathematics test scores (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

    Content-Based Pedagogical Knowledge. An important component of virtually all certification and traditional teacher prep programs is training pedagogy. Subtly different from content knowledge, or the *what* to teach, is the pedagogical knowledge of the content, or the *how* to teach (Strong, 2011). Research offers evidence that pedagogy is important (Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2007). According to the National

Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) 2008 report, teachers' content-specific pedagogical knowledge is "substantially positively associated" with students' mathematical achievement at all levels (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Other studies by Heather Hill, Brian Rowen, and Deborah Ball (2005) point to both elementary and high school teachers' mathematics pedagogical knowledge as the strongest teacher-level predictor of student achievement.

Conversely, Michael Allen (2003) purports that research provides limited support for the conclusion that preparation in pedagogy can contribute significantly to effective teaching, including pedagogical courses in subject-specific courses and courses designed to develop core teaching skills such as classroom management, student assessment, and curriculum development. A study by Douglas Harris and Tim Sass (2011) found that although pedagogical content knowledge was positively associated with student achievement test scores in math at elementary and middle school grades, but not high school. Additionally, a study by David Monk showed that mathematics pedagogy courses made teachers more effective in raising student achievement, but found no relationship for science (National Council Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2014). Given both sides, most findings do fit a trend of results that show a relationship between pedagogical knowledge and teacher effectiveness.

Clinical Experience. Most traditional teacher education programs include some form of clinical experience that places education students in actual classrooms, allowing them to practice skills and theory learned in coursework (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education [AACTE], 2012). While knowing the content and knowing how to teach the content are critical components of quality teaching, the ability

to apply those concepts is a third critical component of quality teaching. (AACTE, 2012).

Field experience, also known as student teaching or clinical experience, offers extended

opportunities to observe and practice ways of engaging students with subject matter in

ways that are developmentally appropriate and effective (AACTE, 2012). Considerable

research attests to the value of high-quality clinical experience (AACTE, 2012).

Empirical research suggests that many aspects of clinical experiences in teacher

education programs are associated with later student achievement gains (Boyd et al.,

2007). Additionally, teacher survey data from multiple contexts have recognized field

experience as the most important component of teacher education (Picus, Monk, &

Knight, 2012). Research consistently shows that, on average, teachers with some

classroom experience are more effective than those with no classroom experience (Picus

et al., 2012). A 2009 study revealed that during the first year in the classroom, teachers

exposed to more field experience and practice opportunities during their teacher

education had a greater impact on student achievement gains than those with less field

and practice opportunities (Picus et al., 2012). Several studies have found that a well-

supervised field experience allows student teachers a stronger ability to connect theory to

practice, become more comfortable and confident with the process of learning to teach,

and have a greater ability to enact what they learn in practice (AACTE, 2012).

Moreover, results of a five-year study of teacher prep programs in New York City

revealed that preparation programs that are focused more on the work of the classroom

and that allow teachers to engage in the actual practices involved in teaching produce

significantly more effective first-year teachers (AACTE, 2012). In addition, a study by

the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) found that well-

prepared novices with intensively supervised clinical experience were more likely to

remain in the teaching profession than those with limited or no clinical experience

(AACTE, 2012). And, finally, candidates have continually reported their increased sense

of teaching confidence and competence as a result of strong, extended clinical

experiences (AACTE, 2012). Two earlier California State University studies also found

a relationship between the experience of student teaching and the feeling of preparedness

(AACTE, 2012).

Teaching is fast becoming a clinical practice profession according to recent

research (AACTE, 2012). Credible organizations across the nation agree on the

importance of extended, rigorous, embedded clinical preparation of teachers in the

development of high-quality, effective teachers (AACTE, 2012).

Lens Two: Inputs: Characteristics.

The teacher characteristics used for the second lens in the framework are teacher

dispositions and teacher collegiality. Goe and Stickler (2008) use these particular

characteristics as part of their teacher quality framework because they view this input as

traits brought into the classroom by teachers that exist independently of the actual *act* of

teaching, and they are characteristics empirically associated with student test scores

Dispositions. Teacher dispositions are just as critical to teacher quality and

effectiveness as knowledge and skills (Wadlington, 2011). The National Council for

Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has even included "disposition" in the

accreditation standards for teacher education units (Da Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007).

NCATE defines dispositions as:

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward

students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning,

motivation, and development as well as the educator's own personal growth.

Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring,

fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. For example, they might

include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging

standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

Dick Usher reformulated Arthur W. Combs's extensive work in the exploration of

necessary dispositions for being an effective teacher (Da Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007).

Usher identifies five dispositions of effective teachers: empathy, positive view of others,

positive view of self, authenticity, and meaningful purpose and vision (Da Ros-Voseles &

Moss, 2007). Studies consistently show a relationship between positive teacher

dispositions and student achievement. Teachers who are extroverted, intuitive, feeling,

and perceiving are more likely to be successful in the classroom; these traits help build

positive relationships with students, parents, administrators, and coworkers (Wadlington,

2011). These teachers are usually innovative problem-solvers, as well. Wadlington

(2011) found that confident teachers are more likely to differentiate their instruction for

diverse learners as well as for higher levels of learning.

Teaching style is also affected by teacher disposition. (Wadlington, 2011).

Teaching style is defined as the "interface between teachers' beliefs and values and the

behaviors that they incorporate in the teaching-learning exchange" (Wadlington, 2011).

Bettina L. Brown and Carol Mills claim that students are more motivated when teaching

style is adapted to learning styles and that teachers with quality dispositions are likely to

understand this claim and will, therefore, adapt to a variety of learning styles of a diverse student population (Wadlington, 2011).

Additionally, a growing body of evidence drawn by Constantino Kokkinos indicates that a correlation exists between dispositions and job satisfaction (Wadlington, 2011). Kokkinos asserts that teachers who are highly conscientious and extroverted and who consistently exhibit a positive attitude and a stable mood are more likely to feel a great sense of job satisfaction, personal satisfaction, and less burnout than their counterparts (Wadlington, 2011). Christopher Day, Allison Knighton, Gordon Stobart, and Pam Sammons report an overall positive sense of effectiveness is critical to overall job satisfaction (Wadlington, 2011). Not surprising, studies also show that teachers who stifle their emotions are more likely to feel high levels of stress and are easily burned out (Wadlington, 2011).

Teacher Collegiality. Teacher collegiality refers to the cooperative relationships among colleagues and is often used interchangeably "teacher collaboration" (Shah, 2012), and "social capital" (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Teacher collegiality has received considerable attention in recent years as a means to improve student achievement (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Empirical research confirms that this team approach is positively associated with school-level achievement, particularly in mathematics and reading (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Collaboration among teachers is a key ingredient for effective teaching practices, improved outcomes for students, and retention of quality teachers (Berry, Daughtery, & Wieder, 2007). Teacher collegiality is regarded as one of the most common attributes found in all successful and effective schools (Shah, 2012). It is

believed that higher collegial relations among teaching staff lead to higher quality instruction and, in turn, increased student academic achievement (Shah, 2012).

Collaboration allows for opportunities to build collective expertise (Berry et al., 2007). A recent study using 11 years of matched teacher and student achievement data found that peer learning among small groups of teachers seemed to be the most powerful predictor of student achievement over time (Berry et al., 2007). Additionally, results of a Teachers Network study on teacher collaboration are clear about the benefits of teacher participation in collaborative activities: over 90 percent of the teachers reported that participation in their network collaboration activities improved their teaching practice (Berry et al., 2007).

New studies show that not only do new teachers benefit from collaboration, but that teachers at any experience level stand to gain from collaborative work (Berry et al., 2007). Teachers who have consistent opportunities to work with effective colleagues also improve in their teaching effectiveness. (Berry et al., 2007). Participation in and access of the campus's collective expertise makes teachers more effective in improving student academic achievements (Berry et al., 2007).

Teachers who are part of campuses that foster collaboration among teachers also tend to remain in the profession longer (McClure, 2008). RAND researcher Cassandra Guarino and associates found lower turnover rates among beginning teachers in school with induction and mentoring programs that emphasized collegial support (McClure, 2008). Research concludes that teachers feel greater personal satisfaction when they believe in their own efficacy, are involved in decision making and establish strong collegial relationships (McClure, 2008). And, new teachers seem more likely to stay in

schools that have an integrated professional culture in which new teachers' needs are recognized and all teachers share responsibility for student success (McClure, 2008).

Lens Three: Processes: Teacher Practices

Goe and Stickler (2008) define teacher or instructional practices as ways in which teachers interact with students and the teaching strategies used to accomplish specific teaching tasks. These tasks include: aligning instruction and assessment; clearly communicating learning objectives and expectations; challenging student thinking with rigorous instruction; providing students with opportunities to explain what they are learning; using frequent formative assessments to gauge student learning and understanding throughout the lesson; providing active learning opportunities through the use of interactive or hands-on teaching practices; and implementing overall best teaching practices (Goe & Strickler, 2008).

Robert Marzano's research on effective teacher practices and consequent framework would add to Goe's list: establishing classroom rules and procedures; helping students interact with new knowledge; helping students practice and deepen new knowledge; helping students generate and test hypotheses; engaging students; recognizing good behavior; establishing and maintaining effective relationships with students; and, communicating high expectations for all students (Barry, 2010). Charlotte Danielson (2010) also created a framework for effective teaching practices that includes four domains: 1) planning and preparation; 2) the classroom environment; 3) instruction; and 4) professional responsibilities. Danielson's framework for teaching identifies those aspects of teacher's responsibilities that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting improved student learning (Barry, 2010).

Danielson (2010) would add to the aforementioned frameworks: 1) demonstrating knowledge of content; 2) demonstrating knowledge of students; 3) organizing physical space of the classroom; and, 4) demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness.

Frameworks for evaluating effective teaching are becoming increasingly popular in the quest for educational improvement. Many teacher educators have found the frameworks for teaching to be of value as they structure their own programs to prepare teacher candidates for the demanding and important work of teaching (Barry, 2010). Educator programs should work to ensure that their graduates are proficient in the knowledge and skills described in effective teaching frameworks.

Lens Four: Outcomes: Teacher Effectiveness

One measure of teacher quality playing a key role in current education policy discussions is teacher effectiveness (Goe & Stickler 2008). Teacher effectiveness in Goe and Stickler's framework refers to a value-added assessment and is calculated by the degree to which teachers contribute to their student's learning (as measured by predicted student results). Value-added measures aim to determine how much of a student's academic progress from one year to the next is attributable to the classroom teacher, as opposed to the factors outside of the teacher's control (Johnson, 2009). The calculation process includes four steps: 1) prior year performance of a student on a relevant assessment; 2) student characteristic data collected on that student; 3) projection made for expected end-of-year assessment performance of that student based on prior year performance plus other current data on students with similar characteristics; 4) actual performance of that student to the model's prediction for a typical student with these characteristics; the process is repeated for every student assigned to a given teacher,

results are averaged, and a value-added score is given to that teacher (Johnson, 2009). If a teacher's students consistently outperform the model's predictions, this teacher is assigned a higher value-added score; if the students underperform relative to the prediction, the teacher is assigned a lower value-added score (Johnson, 2009).

The statistical models used to generate value-added measures are complex, but the principles driving the model are clear (Johnson, 2009). The model attempts to separate out the effect the teacher has on his or her students' learning from factors teachers have no control over such as student poverty, English-learner status, and the prior academic performance of classroom peers (Johnson, 2009). The goal is to isolate the component of a student's performance gains that can be attributed to the teacher. Unlike proficiency standards, value-added models attempt to account for where a student starts with a teacher (Johnson, 2009). This model allows for teachers to be credited for how far students travel under their guidance (Johnson, 2009). Value-added measures aim to link teacher effectiveness directly to student learning (Johnson, 2009).

Studies using multiple years of data show strong implications that value-added teacher effect estimates serve as better indicators of teacher quality for both reading and math than observable teacher attributes such as qualifications and experience (Strong, 2006). It is apparent from the research that observable teacher variables such as education, credentials, paper qualifications, and experience are less reliable indicators of teacher quality than teacher effectiveness (Strong, 2006). What remains is a way to identify the factors that are most predictive of teacher effectiveness (Strong, 2006).

Implications of Teacher Quality Data

What does the research on quality and effective teaching mean for traditional teacher preparation programs? First, research strongly suggests that teacher knowledge of the subject matter taught directly impacts teacher quality and effectiveness, especially in secondary math and science (Goe & Stickler, 2008). University programs should ensure that teacher candidates have had adequate coursework in content areas to be taught and effective training in content pedagogy. Secondly, although no program can send a new teacher into classrooms with the same effective teaching skills a high quality fifth year teacher would have, universities can certainly design programs to better prepare new teachers to develop those skills within the first few years of teaching. Education students will benefit by knowing the characteristics, traits, and practices associated with quality teaching (Strong, 2006). Knowing and understanding these characteristics early will allow them time to reflect on their own character traits and consider ways to transform their current traits into those held by quality teachers. Traditional teacher preparation programs will benefit from a deep understanding and application of the effective teacher frameworks in their own program designs. New teachers should step into the field with a clear vision of what high quality teaching is and armed with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to make a smooth and timely transition from "new teacher" to "high quality teacher."

Assessing Teacher Prep Programs

Based on scientific research, effective teaching is known to impact student learning (Rubenstein, 2007). Policymakers from across the states are calling for an increase in instructional rigor in the classrooms in order to develop better prepared

graduates for the 21st century workplace. While the expectations and accountability of classroom teachers and schools appear to be on a constant path of change, the programs that prepare educators for the classroom appear to have remained flat with little or no attention given to aligning their programs with the needs of the 21st century educator (Rubenstein, 2007). It is imperative that educator programs answer the call for change (Rubenstein, 2007).

The challenge to educator programs today is to determine how to best develop a high-quality, effective teacher. Thomas Carroll, president of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, explains that programs must strive "to close the gap between the way we prepare teachers and the way [effective] teachers actually teach in the classroom" (Rubenstein, 2007). A cry for better education programs is rising as the scrutiny of K-12 schools' performance under the No Child Left Behind Act and the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flows upstream to the institutions that prepare teachers (Rubenstein, 2007).

Calls for change have come from both outside and inside teacher education to better prepare teachers to, in turn, better prepare our students for the twenty-first century workplace (Ingersoll, 2012). The pressure is first placed on public schools to meet new education goals established with the reauthorization of the ESEA. In the "Blueprint for Reform," President Barack Obama (2011) made his goals for educational improvement very clear:

> Every child in America deserves a world-class education.
>
> Today, more than ever, a world-class education is a prerequisite for
>
> success. America was once the best educated nation in the world. A

generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10

countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours.

It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their

students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us

tomorrow. We must do better. Together, we must achieve a new goal,

that by 2020, the United States will once again lead the world in college

completion. We must raise the expectations for our students, for our

schools, and for ourselves—this must be a national priority. We must

ensure that every student graduates from high school well prepared for

college and a career.

Thus, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, (ESEA),

which includes the expectation that all students will graduate high school college or

career-ready based on a set of standards handed down to all public schools (Blueprint,

2011).

Great pressure is being felt by public school systems. And, in turn, pressure is

already being felt by educator preparation programs. To meet the new and more rigorous

college and career-ready standards for student learning, all of today's students must have

access to effective teaching (American Psychology Association [APA], 2014). As

teachers and district leaders are increasingly held accountable for implementing

consistently effective teaching, calls for holding programs that prepare them accountable

have increased (APA, 2014). As a result, state and federal policymakers sense the

urgency of improving educator preparation and are seeking to change how teacher

preparation programs are evaluated (APA, 2014). In taking steps to evaluate and

improve teacher preparation, state education leaders will need to consider a number of factors in building effective teacher training programs (Perry, 2014).

Significance of Teacher Retention

While developing quality teachers is imperative to America's future, so, too, is retaining the high quality teachers once they step into the classroom. Retaining good teachers has actually become a greater problem in education than recruiting new ones (Education Innovation, 2011). Replacing teachers is expensive and high exit rates create teacher shortages. Even worse, high turnover creates instability and negatively impacts student achievement, particularly for disadvantaged students (Education Innovation, 2011).

A major problem in education is the exodus of new teachers from the profession. Nearly 14 percent of new teachers leave within their first year of teaching, over 30 percent leave within their first three years, and almost 50 percent leave within five years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). It is estimated that the costs of teacher attrition is $15,000 on average per recruit who leaves, over $2 billion annually (Alliance, 2004). The cost is even higher when considering losses in campus teacher quality and student achievement. Schools lose any money invested in each new recruit that leaves in terms of money spent developing their skills as they become the high-quality veterans the school hopes for. Schools with high rates of attrition also lose the ability to develop a strong foundation team of teachers, a coherent learning community among the teaching staff, or a sense of stability on the campus (Alliance, 2004). Not surprising, this has a direct impact on campus-wide student learning and achievement (Ingersoll, 2012). Ingersoll (2012) reported that in the late 1980s, 15 years was the average years'

experience for a teacher, and by 2012 the average experience had fallen to just five years. Thankfully, the profession is experiencing an uptrend in teacher experience, tagged by Ingersoll as the "greening" of the teaching force (Ingersoll, 2012).

Knowing that it takes about five years for a teacher to develop into an expert educator, stakeholders must realize that the system will be made up of mostly inexperienced teachers with little or no expert knowledge and experiences to help build and sustain capacity for a given campus (Ingersoll, 2012). This is another reason it has become so critical for teacher preparation programs to acknowledge and accept the challenge of developing the highest quality pre-service teacher possible. Research shows that well-prepared graduates are more likely to remain in teaching (NCATE, 2014). Ingersoll (2012) has found that when teachers are prepared in a system that focuses on key elements of teacher development, attrition for first-year teachers is cut in half.

Why do new teachers leave? New teachers identify lack of preparation, little or no campus support and guidance, and being given the most challenging classes during their first year as major reasons for leaving the profession (Alliance, 2004). As reported in "Tapping the Potential" (2004), once on the job, "all beginners [teachers] must learn to teach to established standards, evaluate the effects of their instruction on student performance, use student achievement data for planning and curriculum, tailor instruction to address specific learning needs, and learn how to thrive in the culture of their school." Novice teachers enter the field confident and enthusiastic, only to find the job to be overwhelming, demanding, and stressful; they are often hit with a workload and expectations they were not prepared to handle (Johnson et al., 2001). Neither the

structures nor the cultures of their schools seemed to be geared toward their needs as novice teachers (Johnson et al., 2001).

New teachers want to be successful. Learning to teach well is slow, difficult work. Managing a classroom, choosing or creating curriculum, developing sound instructional strategies, accurately assessing student learning, and adjusting for student needs are complex tasks, and new teachers need time and support to develop the necessary knowledge and skills (Johnson et al., 2001). New teachers who decide to stay in the profession reported feeling supported and described their schools as having "integrated professional cultures" (Johnson et al., 2001). This allowed for meaningful, supportive interaction among faculty members, support from administrators, and created a sense of team versus isolation (Johnson et al., 2001).

Important factors for new teacher retention include having a mentor from the same teaching field, collaborative planning time with teachers who teach the same grade/subject, participating in activities with other new teachers, principal support and interaction, release time for observing model teachers, a climate and culture that supports new teachers, and a teaching schedule that allows new teachers to be successful (Joiner and Edwards, 2008).

What is known with regard to new teacher success is that quality teacher preparation helps candidates develop the knowledge and skill they need in the classroom; well prepared first-year teachers are more likely to remain in teaching after the first year; well prepared teachers produce higher student achievement; and, leading industrialized nations invest heavily in pre-service teacher preparation (NCATE, 2006). Additionally, well prepared graduates are more likely to remain in teaching after 3 years and to

contribute to the development of a strong professional learning community in the schools they serve (NCATE, 2006).

Current Issues in Teacher Preparation

The nation's 1,206 schools, colleges, and departments of education are located at 78 percent of four-year colleges and universities and award one out of every 12 bachelor's diplomas, one out of every 4 master's degrees, and 15 percent of all doctorates, more than any other branch of the academy (Levine, 2006). While making up a large percentage of university and college degrees, the programs have been the subject of continued criticism over decades. Certainly strengths do exist in many programs across the nation. However, after reading a 2013 study by the National Council on Teacher Quality, Levine (2013) stated that the report described a "field in disarray with low admission standards, a crazy quilt of varying and inconsistent programs, and disagreement on issues as basic as how to prepare teachers or what skills and knowledge they need to be effective" (p. 1). Levine (2013) also pointed out that many other studies have issued similar findings in recent decades.

Even some college professors admit a need for reform. Traditional programs train 70 to 80 percent of teacher candidates in the nation, yet education professors surveyed by a Fordham Institute report that their own programs fail to adequately prepare candidates for the demands of today's classrooms (Perry, 2014).

A plethora of research evidence exists to make believers out of all stakeholders that our current education preparation programs are in trouble. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan echoed such in a 2010 speech in which he declared that most of the teacher prep programs in the United States are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the

21st century classroom. Duncan went on to state that university–based programs need

revolutionary change, not "evolutionary tinkering." In the same speech Duncan urged

university programs to consider three challenges for reform: teachers must be prepared

to teach in a much different world than that of even our recent past; teachers must be

prepared to address the learning gaps that currently exist among different groups of

students; teachers must be prepared in quality and quantity to replace the impending

exodus of Baby Boomer retirees.

Unfortunately, research indicates that few university programs are responding to

the research and reports (Levine, 2006). Many universities are reluctant to invest in their

education programs because they view their education programs as "cash cows" for the

institution (Levine, 2006). In some cases, education programs are forced to enroll more

students than was desirable in order to bring in more revenue for the university, thus

lowering admissions standards, and employing too many adjunct professors because they

are cheaper than full-time professors (Levine, 2006). The additional revenues from the

education programs are typically moved to other university programs that carry a higher

status than education and cost more to operate, such as physics or engineering programs

(Levine, 2006).

University leaders fail to acknowledge the importance of investing that overflow

back into the education programs for improvement and reform (Levine, 2006). They fail

to acknowledge that their university-based teacher education programs are in trouble and

that they could possibly lose their "franchise" to alternative certification programs on the

rise (Levine, 2013).

Levine (2013) looks at two possible solutions, repair the current university programs or replace them. In recent years, the focus has been on replacing the programs because, while well aware of the problems, universities continue to ignore them or just refuse to repair them. Levine (2013) suggests that a strong focus should be on repairing the programs because regardless of the current state of affairs for college-based teacher prep programs, this is still where the majority of students are going for education preparation. In addition, these programs are self-sustained and have a unique offering of education faculty plus content-specific faculty to better prepare teachers, especially in the areas of math and science (Levine, 2013).

Simply stated, current college-based education programs need reform. Agreement does exist among educators, policy makers, and education leaders that current programs need redesigning for a new era (Levine, 2013). Programs are needed that produce greater numbers of high-quality teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to raise student achievement to the highest levels in history (Levine, 2006).

Unfortunately, the movement to make necessary changes is stagnant because educators and policy makers disagree on how to accomplish this complex task (Levine, 2006). Conflicting and competing beliefs exist among decision makers on issues as basic as the who, what, where, when, and how of preparing teachers. A "profession versus craft" debate has existed for years and remains the basis for much of the ongoing conflict regarding traditional education preparation reform (Levine, 2006). This debate stems from a difference in how teaching is viewed. Some believe teaching is a profession like law or medicine, and requires in-depth specific coursework, while others believe teaching is a craft or trade like journalism, which mostly requires on-the-job training. Those who

embrace teaching as a profession firmly disagree and believe that rigorous preparation is essential to educating teachers (Levine, 2006). Those who embrace the craft position generally believe that little is needed in education coursework or pre-job practice and that teachers be hired on the basis of subject matter knowledge and verbal skills with education school coursework being eliminated and no need for student teaching (Levine, 2006).

States have responded to the conflicting notions by typically taking one side or the other and developing policy that reflects the beliefs of the chosen side (Levine, 2006). This has created even more problems in the teacher preparation crisis resulting in a nation that lacks a common vision of how to prepare teachers to meet today's needs, leading to divergent and opposing approaches to much needed reform (Levine, 2006). As a matter of fact, the greatest commonality among university-based programs is likely their diversity (Levine, 2006). For those being prepared for the "profession" of teaching, the traditional university programs rely on professors as the primary faculty and tend to be more theoretical and academic in nature (Levine). The institutions vary from open admission baccalaureate granting colleges to the most selective doctoral awarding universities (Levine, 2006). These programs may require majors in education, majors in liberal arts and education, and minors in teacher education or the liberal arts (Levine, 2006). Unfortunately, the requirements and program designs among universities have little or no alignment with one another (Levine, 2006).

The same holds true for alternative route programs (Levine, 2006). The greatest commonality is their diversity. For those being prepared for the "craft" of teaching, they find an array of program options. Programs range from for-profit to non-profits,

community colleges to school systems, and regional education service centers to individual public schools, each with their own set of entrance and exit requirements (Feistritzer, 2011).

The divergences in beliefs about where teachers should be prepared once again leads to conflicting and inconsistent directions for improving teacher education (Levine, 2006). Making the situation particularly troubling is the likelihood of systematic differences in how teachers are educated for differing types of schools, subjects, and students. Teachers in urban schools are more likely to be prepared for a "craft" than their counterparts in suburban schools, and, hard-to-staff subjects are more likely to be staffed by teachers trained through alternative programs (Levine, 2006). Additionally, low-income children of color are more likely be taught by teachers trained for the "craft" than their more affluent white peers (Levine, 2006). School systems more concerned with increasing the quantity of teachers are more likely to hire from alternative programs, while schools that focus on quality improvement will tend to hire from traditional university programs (Levine, 2006). The reality is that a school district with multiple campuses and multiple needs could very well have a group of faculty coming to them with large variances in their training and levels of preparation, a potential problem that results in growing learning gaps for students in the most-needy schools.

The Impact of Program Faculty.

Teacher education faculty, like curriculum, mirror the historical conflicts of the profession (Levine, 2006). Generally, they are disconnected from the schools, the arts and sciences, and engage in research disconnected from policy, practice, and the academy (Levine, 2006). According to a National Academy of Science study, it is difficult to

ascertain the qualifications of the people who staff teacher preparation programs

(National Research Council [NRC], 2010). More than half of prospective teachers are

educated in institutions identified as less selective about their faculty (NRC, 2010).

Many education faculty do not even work in teacher preparation programs (NRC, 2010).

Because most educator programs include programs for school psychology and counseling

psychology among other fields, educator faculty may be housed in different units across

university and college campuses (NRC, 2010).

Data shows that faculty members in university-based teacher education programs

are likely to be white women with a median age of 51 years (NRC, 2010). Fifty-one

percent of education faculty are full time, and of those, 36 percent are tenure-track faculty

(NRC, 2010). On average, 56 percent of college faculty are employed full time, and no

program area has a lower proportion of its faculty working full time that does education

(NRC, 2010). About 25 percent of full-time education faculty members hold the rank of

full professor, and about 28 percent of education faculty are more likely than their peers

in other program areas to be assistant professors. (NRC, 2010). Almost 75 percent have

doctoral degrees, less than 5 percent report research as their primary activity, and more

than 67 percent of full-time education faculty report teaching as their principal activity,

while another 20 percent focus on administration, the highest among all program areas

and nearly double the percentage across academic areas (NRC, 2010).

The Thomas Fordham Institute conducted research in 2010 on education program

faculty that resulted in a report entitled "Cracks in the Ivory Tower? The Views of

Education Professors Circa 2010." The study surveyed over 700 education professors

across the United States to determine how they view their own roles and what they think

of the menagerie of K-12 policy developments over the past decade (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). The report uncovers some troubling trends among those surveyed: a) only 24 percent believe it is absolutely essential to produce teachers who understand how to work with the state's standards, tests, and accountability systems; b) just 37 percent believe it is absolutely essential to focus on developing teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom; and, c) fewer than 40 percent believe it is absolutely essential to create teachers who are trained to address the challenges of high-needs students in urban districts (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).The Fordham report does point out, however, that many professors do feel the aforementioned are important, just not as important as forming "change agents," new teachers who push back against modern reforms (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Other key findings of the Fordham report offer reason for all stakeholders to give serious thought to revamping educator programs. First, teacher educators show only modest concern for real-world challenges such as managing classrooms and student discipline, implementing differentiated instruction, and working with state standards (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Just 26 percent believe their programs should prepare students to work effectively within the realities of today's public schools (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Additionally, the Fordham study shows that most professors of education believe their field needs to change. Many faculty in the study allude to serious deficiencies with teacher-preparation programs, prospective teachers, and even their colleagues (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Sixty-six percent believe that the present system of university-based teacher education has some good qualities although change is needed (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Half agree that teacher preparation programs often fail to adequately prepare

students for the real-world classroom, and 73 percent feel the teacher educator programs should be held more accountable for the quality of teachers they graduate (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). A large majority, 73 percent, believe that most professors need to spend more time in K-12 classrooms (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Thirdly, education professors tend to be supportive of policy initiatives aimed at improving teacher corps, such as holding faculty more accountable, changing salary structure and incentives for teachers, and loosening tenure protections (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Seventy-nine percent agree with requiring a minimum of five years for tenure and strengthening formal teacher evaluation, and 86 percent support making it simpler to terminate unmotivated or incompetent faculty, even if they are tenured (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). And, 83 percent favor financial incentives for teachers who work in tough neighborhoods with low-performing schools (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

The Fordham study also reveals that a majority of faculty in the study feel that phonics and math facts are no longer a priority. Just 36 percent feel it is essential to teach math facts such as multiplication tables in the early grades, and 44 percent believe it is necessary to teach phonics and phonemic awareness in the early grades when teaching literacy (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). These attitudes likely put professors at odds with conventional wisdom while also contradicting the recommendations of national panels that have endorsed these instructional techniques for years (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Even something as simple as rewarding students for achievement is viewed much differently by college professors in the study. Only 35 percent of the faculty agree that rewards can be valuable incentives for student learning (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Professors tend to want school-age students to seek knowledge because they are curious

and love to learn, not because of a reward (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). They feel that encouraging teamwork and collaboration is more important than a competition that results in winners and losers (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Educator faculty also stand apart on the issue of teaching immigrant students in public education. Forty percent of professors are more likely to believe that public schools should help young immigrants maintain their original language and culture rather than absorb America's language and culture as quickly as possible (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). These results differ sharply from a national survey of immigrants in which 74 percent thought it is more important for schools to teach new immigrants English as quickly as possible (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Most professors agree with public policy regarding differentiated instruction. Fifty-one percent of professors believe it is absolutely essential to train teachers to differentiate instruction in their classrooms (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Eighty-one percent acknowledge that it is difficult to tailor instruction to match the individual needs of students on a daily basis in the classroom (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

The Fordham results indicate that from state standards to classroom management, from technology to pedagogical issues, in creating their program curriculum and instruction, faculty tend to ignore, and at times contradict, the policies and challenges that their students will face as actual teachers (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). They do not appear to define their mission as training teachers for actual classrooms (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Professors appear to be implying that the real world needs to change, not them (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). They feel the teachers they train should go out into the world of education to provoke change and to challenge the status quo (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Thus,

according to the Fordham Report, "the disconnect between the real world and the ivory tower is not only one of their own making, but is conscious and purposeful" (p. 21).

Current Context of Teacher Preparation and Accountability

The current mechanisms for accountability and quality control in teacher preparation programs are a "patchwork of mandatory and voluntary actions" (Levine, 2006). States have the primary responsibility to form teacher policies and, therefore, regulate the teaching profession through teacher certification programs that serve as gateways into the teaching profession (Boyd et al., 2007). These policies set standards for educators, as well as requirements for certification. States ensure compliance with these standards through the approval of programs, including alternative programs (Perry, 2011). In establishing guidelines for teacher preparation, many states model those created by national organizations including the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (Perry, 2011). Important criteria is established, including recruitment, selection, type and duration of fieldwork, length of required training, and possibly the minimum number of credit hours for coursework (Perry, 2011).

Most states have a number of pathways for candidates to obtain a license to teach. "Traditional" programs are typically housed in a higher education setting and result in a bachelor's or master's degree (Perry, 2011). The label "alternative certification" has become a catch-all classification in teacher preparation, and includes various routes a candidate can obtain a teaching license without returning to a higher education institution for traditional education coursework (Perry, 2011). Traditional programs train between 60 and 80 percent of teacher candidates on a national average, depending on how

traditional and alternative route programs are categorized for the data (Perry, 2011; Levine, 2006; Johnson et al., 2001). And, yet half of the education professors surveyed by the Fordham Institute report that these programs fail to prepare teachers for the demands of today's classrooms (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Currently, states use several mechanisms to hold teacher preparation programs accountable for the quality of teachers being produced (APA, 2014). Most states have three levers for regulating program quality: approval, accreditation, and certification (APA, 2014). Considerable circumstantial evidence supports that these accountability levers do little to ensure that each state's new teachers are ready for the classroom (APA, 2014). Too many beginning teachers report that they do not feel well prepared when they enter the classroom and their supervisors often agree (Levine, 2006). In addition, the claim that student achievement lags behind other countries has sparked debates about the effectiveness of teacher preparation in the United States (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2009).

Since the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1998, federal policymakers have sought to implement data collection that would yield systematic information on the characteristics and the outcomes of teacher preparation programs (APA, 2014). The annual reporting requirements mandated in HEA Title II represent the first step in systematizing data collection, using common definitions, and making information public (APA, 2014). Title II requires that states provide the secretary of education with multiple input, process, and candidate outcome data points, including pass rates on assessments used by states in certifying or licensing teachers, requirements for teaching certificates and licensure, state efforts in the past year to improve teaching,

descriptions of alternate routes to licensure, and information on each teacher preparation

program in the state (APA, 2014). In all, states must report 440 data elements each year

for teacher preparation programs (Duncan, 2010). The *Race to the Top* initiative took

this federal accountability system a step further by encouraging states to link information

on student achievement with specific teacher preparation programs, publicly report these

data on program impact for each teacher preparation program in their state, and expand

those programs that seem to produce teachers who are effective in promoting student

growth (Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, & Ahn, 2013).

However, despite the increased publication of data and recent accountability

efforts, policy leaders question the usefulness of the Title II reporting requirements

(APA, 2014) and the actual impact this information has on improving educator programs.

The Challenges for Assessing Educator Programs

The public demand for high-quality teachers makes it crucial to find valid and

reliable teacher preparation program evaluation measures (Education Innovation, 2013).

For many years, administrators of teacher education programs focused on inputs for

program evaluation rather than outputs, meaning the focus was on program accreditation

measures such as quality of program faculty, nature of program curriculum, and adequacy

of program budget, among other input criteria (Russell & Wineberg, 2007). Secretary of

Education Arne Duncan (2010) in a report on the *Race to the Top* has called for a shift in

focus from program inputs to program outputs – measuring program graduates'

effectiveness in the classroom during their first few years of teaching by looking at the

learning gains of their students. No matter the focus, the intent of administrators in

general has been to produce quality teachers.   When a focus is placed on program

outcomes, the mindset of administrators and evaluators is forced to change. The shift in

program evaluation focus has renewed dialogue around teacher effectiveness and teacher

preparation (APA, 2014).

However, shifting to an outcome-based evaluation for educator programs creates

its own unique set of problems. A key challenge in any educator preparation program

research is that isolating the elements of the preparation programs that lead to improved

student learning requires dealing with layers of outcomes (Education Innovation, 2011).

As Cochran et al. wrote,

> This kind of research depends on a chain of causal evidence with several critical
>
> links: empirical evidence demonstrating the link between teacher preparation
>
> programs or structures and teacher candidates' learning (i.e., candidates'
>
> knowledge growth, skills, and dispositions); empirical evidence demonstrating the
>
> link between teacher candidates' learning and their practices in actual classrooms;
>
> and empirical evidence demonstrating the link between the practices of graduates
>
> of teacher preparation programs and what their pupils learn.   Individually each
>
> one of the links is complex and challenging to estimate.   When they are
>
> combined, the challenges are multiplied" (Education Innovation, 2011).

Scholars have further warned that no unified theory exists to suggest how these

individual elements and layers interact to explain how and why certain experiences in a

teacher's training lead to certain outcomes by her students several years later (Education

Innovation, 2011).

Developing systems capable of assessing the effectiveness of teacher education programs creates an enormous challenge. Some of the difficulties in obtaining needed information include: issues with methods used linking teacher practice to pupil outcomes; confidentiality and privacy issues handling access to data; problems in linking data gathered by different agencies; difficulties in ensuring the validity and reliability of data; the time and expense required to gather needed data; and varying definitions and data requirements for the formal reports mandated by states, the federal government, and national accrediting bodies (Russell & Wineburg, 2007).

Levine (2011) claims that one of the primary barriers to establishing an accountability system for educator preparation programs is simply the availability of needed information. A complexity in using student test score growth, for example, is the need for a well-designed system for collecting and maintaining longitudinal data that links K-12 teachers to their students, schools, and educator preparation program (Education Innovation, 2011). Without this type of data available to administrators and stake holders, the process of designing effective and meaningful educator program evaluations is hindered.

A National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) study shows that assessment of new teachers' impact on student learning is the most critical type of data needed to create a cycle of evaluation and continuous improvement for teacher preparation programs (Goe, 2007). Unfortunately, it is also the most difficult to obtain. The diversity of what and where new teachers teach creates a tremendous challenge for devising appropriate measures (Goe, 2007).   The practical challenges in collecting such an array of measures across so many contexts establishes an argument for the need for

teacher preparation entities to partner with states already engaged in systematic, statewide teacher evaluation efforts (Goe, 2007). The report also asserts that an additional challenge that goes beyond just obtaining the data lies in devising systems to capture data efficiently and systematically, creating standards for evaluating those data, and developing ways for using information from the data to inform faculty about the curriculum and the program in a thorough and timely manner (Goe, 2007).

Finally, identifying the causal impact of educator preparation programs is even more complex when consideration is given to the array of variation among them. There are more than 2,000 educator preparation programs in the United States, preparing about 235,000 completers each year (Education Innovation, 2013). Seventy-one percent are traditional programs based at institutions of higher education, another 21 percent are alternative programs based at institutions of higher education, and eight percent are alternative education programs not based at institutions of higher education (Education Innovation, 2013). Within those three broad program structures is enormous diversity. Programs vary in size from a few students to thousands. Their admission standards, average age of students, curricular offerings, graduation requirements, pedagogical frameworks, guiding philosophies, instructional methodologies, field experiences, types of districts where graduates are placed, and expectations for faculty research all vary as well (Education Innovation, 2013).   While the diversity of programs is important to a system of teacher preparation, it also make comparisons among them challenging (Education Innovation, 2013).

Jenny DeMonte (2013) discusses a disconnect between teacher preparation programs and K-12 public education administrators as a major challenge to program

evaluation and program success. The starting point for ensuring that every student has a good teacher and receives high-quality instruction, according to Demonte, might be to align the work of teacher preparation with the needs of K-12 schools and students (DeMonte, 2013). This would allow for a well-focused and outputs-based evaluation piece to educator programs. The challenge to a seemingly simple solution, however, is that for the most part the institutions governing teacher training organizations are not governed by the bodies charged with overseeing the K-12 public education (DeMonte, 2013). Nations with the highest-ranked educational systems almost always have congruence between teacher preparation and schools and are closely aligned with the needs of the schools they serve (DeMonte, 2013). Getting K-12 and higher education to talk to each other is often difficult because in most states each system is regulated and governed by different authorities that aren't required to share or collaborate to improve education for children (DeMonte, 2013). The problem is magnified when considering that at least 16 different groups are partially responsible for or involved with standards, accreditation, program content, and program approval of teacher preparation (DeMonte, 2013). The lack of coordination between the needs of K-12 education and the work of preparing teachers in higher-education institutions creates a gap between what teachers learn and what K-12 schools and students need.

New Teacher Views and Attitudes about their Preparation Programs.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) (2008) compiled information gleaned from a survey of 641 first-year teachers from schools across the country in which teachers were asked more than 100 items, including questions regarding their teacher preparation programs (Goe & Stickler, 2008). The results were

surprising in light of what is considered common opinion about the condition of current university-based teacher preparation programs. In contrast to the views of many education critics, most new teachers give average to high marks to their overall (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Feistritzer (2011) echoes the same. Of the 2,500 public school teachers surveyed for the *Profiles of Teachers in the U.S. 2011,* 24 percent reported that their preparation programs were "excellent," and 41 percent reported "very good," while 24 percent stated theirs was "good," and only one percent rated their programs as "poor" (Feistritzer, 2011). Most said their training covered a variety of topics from teaching specific subject areas to classroom management, and that they felt confident stepping into their first year of teaching (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

However, teachers in this study did not feel quite as prepared for dealing with diversity in the classrooms (Goe & Stickler, 2008). While 76 percent surveyed agreed that diversity was covered in the curriculum, only 39 percent felt the training they received was adequate for dealing with the poverty, and social issues they faced in their schools (Goe & Stickler, 2008). New teachers are saying that despite their training, they were just not ready for what they found to be reality in terms of student diversity and the wide range of student needs they had to deal with (Goe & Stickler, 2008). This is not just true of teachers going into urban schools. New teachers stepping into upscale suburban schools felt the most anxiety with regards to ethnic diversity (Goe &Stickler, 2008). This is because suburban teachers increasingly find themselves with a wide range of populations from cultures from Asia (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

Additionally, many new teachers in the study reported they were unprepared for the number of special-needs students in their classrooms (Goe & Stickler, 2008). The

presence of at least some special-needs students is almost universal. Only five percent of teachers in the study reported no students with special needs (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Although 82 percent reported they were taught in some manner to deal with issues of working with special-needs students, 53 percent felt the training was not useful for the real world setting (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

The challenge of diverse classrooms is also reflected in the ideas new teachers have about what would really help them improve teaching and student learning (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Ninety-four percent of teachers surveyed felt that more emphasis should be placed on "preparing teachers new teachers to adapt or vary their instruction to meet the needs of a diverse classroom" (Goe & Stickler, 2008). In other areas of teacher preparation, 87 percent of teachers surveyed felt that secondary teachers should be required to major in the subjects they are teaching, 76 percent felt teacher preparation programs should require more time in field experiences under direct supervision of strong mentor teachers, and 64 percent reported that teachers should be required to pass rigorous tests of subject knowledge (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

These findings suggest that teacher preparation programs should reexamine their programs and place a greater emphasis on teaching in diverse classrooms and teaching students with special needs in regular classroom settings (Goe & Stickler, 2008). Although it appears the subjects are being covered, in reality, a gap exists between what is being taught and what the reality of the classroom is (Goe & Stickler, 2008).

Feistritzer (2011) yielded similar findings. Feistritzer surveyed 1,076 K-12 public school teachers in 2011 as a project for the National Center for Education Information and found the majority gave high marks to their preparation programs with 24 percent

rating their program as excellent and 24 percent rating their programs as very good and 88 percent willing to recommend their programs to others (Feistritzer, 2011). Like the *Lessons Learned* study, the majority of new teachers in Feistritzer's survey felt the student teaching experience should be lengthened (Feistritzer, 2011).

Feistritzer's study asked participants to rate the effectiveness of 15 aspects of their teacher preparation programs. Seventy-five percent of participants rated "discussions with fellow teachers" and 71 percent rated "actual teaching part of the program" as the top two most effective aspects of their own teacher preparation (Feistritzer, 2011). Fifty percent rated "practical experiences of instructors" as very effective, yet only 36 percent rated the "knowledge and backgrounds of instructors as effective (Feistritzer, 2011). Only 27 percent rated "education courses before teaching in the program" as an effective aspect of their programs and only 17 percent reported "working with college faculty in the school where I was teaching" as effective (Feistritzer, 2011).

The Feistritzer (2011) survey also asked teachers to rate how competent they felt they were in eight areas when they first began to teach. Generally, when they began to teach, 44 percent felt very competent in their ability to teach their subject matter, but only 27 percent felt competent to handle classroom management and only 25 percent felt competent to handle classroom discipline (Feistritzer, 2011). It is important to note that nine to 28 percent of teachers surveyed felt *incompetent* to deal with classroom discipline, classroom management, and organizing instruction (Feistritzer, 2011).

Feistritzer (2011) also asked teachers to rate what is most valuable to them in developing competence to teach over time. The most valuable area is clinical and field experiences (87 percent) followed by one's own teaching experiences (85 percent) and

working with other teachers/colleagues (77 percent) top the list of variables most

valuable in developing competence to teach. Education methods courses (39 percent),

the college faculty in one's subject area major (38 percent), and the college of education

faculty (25 percent) were among the lowest criteria rated (Feistritzer, 2011).

The Data on Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs

This section of chapter two will include a review of research data that examines

the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs from across the nation as well as data

specific to Texas. The data reviewed has been collected and categorized into the

following areas: 1) admissions/qualifications; 2) content area curriculum; 3) pedagogical

curriculum; 4) field experiences; and 5) faculty effectiveness. Since some of the

characteristics of quality teaching are obtained only through classroom experience, the

categories are based on the elements of quality teaching that can be feasibly addressed

and taught in traditional teacher preparation programs. It is important to note that teacher

preparation programs should work to prepare students to learn and grow as teachers once

they enter the classroom.

The NCTQ *Teacher Prep Review, 2014*. Much of the research data used for the

data review section of this report comes from data collected on 12 of the 19 teacher

quality standards developed and used by the National Council on Teacher Quality

(NCTQ) *Teacher Prep Review, 2014*. The idea for the *Teacher Prep Review* was inspired

by the *Flexner Report* of 1910, a landmark study that evaluated the nation's medical

schools and led a transformation of the system of training doctors into the world's best

doctors (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ's goal is to "spur underachieving programs to

recognize their shortcomings and adopt methods used by the high scorers" (p. 4). The

Teacher Prep Review, 2014 also serves as a consumer guide for aspiring teachers to select their programs and for district leaders in their recruitment efforts (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ (2014) recognizes the urgency for addressing the issues of developing a high-quality teaching force in America and believes the reviews will assist in policy and decision making by education leaders (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

The *Teacher Prep Review, 2013* was the first edition and has been the basis for much controversy in the education arena. Edward Fuller wrote that the study has a number of serious flaws that include a narrow focus on inputs, lack of a strong research base, missing standards, omitted research, incorrect association of research findings, poor methodology, and so on (Fuller, 2013). On the other hand, Levine (2013) asserts that the ratings of most of the report's programs as mediocre or poor would be "shocking" if studies showing the same thing had not been issued regularly in recent decades. Levine's criticism after publication of the *Teacher Prep Review, 2013* fell on teacher education programs instead of the NCTQ for their lack of response to such studies (Levine, 2013). Program leaders typically just criticize the studies instead of studying the information and using it for program improvement, as they should do (Levine, 2013). The *Teacher Prep Review, 2014* boasts that the 2013 report sparked a national debate in which more than 1,000 news stories were published within 48 hours of the report's release (Levine, 2013). The *Teacher Prep Review, 2014* also takes credit for moving the need to reform teacher preparation to the top of the public agenda, thus meeting their intended goal (Levine, 2013).

All things considered, Chris Minnich, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) believes the report provides "useful data that states can

use in their work with educational stakeholder groups and policymakers to transform educator preparation programs" (Abdul-Alim, 2014).

Admissions/Qualifications. Many policymakers and educators have expressed concern about the quality of some newly licensed teachers and have suggested that raising the bar for admission to teacher preparation programs might be an answer (Allen, 2003). Despite the importance of teacher education programs in improving teacher quality, only 15 states have established minimum admissions requirements for individuals seeking a degree in education (Perry, 2011). At a time when many people feel it is more vital than ever to attract intellectually capable candidates to teaching, some feel the profession is actually attracting the less capable (Allen, 2003). When compared to top performing nations in education that recruit 100 percent of their teacher corps from the top third of their high school graduating classes, the U.S. pales; less than one-quarter of U.S. teachers come from the top-third of their graduating classes (Perry, 2014).

Studies have shown that, on average, entering teachers have much lower academic qualifications in terms of test scores and institutional selectivity than a decade ago (NRC, 2010). According to NCTQ (2014), approximately 25 percent of new teachers come from teacher preparation programs that have minimal or no entry requirements. Most programs require an application of admissions, may or may not require a minimum GPA and/or SAT score, and tend to recruit from the bottom two-thirds of college classes or even the bottom third for schools in poor neighborhoods (National Association of State Board of Educators [NASBE], 2011). The NCTQ study shows that only thirty-five percent of programs at the undergraduate level met this NCTQ standard.

Levine offers a different view on the dismal reports presented by most of the research and evaluations. While Levine (2006), asserts it is true that students who intend to major in education have lower SAT scores than other college students, research shows that many who identify themselves as teacher education majors never go on to a major in education, they switch majors, and students who entered college selecting a different major change to an education major, thus skewing the data.

Texas requires that educator preparation programs only admit candidates that first pass the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), a test designed for the general college population and meets the NCTQ state goal (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). Texas has set a minimum score for admission that is considered "selective" when compared to academic qualifications of other states (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). The state also requires a GPA minimum of 2.75 (Greenberg, et. al., 2013).

Content-Area Knowledge. Candidates preparing to become teachers need to master the content they will teach. State policies and programs vary with regard to their requirements for subject-matter preparation (Perry, 2011). Some programs require that prospective teachers complete majors in the subject areas they will teach, while other programs only require minors or, in the case of elementary candidates, a broad array of courses related to the array of subjects an elementary teacher might teach (Tournaki, Lybulinskaya, & Carolan, 2009).

A study by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) shows that 25 states require secondary teachers to major in the subject they plan to teach and to pass an exam in that subject area (NRC, 2010). The same study also shows that only six states require only the major and 18 require only the exam (NRC, 2010). And, the College Board of the

Mathematical Sciences (CBMS) reported in their recent findings that only four percent of

K-8 certification programs require no mathematics courses, 26 percent require one

mathematics course, 37 percent require two courses, and 22 percent require three courses

(NRC, 2010). NCTQ's study revealed about one-third of the elementary teacher

preparation programs require no math coursework (Perry, 2014). CBMS reported that

between 59 and 70 percent of programs require a two-course math-sequence for

elementary mathematics majors, and between 40 and 56 percent of programs studies

require college algebra (NRC, 2010). The NCTQ 2013 study reveals that only one in five

elementary and special education teacher preparation programs evaluated are ensuring

that their candidates have the conceptual understanding of elementary math necessary for

effective instruction.

These issues are not only confined to mathematics. Only a handful of states

require an elementary education major to have an area of concentration other than general

education (Perry, 2014). While reading is considered a foundational skill for learning,

only one-third of states test new elementary teachers' knowledge of the science of

reading (Perry, 2014). And, only about one-half of states have minimal or no

requirements that programs require the basics of reading instruction for elementary and

special education teachers (Greenberg, McKee, & Walsh, 2013). Three out of four

elementary preparation programs do not teach evidence-based methods of reading

instruction (Greenberg et al., 2013). This data is based on the NCTQ's standard that to

be effective, the reading programs should consist of five components of effective reading

instruction (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ (2014) also found that 76 percent of

programs do not adequately address strategies for English language learners, and 76 percent do not adequately address strategies for struggling readers.

Overall, according the NCTQ 2014 study, the data shows a real problem with elementary curriculum. Only 12 percent of elementary programs are preparing teacher candidates in content spanning either most of or the complete elementary curriculum, which includes appropriate coursework in literature and composition, history and geography, and the sciences with labs, while 72 percent of the elementary preparation programs spans only a small part or none of the full elementary curriculum (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

Science appears to be a particular area of weakness according to studies (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). For example, the NCTQ evaluation indicates that 68 percent of programs do not require a single, general-audience science course that covers content centrally relevant to elementary grades. Instead, most programs require a full three-credit science course from a selected group of basic science courses such as biology, physics, archeology, geology, just to name a few (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

Programs preparing teachers for middle school content fare much better. According to the NCTQ 2014 study, because most states require a subject-area certification exam to be passed by teacher candidates, 82 percent of middle school programs satisfied the middle school standard.

Unlike the middle school preparation programs, high school preparation programs show areas of weakness (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). The NCTQ standard is based on the premise that high school teacher candidates should have adequate knowledge in every course they are certified to teach (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). The majority of the states

certify teachers for a broad field, such as science or social studies composite, but not in the subject area to be taught. For example, a science-composite certified teacher may have passed the certification test with most coursework in the life sciences field, but he/she is hired to teach physics. Without adequate coursework knowledge in physics, the teacher is not likely to be effective in teaching that content. The NCTQ standard calls for programs to require at least a minor in two of the eligible content areas under the broad subject area umbrella. Based on that standard, only 35 percent of teacher preparation programs meet the standard (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

According to the results of the NCTQ 2013 state report, Texas is on the right track in ensuring that its elementary candidates are adequately prepared to teach a wide range of elementary content geared to college and career-readiness standards (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). However, the study gives Texas a lower score for preparing elementary teachers in reading instruction because Texas does not require teacher preparation programs to address the science of reading (Greenberg, et. al., 2013.) Other data in the study includes recent Texas legislation that requires teacher candidates to earn a "satisfactory" in each core subject covered by the examination, for certification (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). Additionally, Texas is highlighted for requiring all teacher candidates to complete either an academic discipline major or an interdisciplinary major (Greenberg, et. al., 2013).

Texas is also noted for requiring all middle school teachers to obtain either a generalist (grades 4-8) or subject-specific (grades 4-8) endorsement and is commended for not offering a K-8 generalist certification (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). With regards to secondary certification, the study finds it positive that Texas requires its secondary

candidates to pass a content test to teach any core secondary subject; however, the report shows a significant concern that Texas allows a general science and general social studies certification exam (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). And, because Texas allows additional testing for certification in other areas without taking the related content coursework, the report finds it concerning that passing the exam cannot guarantee content knowledge (Greenberg, et. al., 2013).

Pedagogy/Methods Coursework. One of the most heated debates concerning the quality of teacher preparation is the extent to which pedagogical preparation is necessary for teacher effectiveness (Allen, 2003). Ingersoll, Merrill, and May (2012) assert that teachers who receive more pedagogical training, including student teaching, are far more likely to stay in education after their first year NCTQ 2014 also stresses the importance of teaching pedagogy in preparation programs and includes a standard for rating this aspect of teacher preparation.

Beyond knowing content, new teachers should be skilled in introducing and teaching that content. Best practices differ among content areas at the secondary level, so methods courses should be tailored to the candidate's chosen teaching field (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ 2014 findings show that 31 percent of the secondary programs evaluated require three semester hours or more of subject-specific methods coursework that includes actual classroom instruction (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). When considering elementary and secondary programs, 25 percent do not require a single three-credit subject-specific methods course. (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

The NCTQ 2014 classroom management standard evaluates the feedback that programs give to student teachers based on how well they manage their classrooms

(Greenberg, et. al., 2015). Classroom management is a critical set of skills that few

novice teachers possess (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). Studies show that many teacher

educator programs do not place much emphasis on actually training education students in

classroom management (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). Typically, classroom management

coursework includes an introduction to a variety of classroom management models and

techniques and then asking students to develop their own personal philosophies of

classroom management (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). This standard includes student

application of rules, routines, positive reinforcement, handling misbehavior, and

engagement and is measured on whether or not the teacher preparation program provides

feedback on specific techniques, including (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ 2014 data

shows that 38 percent of programs provide student teachers with feedback on classroom

management techniques, 25 percent provide student teachers with feedback on their use

of some, but not all, critical classroom management techniques, and 37 percent do not

provide student teachers with feedback on their use of critical classroom management

techniques. With regard to feedback provided on reinforcing appropriate behavior, only

26 percent of programs provided feedback in this area, while 74 percent provided little or

no feedback (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). The report also looked at the distribution of

classroom management standard scores by program type and found that 39 percent of

elementary programs nearly meets or meets this standard, while 36 percent of secondary

programs nearly meets or meets this standard. For both elementary and secondary

programs, 37 percent either meet a small part or no part of the standard at all (Greenberg,

et. al., 2015). In addition to data gathered from the NCTQ 2014 evaluation, LePage and

colleagues (2005) note that based on surveys of teachers about their preparation,

programs seem to have become more likely to offer formal instruction in classroom management over the past few decades as opposed to just leaving it to on-the-job training (NRC, 2010).

Additionally, the results of NCTQ's 2014 report show that only 15 percent of teacher preparation programs included in this evaluation ensure that teacher candidates meet the challenges of planning classroom instruction, while 27 percent ensure that candidates will meet some of the challenges, and 58 percent do not ensure that candidates will meet the challenges of planning classroom instruction.

And, although there are many views on the amount of testing in classrooms today, PK-12 education is awash with classroom standardized tests and the data they produce (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). Yet, based on data from the NCTQ 2014 study, only 24 percent of the elementary and secondary preparation programs evaluated adequately address assessment topics in a way that assures their novice teachers that they will be able to work productively within their schools to assess student learning and use results to improve instruction. Although use of standardized test data are typically a lecture topic in coursework in nearly half of all programs participating in this evaluation, few programs include assignments in coursework or capstone projects that require teacher candidates to actually tackle the data derived from tests and to practice using the data to plan instruction (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). And, although teaching is an increasingly collaborative profession, the study found little evidence of collaborative practice in assessment-related assignments in most of the coursework evaluated (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

How does Texas fair in this category? Texas meets the NCTQ 2014 state goal for assessing professional knowledge because policy requires all new teachers to pass a pedagogy test based on its own standards for full certification (Canaday, 2014).

Field and Clinical Experience. Researchers agree that high-quality, practical experience in important in learning to teach. Unlike the multitude of differing beliefs about coursework and pedagogy, little relevant disagreement exists with regards to the importance of field and clinical experience (Perry, 2011). Most agree that field experiences ensure teachers can apply the education program knowledge and skills they have acquired in the classroom (Perry, 2011). A survey of 15,500 education school alumni revealed that 75 percent had reported the student teaching experience as the most valuable aspect of their education program (AACTE, 2012). Levine reports that in a similar survey of alumni, 60 percent of teachers reported that their student teaching had lasted a semester, while roughly 20 percent reported longer than a semester, and another 20 percent reported having spent less than a semester in student teaching (NRC, 2010).

State regulatory policies vary widely with regard to required clinical experience. Currently, only 39 states require field experience (AACTE, 2012). Data from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification reveals that 85 percent of the state survey respondents indicated that their state requires field practice prior to student teaching, only 60 percent require experience in a multicultural setting, and 60 percent require experience with more than one group or grade level of students (AACTE, 2012). About 33 percent of state respondents require training for cooperating teachers, and 10 to 15 weeks is the norm among 31 respondents (AACTE, 2012).

The NCTQ (2013 & 2014) studies of teacher preparation programs place the strongest emphasis of all its measurement standards on student teaching. NCTQ (2014) believes that for too long teacher educators have been content simply go through the basic motions with school districts to arrange for classroom placements and teacher supervisor selection. Teacher candidates have only one chance to experience the best possible student teacher placement (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). The goal of this standard is to set minimum conditions for best placement (Greenberg, et. al., 2015). NCTQ (2014) based their program evaluations of this standard on whether or not program policies required student teachers to be placed in classrooms with an effective classroom teacher and also whether or not sufficient support and feedback was given by the university supervisor. This NCTQ standard also evaluates whether the program plays an active role in selecting cooperating teachers and if the programs seek information regarding whether the nominees are capable mentors and/or effective instructors. NCTQ's results show that only five percent of student teachers are ensured of receiving strong support from program staff and cooperating teachers, 36 percent are ensured of receiving some support, and 59 percent receive little or no support at all. Results also show that only 34 percent of programs give frequent feedback, nine percent communicate adequate cooperating teacher characteristics to school districts, and only 12 percent take an active role in selecting cooperating teachers (Greenberg, et. al., 2015).

The NCTQ (2014) evaluation ranks the University of Houston as one of only four institutions in the country whose programs fully satisfy all of the student teaching standard's indicators (Canaday, 2014). This program now requires five observations of

student teachers and clearly meets the standards for communicating with cooperating school districts and mentor teachers (Canaday, 2014).

Other research has found that successful student teaching programs share the following criteria: a) the program chooses the teacher with whom the student teacher is paired; b) the program requires that paired teachers have at least three years of experience; and c) the student teacher is observed at least five times and completes a capstone project that aggregates their learning from the experience (Perry, 2014). Based on NCTQ (2104) data, only 11 percent of programs ensure that paired teachers are effective, and only 28 percent require that paired teachers are effective mentors or have received mentor training (Perry, 2014).

The NCTQ (2014) conducted an additional survey based solely on student teaching in the United States. Of the programs sampled that require student teaching, 99 percent require full time student teaching and 91 percent prohibit extra coursework during student teaching (Canaday, 2014). Additionally, 100 percent of those programs sampled require at least ten weeks of student teaching, 75 percent ensure that their student teachers share all of their cooperating teachers' responsibilities, and 68 percent require their student teachers to be present on the first day of school (Walsh & Tracy, 2004).

According to Levine's study, too many schools pay inadequate attention to where they place students and then fail to supervise them or provide any type of feedback during their experience (Levine, 2006). According to those surveyed in Levine's study, very few experienced working with special needs students or opportunities to experience working in lower socio-economic urban schools. Alumni who were critical of their

teacher education programs as a whole typically pointed to "the price they paid later for their limited practical experience" (Levine, 2006). The common thread in their input was a desire to "have more, longer, earlier, and better-integrated field work experiences" (Levine). This voice is echoed across research. Rebecca Anhorn's (2008) work found it a startling revelation in learning the high value that new teachers placed on student teaching. Teachers viewed student teaching as the place to "bring it all together, to really become a teacher" (Anhorn, 2008). Teachers expressed the class work and time spent in the university preparing for teaching paled in comparison to the value of the field experiences (Anhorn, 2008).

Texas only partly meets the NCTQ state goal for student teaching (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). Although the state is commended for requiring candidates to complete at least a 12-week, full-day student teaching experience, the report marks Texas down for not ensuring that cooperating teachers are of high quality and for allowing student teaching outside of the state (Greenberg, et. al., 2013). Additionally, it is noted that Texas scores poorly in this area because only three programs out of 40 offer the opportunity for clinical practice prior to the beginning of an internship, only six programs provide more than minimum levels of mentor support, and only one year of teaching experience is required to be a mentor teacher (Greenberg, et. al., 2013).

Program Faculty. Levine (2006) asserts that teacher education faculty are disconnected from the real world needs of public schools and the teachers within. Research reveals that education program alumni surveyed feel strongly that program faculty is a weak link in the scope of their training (Levine, 2006). Alumni and current students felt that faculty experiences in the public school classrooms had not been long

enough nor recent enough (Levine, 2006). Those surveyed also felt that their professors

had little or no idea of what is really happening in the classrooms of today, even though

they might visit classrooms a few times each semester (Levine,2006). Alumni did not get

from these faculty insights, ideas, and how-to's (Levine, 2006).

Students and alumni criticized courses taught by professors with limited real-

world experience for being out of date, more theoretical than practical, and lacking in

content (Levine, 2006). Alumni spoke of being taught methods from the 1970s and

1980s that no longer apply in classrooms today, programs that have no mention of

students with disabilities and programs that assume all immigrant students are highly

literate in their first language (Levine, 2006).

Many professors actually agree that their field needs change (Farkas & Duffet,

2011). Recent movements in evaluating teacher preparation programs has resulted in

some professors examining their own programs with a critical eye (Farkas & Duffet,

2011). Self-reflection and openness to change and reform are no longer uncommon

(Farkas & Duffet, 2011). According to the Fordham study, nine percent of faculty

believe the system needs a complete overhaul, while 66 percent believe the current

system just needs some major tweaking, and 22 percent believe the system only needs

minor changes (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Many professors also acknowledge that education students are not getting the

practical tools they need for the classroom (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Fifty percent believe

that teacher education programs fail to adequately prepare teachers for the challenges of

teaching in the real world (Farkas & Duffet, 2011). Seventy-three percent believe that

education professors should spend more time in K-12 classrooms (Farkas & Duffet,

2011). And, 73 percent feel that teacher preparation programs should be more accountable for the quality of the teachers they graduate (Farkas & Duffet, 2011).

Universities Can't Do It All: School Districts Play an Important Role

Although it is clear that many improvements need to be made to university-based teacher preparation programs, it cannot be expected that these programs prepare teachers in such a way that they step into the classroom on the first day and find immediate success as a novice teachers. Developing a high quality teacher is a process that requires not only adequate preparation experiences from pre-service training, but immediate support with continued training and mentoring from the hiring school district to ensure the smoothest transition and strong support throughout at least the first year of teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Teaching is complex work and teacher preparation is rarely sufficient enough to provide all of the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching, and a significant portion can only be acquired while on the job (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Whether they enter teaching through an alternative route or through a traditional preparation route, all new teachers have so much to learn. New teacher support is a critical component of a comprehensive solution to achieving excellence in teaching quality (New Teacher Center [NTC], 2007). There is a necessary role for schools in providing an environment where novices are able to learn the craft and survive and succeed as teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). High-quality support programs for new teachers, increases the retention of first-year teachers and impacts student learning (NTC, 2007).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) reviewed five studies that provide evidence about the relationship between participation in induction programs and how well beginning

teachers taught, including their skill, practices, development, and pedagogical methods. With one exception, all of the studies reported positive effects for their induction/mentoring group (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). A more comprehensive study reviewed by Ingersoll divided mentoring programs studied into high, middle, or low levels of induction engagement and found that beginning teachers with high engagement programs outscored the low engagement group on seven of nine items measures of teaching practice (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Ingersoll also reviewed seven studies about the relationship between participation in induction programs and a beginning teacher's job satisfaction, commitment, retention, or turnover (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Three of the seven studies evaluated state and district mentor programs and found that beginning teachers who received some type of induction had higher job satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Of these studies, the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS), a statewide comprehensive program of instructional support, mentoring and formative assessment to assist teachers during their first years of service to Texas public schools, showed very positive results (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The study compared data on teacher retention from the TxBESS participants with data from all beginning teachers in the state, and analysis showed that TxBESS participants left the Texas public school system at statistically significantly lower rates, for each of their first three years, than did non-participants (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Researchers also found that the positive effects held up across high-poverty and high-minority schools and across elementary, middle, and high school levels (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Strong, effective mentoring programs can address the areas teachers feel the least prepared for when they step into the classroom for the first year such as working with diverse learners and special-needs students, managing the classroom and student discipline, working with assessment data, and planning effective lessons (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Effective mentors and mentoring programs can bring to the table a wealth of experience in addressing the needs of first-year teachers that most college professors cannot (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Teacher Education Reform and Improvement.

In 2009, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan addressed several groups across the nation regarding the need for education reform in America. According to his address to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, President Obama's administration believes the first step is with how to handle teacher preparation (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2011). The goal, according to Duncan, is for every teacher to receive the high-quality preparation and support they need so that every student can have the effective teachers they deserve (USDE, 2011).

Duncan's remarks in a speech at Columbia University's Teacher College echoed more of the same. Duncan (2010) suggests that the bar for teacher education must be raised because today's teachers are expected to do so much more than even a decade ago. Duncan went on to say that reforming and supporting education schools is a national priority and a critical concern for higher education, not only because more than half of tomorrow's teachers will be trained at traditional colleges of education, but the America's tax payers already generously support traditional teacher preparation programs through taxes, Pell Grants (distributed to 30 percent of undergraduate education majors), and

through federal loans ($3 billion distributed to 40 percent of undergraduate education majors). The federal government now provides $4 billion in Pell Grants and federal loans to support student and America's university-based teacher preparation programs (Duncan, 2010).

Duncan (2010) pointed out that most states do not carefully track the performance of teachers to their preparation programs to identify which programs are producing well-prepared teachers and those who are not. Duncan went on to say the draft *Race to the Top* criteria would reward states that publicly link the student achievement data to the programs where teachers and principals were credentialed (Duncan, 2010). As well, the *Race to the Top* calls for the federal government to fund a large expansion of teacher residency programs in high-needs districts and schools (Duncan, 2010). Duncan also acknowledged the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) for supporting the movement for colleges of education to have more meaningful self-policing with clinical experience driving the coursework. In June, 2009, NCATE's president announced new accreditation requirements that obliges university-based programs to strengthen the clinical focus of their programs, and to strongly consider a residency-model of training (Duncan, 2010).

Duncan (2010) applauded America's best educator programs for being coherent, up-to-date, and research-based, and for providing students with subject-mastery. These programs, according to Duncan, offer strong and substantial field-based experiences for students in local public schools that drives much of the coursework in classroom management and student learning and prepares students to teach diverse pupils in high-

needs settings and to make data-based decisions for instructional purposes (Duncan, 2010). The AACTE is working with 21 states to develop a teacher performance assessment that will replace licensure tests with an assessment built around high professional expectations to which both teachers and preparation programs would be held accountable (USDE, 2011).

The USDE 2011 report *Our Future, Our Teachers: The Obama Administration's Plan for Teacher Education Reform and Improvement* states that the federal role in educator preparation reform is to support states in their work, not to "usurp the significant progress already being made across the country." Nor is it to prescribe any particular model of improvement, but to create policy and make investments that will accelerate and support progress already underway (USDE. 2011). The federal government should support state-level policies that reward the best programs, improve the mid-performing programs, or ultimately shut down the lowest-performing programs (USDE, 2011).

The Obama Administration's plan includes a comprehensive agenda: 1) institutional reporting and state accountability; 2) reform financing of students preparing to become teachers; and 3) target support t institutions that prepare high quality teachers from diverse backgrounds (USDE, 2011).

A Focus on Results: Institutional Reporting and State Accountability. The Obama Administration's plan begins with revamping the data collected for Title II reporting in order to provide prospective teacher candidates, hiring districts, and teacher preparation programs themselves with meaningful data on program quality (USDE, 2011). Instead of focusing on input data, the new report will include outcome standards as well, thus measuring program impact: 1) student growth of elementary and secondary school

students taught by program graduates; 2) job placement and retention; and 3) surveys of program graduates and their principals (USDE, 2011). Collection and distribution of outcome-based data can inform better decision-making at all stages of teacher preparation.

Promoting Excellence: Presidential Teaching Fellows. In 2012, the Obama Administration renamed the TEACH grant program to the "Presidential Teaching Fellows" program, to provide formula aid to states that commit to establish rigorous systems for teacher certification and licensure and teacher preparation program accountability (USDE, 2011). The bulk of the funds are to be used for scholarships for "high-achieving, final-year students attending high-quality traditional or alternative teacher preparation programs" (USDE, 2011). The aim is to send these funds to the best programs for the best students with a priority on those with financial need (USDE, 2011). Other funds would be used to support state efforts in improving teacher education programs (USDE, 2011).

Targeted Investments. While the HEA regulations and Presidential Teaching Fellows program will create conditions for reform for all programs and students in a state, targeted investments are also necessary (USDE, 2011). Research indicates that disadvantaged students benefit academically and socially from having teachers with whom they can identify (USDE, 2011). Such teachers are underrepresented in the education workforce: 14 percent of teachers identify as African-American or Hispanic, compared to 38 percent of students, and only two percent of teachers are African-American men, and only two percent are Latino men (USDE, 2011). For this reason, Obama's reform policy will grant $40 million to upgrade and expand teacher education

programs of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) (USDE, 2011). Potential reforms for the MSIs include: a) increased entry/exit standards; b) comprehensive support for candidates while in school and on certification exams; c) deeply clinical-based curriculum that allows for extensive field experiences; d) training in evidence-based methods of reading instruction and the use of data to drive classroom practice; and e) partnerships with local school districts or with non-profit organizations with demonstrated experience and effectiveness in preparing and placing high-quality candidates (USDE, 2011).

These proposals are part of a broader effort by the Obama Administration to ensure an effective, well-supported teacher for every child (USDE, 2011). They build on work advanced through the *Race to the Top* and enabled by the Administration's reform of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (USDE, 2011). The goal is to form a comprehensive agenda to recruit, prepare, place, support, develop, and advance student enrolled in high-performing schools (USDE, 2011). As of this 2011 report, the Administration had already invested $140 million in innovative programs to provide intensive clinical training to prepare the next generation of teachers (USDE, 2011). Additionally, the Administration was able to offer five years of support for 40 projects under the Teacher Quality Partnership program to provide novice teachers with comprehensive induction in their first years of teaching and to support new pathways for those entering the profession from other fields (USDE, 2011).

In reforming the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the Obama Administration also invested $250 million in the new Teacher and Leader Pathways program, building off the Teach Quality Partnership Program, to provide grants to school districts, non-profits, and

universities to create and scale up high-performing teacher preparation programs, with an emphasis on programs that offer rigorous clinical experience and provide evidence of success in preparing teachers who achieve strong results in high-needs schools (USDE, 2011). The belief is that regulatory reform and the new Presidential Teaching Fellows program will create a stronger state system for ensuring the quality of teacher preparation, while the investments will support and help scale up individual high-performing schools (USDE, 2011).

   Critics and Supporters. Opposition to the Obama Administration's proposal abound, even from AACTE for a variety of reasons (Sawchuck, 2015). Although most agree that change is needed and that the Administration may be on the right track, the way in which they propose to go about getting the desired results has evoked concern (Sawchuck, 2015). As of Jan. 30, 2015 some 2,300 public comments had been submitted in response to the U.S. Department of Education's proposed rules to heighten tracking of teacher education programs (Sawchuck, 2015). A review of the comments submitted through Jan. 29 showed several main themes among the complaints, including that the rules would: a) prioritize student test scores, potentially leading to deleterious effects on teacher-preparation coursework; b) apply punitive sanctions to programs rather than support them; c) expand federal meddling in state affairs; d) prescribe flawed measures that would yield biased results; and, e) cost far more to implement than the $42 million the Education Department estimated. (Sawchuck, 2015). Teachers' unions were also among the major critics of the proposal with a major concern for the impact the policy may have on education schools producing teachers of color (Sawchuck, 2015).

Sharon Robinson, president and CEO of the AACTE, voiced concerns that the proposed regulations have the potential to end or even reverse the hard-won progress of current teacher preparation program reform efforts (Abdul-Alim, 2014). Robinson and others at AACTE are meticulously reviewing the plan to determine the effects on the field should the regulations be implemented (Abdul-Alim, 2014). Others view the proposed regulations as federal overreach (Abdul-Alim, 2014).

Yet, there are groups that show support the proposals. Takirra Winfield, a spokesperson for Teach for America, said the organization continues to review the proposed regulations and believes that limiting the number of evaluation measures and making those measures meaningful can be helpful to measure the quality of teacher preparation programs (Abdul-Alim, 2014). She speaks for the organization in stating that Teach for America believes the final rules should reflect goals we all want to achieve, including increasing the diversity and breadth of the talent pool (Abdul-Alim, 2014). A coalition of supporter, including Teach for America, will endorse the overall notion of placing programs in four categories and attaching consequences to the final ratings (Sawchuck, 2015). But, the coalition also hopes to see more flexibility to states as to the indicators used to rate (Sawchuck, 2015).

Final regulations are scheduled to be published in September of 2015 (Abdul-Alim, 2014). States would then have a year to get stakeholders involved to design their accountability systems and to collect required data (Abdul-Alim, 2014). States would be required to make report cards available to the public in April, 2018 on a pilot basis, and in 2019 states would be required to rate programs using the new measures (Abdul-Alim, 2014)

Early Evidence of Reform. Improving preparation is now a big priority for states. Although teacher effectiveness has dominated education improvement discussion for the past several years, states are now turning their focus to teacher preparation (Greenberg, 2014). Thirty-three states made significant improvement to their teacher preparation policies in the two-year period of reports to the NCTQ project and seven more made minor policy changes (Greenberg, 2014). More recently, the Council of Chief State School Officers' deputy executive director Carlissa Miller reported that over the past few years 45 states adopted new preparation standards for teacher programs, revised entry requirements, and/or implemented other key policy changes (Abdul-Alim, 2014). Five years prior to the NCTQ reviews, not a single state required elementary teacher candidates to pass strong multi-subject test that did not allow a strong score in one area to compensate for a low score in another area; as of the 2014 review, 19 states, including Texas, have adopted such a test (Greenberg, 2014). The 2014 review indicates significant improvements in several areas of teacher preparation programs they evaluated: entry requirements, testing of content knowledge, preparation of teaching the science of reading, making the student teaching experience more meaningful, and setting measurable expectations for programs (Greenberg, 2014). Clearly, states are taking note and stepping up to make necessary changes to their policies regarding teacher preparation (Greenberg, 2014).

Texas Reform Efforts. In 2012 an Educate Texas report was completed and published by the Texas Teaching Commission to provide a roadmap for the state and districts as they make decisions on addressing the need to continue developing and supporting those who decide to become teachers (Educate Texas, 2012). As of 2012, the

report boasts that Texas was already focusing on teacher recruitment, training, development, and retention through a range of district and state initiatives, legislative and administrative policies, grant programs, and local traditional and non-traditional K-12 and higher education efforts (Educate Texas, 2012). With regards to teacher preparation, Texas state statutes and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) policies determine the quality of teacher preparation in various ways, including: 1) setting standards for what is taught in traditional preparation programs; 2) regulating alternative certification programs; and 3) requiring all preparation programs to meet standards for quality to be approved (Educate Texas, 2012). Preparation curriculum requirements, mandated by SBEC, ensure that teacher preparation programs provide instruction aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge Skills (TEKS), and emphasizes subject matter and pedagogical knowledge (Educate Texas, 2012). The requirements include completion of student teaching, clinical teaching, or internship experience (Educate Texas, 2012). While each of these requirements contributes to preparing teachers for the classroom, national research shows that training is also needed in teaching a diverse student body and should be required as part of the preparation program (Educate Texas, 2012). While SBEC rules concerning teacher preparation curriculum do address the teaching skills needed for special populations, the Commission recommends a clearer standard of what the entails and a minimum requirement in the coursework rules to increase the likelihood that teachers would receive training in working with the diversity they will face in their classrooms (Educate Texas, 2012).

While state support is important, the Texas Teaching Commission acknowledges the importance of the innovative and effective strategies often produces by local

endeavors, such as UTeach (Educate Texas, 2012). UTeach is a product of the

University of Texas at Austin and has become a national model for recruiting would-be

teachers in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) areas in which

participants earn two credentials, a degree in a major related to the content they intend to

teach and a secondary teaching certificate (Educate Texas, 2012). UTeach has been

replicated at seven sites in Texas and on 33 college campuses in 16 states (Educate

Texas, 2012).

Texas is also home to the largest number of alternative certification programs

among all states and is the only state that allows for-profit entities to operate alternative

programs (Teach the Vote) (Educate Texas, 2012). Texas permits districts, education

service centers, for-profit and non-profit organizations, community colleges, and

universities to administer alternative route programs (Educate Texas, 2012). Current data

from the Texas Education Agency (T.E.A.) indicates more Texas teachers are certified

through alternative programs than traditional programs. Although Texas requires all

alternative certification programs to adhere to the same standards as traditional teacher

preparation programs, the NCTQ Pilot Review on alternative certification programs gave

Texas programs very low marks mostly for the lack of oversight from state accrediting

agencies (Educate Texas, 2012).

Texas is moving to improve the quality of its teacher preparation programs

through its Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) (Educate Texas,

2011). Senate Bill 174, 2009, created four measures for quality programs: 1)

certification exams – each program is required to have an 80 percent overall pass rate by

their candidates to retain their accreditation; 2) principal assessment of new teachers –

Texas principals are required to complete surveys rating the effectiveness of new teachers from each preparation program; 3) impact on student achievement – design a metric to measure the impact of new teachers (those with three years or less of experience) on student achievement that includes measures of student growth, observations of teachers, principal appraisals, and school-wide growth in student performance; and 4) frequency, duration, and quality of field supervision – exiting teacher candidate surveys provide data on this measure (Educate Texas, 2012). As former Texas Commissioner of Education Mike Moses stated, "Texas faces significant challenges in the coming years, and we need to rethink how we train and support teachers to better meet the needs of the next generation of students" (Educate Texas, 2012, foreword).

Chapter III

Method of Procedure

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study placed a focus on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. The study utilized a guided interview method to examine underlying themes that might reflect attitudes and beliefs of teachers and campus administrators regarding the needs of first-year teachers, the effectiveness of their preparation programs, and the reasons new teachers decide to remain in or leave the teaching profession during the first five years of teaching.

The participants in the study included 10 second, third, fourth, or fifth year teachers, grades k-12, who earned their teacher certifications through a traditional teacher education program. A principal focus group made up of four campus principals was also included in the study. Teacher participants were interviewed individually, and the principals were interviewed as a principal focus group. A guided interview was conducted with the individual teachers and with the campus principal focus group.

An interpretative phenomenological analysis method was used to analyze the interview response data. The interview data was transcribed by the interviewer and then coded and analyzed to look for emerging themes.

Primary Research Questions

This study examined the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better understand the task at hand for public schools and traditional educator preparation

programs to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for America's classrooms. The primary research questions were designed to include probing questions that allowed exploration of teacher attitudes about their own preparation, needs, and experiences of their first year of teaching. The primary research questions included:

1. When entering the profession, what expectations and demands of teaching are new teachers most and least prepared for?

2. What should public school leaders know about teacher preparation programs in order to help new teachers meet the demands of the job?

3. How do teacher preparation and district support impact new teacher performance and their decision to leave or remain in the profession?

Setting

The subjects for this study were employed in a mid-size school district in northeast Harris County. The district was a 4-A school district with five campuses that housed just over 3,400 students. It was an unincorporated area covering 54 square miles and housing more than 14,000 citizens. The district served a unique community comprised of mostly residential subdivisions, scattered farms, and small businesses. Each campus in the district "met standard" on the state accountability system. According to the Texas Education Agency 2013-2014 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) the district's student demographic makeup at the time of the research was 77 percent White, 18 percent Hispanic, 3 percent African-American, and 2 percent "other," and 34 percent socio-economically disadvantaged. The demographic breakdown of teachers was 91.8 percent White, 5.3 percent Hispanic, 1.4 percent African-American, and 1.5 percent "other" (TAPR, 2013-2014). The district hired 47 new teachers at the secondary level for

the 2014-15 school year, of which 25.0 percent had no experience, 14.0 percent had one -

two years' experience, 15.0 percent had three to five years' experience, 40.0 percent had

six – ten years' experience, and 6.0 percent had eleven - fifteen years' experience (Lang,

2015). The breakout of teaching experience for the 206 teachers in the district based on

2014-15 data was 4.3 percent with no teaching experience, 25.3 percent with one to five

years' experience, 24.7 percent with six – ten years' experience, 28.7 percent with eleven

– twenty years' experience, and 17.0 with twenty or more years' experience (TAPR,

2013-2014). A little more than half of the zero - five years' experienced teachers

graduated from a traditional teacher education program.

    The district's teacher pay scale at the time of the research fell in the mid-range

area when compared to surrounding districts (Lang, 2015). A survey at that time showed

this district hired more first-year teachers on average than did surrounding districts even

though the starting salary for new teachers was significantly less than that of surrounding

districts (Lang, 2015). One possible reason for that phenomenon was that the

surrounding districts were attracting teachers who had between three and five years'

experience by paying a higher salary at that level of experience, thus leaving a large pool

of first-year teachers available to this district. To address the concerns with the trend of

hiring more novice teachers, the district was looking to enhance its new-teacher

mentoring program as a proactive approach to build, retain, and sustain a high quality

teaching force for its students.

Subjects/Participants

    The subjects of the qualitative study were second, third, fourth, and fifth year

teachers who earned their certifications through traditional teacher education programs.

The teacher participants had an average of 2.6 years' teaching experience with three having four years' experience, two having three years' experience, three having two years' experience, and two having one years' experience. The teacher participant group also included nine females and one male and five elementary and five secondary teachers. Nine of the ten participants graduated from a traditional college preparation program in Texas, while one graduated from a college teacher preparation program in New York. Participant college programs included Stephen F. Austin State University, Sam Houston State University, the University of Texas Tyler, Lamar University, Texas State University, University of Houston, and Nyack College (New York). First-year teaching assignments included special education, kindergarten, 9th grade English, 12th grade English, computer skills, journalism, grade four, grade five, and 6th grade social studies. Two of the participating teachers were also athletic coaches during their first year of teaching. One participant's program (New York) was non-traditional in the sense that coursework was delivered and completed online, while clinical experiences were face-to-face.

A focus group comprised of four campus principals was also interviewed. The principal focus group included principals with zero, two, two, and four years' experience as a campus principal. All four had graduated from traditional educator preparation programs in Texas and had an average of 14.0 total years' experience in education. Two of the principals had certifications and backgrounds in secondary education, and two had certifications and backgrounds in elementary education. The two secondary principals were male; the two elementary principals were female. Three of the four principals had also worked as teachers in the selected district prior to becoming an administrator in the

same district. When approached about participating in this study, the four principals were enthusiastic about helping.

Procedures

A letter asking for permission to conduct the study was sent to the superintendent of the school district (see Appendix B). Interview questions were developed and the interview instrument was created (see Appendix A). Request for permission for the study was submitted to the University of Houston IRB department (see Appendix B). After IRB approval to conduct the study was granted, the district's teachers who were in their second, third, fourth, or fifth year of teaching were identified by using a database housed at the district's human resource department. The purpose and procedures of the study were presented to campus principals during a meeting. A message was also emailed to principals and included a letter that explained again the study's purpose and benefits of obtaining information from new teachers (see Appendix B). Principals were asked for permission to contact identified teachers on their campuses to obtain volunteers. Upon approval from campus principals, identified teachers were sent an electronic message inviting them to participate in the study. The message included the study's purpose, the significance of their participation and feedback, a description of their roles as participants, a description of the process, and a consent form should they agree to participate (see Appendix B). Teachers who received the invitation were asked to respond via electronic message to the researcher indicating such. The first ten teacher volunteers were selected for the interview process. Meetings were scheduled with individual teachers at a place and time convenient for the teacher. Consent forms were signed at the interview meetings prior to the start of the interview (see Appendix B).

The district's campus principals were also sent an electronic message inviting them to participate in a principal focus group interview for the study. The message included the study's purpose, the significance of their participation and feedback, a description of their roles as participants, a description of the process, and a consent form should they agree to participate. Those who received the invitation were asked to respond via electronic message to the researcher indicating such. Participants signed consent forms prior to the principal focus group interview (see Appendix B). The principal focus group's guided interview was conducted at an agreed upon time, date, and place.

Interviews were conducted as scheduled and audio recorded. Interview responses were later transcribed and analyzed for emerging themes. Transcribed responses were reviewed three times looking for emerging themes, trends, and commonalities. The researcher color-coded related responses, terminology, and phrases to consider possible themes. Emerging themes were identified. Teacher and principal focus group responses were compared to identify possible gaps. Finally, original research questions were answered using the results.

A guided interview method was used with participants to gain deeper insight into responses to the survey. The guided interviews allowed for clarification and elaboration on responses. All interviews were conducted in essentially the same manner to increase the likelihood of obtaining standardized and comparable data.

Instrument

The primary research questions were designed to include probing questions that allowed exploration of teacher attitudes about their own preparation, needs, and

experiences of their first year of teaching. The interview instrument was developed to gain information that would be useful to school districts in their efforts to develop and retain newly hired teachers and to gather valuable data that would benefit universities seeking to improve their educator preparation programs (see Appendix A.) In addition to 11 discussion-based questions, the instrument included a section for teachers and principals to rate 10 areas of teacher preparation on levels of importance in the preparation of first-year teachers and for teachers to rate how well they felt their programs prepared them for those same areas. The particular teaching areas used for ratings on the interview instrument were selected based on what research showed as common high-needs but low-levels of preparation for new teachers. The questions were designed to glean from participants the strengths and weaknesses of their preparation programs, the critical aspects of teaching they felt most and least prepared for their first year in the classroom, how/if campus support can fill the preparation gaps, and a general idea of their expectations of preparation programs and campus support. Participants were asked to elaborate on responses for clarification and opportunity to complete or extend their thoughts.

The principal focus group instrument included the same questions as the one used for teachers, although slight changes were made for grammatical and subject-verb purposes. The purpose of the principal focus group instrument was to probe principals' attitudes about the effectiveness of traditional teacher preparation programs, campus responsibilities for new-teacher support, and perceptions of first-year teacher needs (see Appendix A.)

All interviews were digitally recorded; consent for doing so was obtained in the initial agreement for participation. Responses were transcribed by the interviewer on the day of the interview.

Analysis

This study utilized a qualitative methods approach using a guided interview process as the research instrument. An interpretative phenomenological analysis method was used to analyze the interview response data. The interview data was transcribed by the interviewer and then coded and analyzed to look for emerging themes. Data was viewed in three ways. First, transcripts of interviews were read three times to consider possible themes. Possible themes were documented and assigned a color. Secondly, all responses were organized by question. Each question and set of responses to that question were placed on large piece of chart paper, each question and set of responses on separate paper. Teacher and principal responses were posted separately in each section of the process in order to better compare perceptions and attitudes of the two groups. Responses for each question were analyzed for words, phrases, sentences that matched possible themes. Then, identified words, phrases, sentences that matched possible themes were color coded accordingly, based on thematic color assignments from step one. Color-coded data was then viewed across all questions and used to select themes. Color-coded data was then organized by theme to be used for supporting evidence. Reponses that had not been used for supporting themes were reviewed again to consider possible outliers for other consideration. Finally, data was compared between individual teacher responses and principal focus group responses to look for possible gaps between

the two perspectives. Responses were reviewed again to identify supporting evidence to

answer each of the three research questions.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of new teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study focused on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. Through the use of a guided interview process, this study collected responses from teachers who have one, two, three, or four years' experience in the classroom and who graduated from a traditional educator preparation program. In addition to teacher input, the views of a campus principal focus group were collected for the purpose of identifying possible gaps that exist in teacher needs and principals' perceived teacher needs. The overall goal was two-fold. The first goal was to gather considerable information that would be pertinent to school districts in their efforts to develop and retain high-quality teachers for their classrooms. The second goal was to gather valuable data that would benefit universities seeking to improve their educator preparation programs.

Primary Research Questions:

This study examined the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better understand the task at hand for public schools and traditional educator preparation programs to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for America's classrooms. The primary research questions were designed to include probing questions that allowed exploration of teacher attitudes about their own preparation, needs, and experiences of their first year of teaching.

1. When entering the profession, what expectations and demands of teaching are new teachers most and least prepared for?

2. What should public school leaders know about teacher preparation programs in order to help new teachers meet the demands of the job?

3. How do teacher preparation and district support impact new teacher performance and their decision to leave or remain in the profession?

Results

Through guided interviews, this qualitative study found that participating teachers stepped into their first year of teaching with mixed emotions, including excitement, hope, anxiety, and frustration. Three themes emerged regarding new teacher preparation and first-year teacher needs: 1) the lack of preparation for the realities of everyday teaching; 2) the significance of clinical experiences; and, 3) the importance of new-teacher support systems.

The findings of this study will first be presented by each interview question with a summary of results for each question. Secondly, findings will be presented by each of the three themes and will include summaries of interview responses and supporting comments from participants.

Interview Questions and Summaries

Question 1: Overall, do you feel that your teacher education program adequately prepared you for your first year of teaching? Most participants felt their programs had somewhat prepared them for their first year of teaching. Most felt very prepared for what to teach, and somewhat prepared for how to teach the content. Program strengths that

helped them feel prepared were related to quality student teaching experiences and ample opportunity to be in classrooms with teachers and students "practicing and applying what we learned." The teachers focused on the importance of a variety of clinical experiences some of which began early in the educator training program and continued throughout the entire program, which led to the student teaching experience, the capstone for most programs.

The participants felt the greatest weaknesses in their programs were the limitations on the opportunities to be in classrooms to experience "real world classroom situations and teaching." Courses that relied heavily on textbooks and lecture were not viewed favorably; "too much reading and not enough doing" would sum up the attitudes. All participants viewed their programs as weak in preparing them for the daily realities of teaching, like classroom management; teaching with special education students as part of their classrooms and the documentation requirements that go with it; dealing with parents; and the everyday business of teaching such as the amount of stress, time commitments, daily routines, and just generally feeling overwhelmed throughout the first year.

The principal focus group felt that new teachers were adequately prepared on pedagogy, content, and delivery, but that new teachers most often lacked significantly in classroom management skills. They also felt new teachers should have a greater awareness of the realities of day-to-day teaching, such as time commitment, working with parents, working with special student populations, and the general daily business of a teacher.

Question 2, a-j: On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important do you feel it is for the university programs to prepare new teachers for dealing with the following areas for their first year of teaching; and on a scale of 1-5, 1 being very weak and 5 being very strong, rate how well your program prepared you for each area: (The teacher results are shown as averages of participants' input. The principal focus group score only includes the level of importance to preparation.)

Table 1

Rating of Importance of Teaching Skill and Preparation Program Strength

Teaching Skill	Importance to Preparation	Quality of Teacher Program Rating
Classroom Management		
Teachers	5.0	3.1
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Student Assessment		
Teachers	3.7	3.2
Principal Focus Group	3.0	
Data Disaggregation		
Teachers	4.0	2.8
Principal Focus Group	4.0	
Working with Diversity in the Classroom		
Teachers	4.7	3.3
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Working with Special Needs Students		
Teachers	5.0*	2.1*
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Teacher Evaluations		
Teachers	2.9	3.3
Principal Focus Group	2.0	
General Instructional Preparation and Practices		
Teachers	4.2	3.8
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Content Knowledge of Teaching Area		
Teachers	4.6	3.0
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Instructional Practices in Content Area		
Teachers	4.8	3.6
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
Student Teaching		
Teachers	5.0	4.0
Principal Focus Group	5.0	
*Two responses marked 5s were removed to prevent skewing of the data; participants were special education majors or minors.		

2k. Discuss other, if any, teacher expectations you feel your program did or did not adequately prepare you for. Teachers responded feeling unprepared for other general daily tasks and responsibilities of teaching, including 504 paperwork and accommodations, dealing with parents, administrative duties, daily routines, building relationships with students and parents and coworkers, differentiation, and learning diversities in the classroom.

The focus group responded with a need for teaching new teachers the importance of building relationships with students and parents and how to do so, the importance of being the students' cheerleader, and the need for more hands-on experiences, including lengthening student teaching experiences.

Question 3: What element(s) of your teacher preparation program had the greatest impact on preparing you for teaching? Responses from every participant was related to student teaching, PPR classes, and observations. Clearly, clinical experience was important to the preparation of these teachers. One teacher also discussed the impact of a classroom management class she was required to take as part of her program coursework. She felt this class was as important to her preparation as her student teaching.

The principal focus group also felt the most critical piece to preparing teachers for the first year is clinical experiences, such as student teaching, internships, and observations. The group was emphatic about this and indicated a need for more hands-on experiences for their new teachers. They also acknowledged a need for first-year teachers to have opportunity to observe other good teachers during their first year of teaching for continual growth and improvement.

Question 4: What, if any, are the limitations to what educator preparation programs can prepare new teachers for? Most participants felt there were aspects of teaching that a preparation program is not able to fully prepare teachers for, such as time management, dealing with parents, how overwhelmed a new teacher will likely feel at times, emotions, general paperwork, and the diversity among students, both learning and cultural. While they recognized programs would have a difficult time actually teaching some of these aspects, the teachers felt programs should at least talk about these aspects to prepare students' mindsets for them. Some of them felt blindsided by these aspects and would like to have been more prepared mentally for dealing with these realities.

The focus group felt that preparation programs are not able to teach the realities of the daily stressors that new teachers face beginning day one. The stressors referred to include time management, organization, ARD meetings, 504 meetings, paperwork that goes with both, and daily routines of teaching.

Question 5: What do school district leaders need to know about your level of preparedness for your first year of teaching? The teachers in this study wanted school leaders to know that they are not 100 percent prepared when they enter the classroom their first year. They stated the need for a great deal of support from the administrators, the campus mentor teachers, and their grade level or subject area teams. They wanted principals to know that they feel stressed, especially about classroom management and dealing with parents because they did not feel prepared in these areas. These teachers were appreciative of all content and instructional training they attended their first year as well as the new teacher orientations at the beginning of the year. They wanted their principals to know that they were still learning and not to assume they knew about things

dealing with special education students and other special populations they had to deal with during the year. Participants also discussed the need for principals to consider the number of special needs students placed in new teachers' classrooms their first year. They felt principals should make sure new teachers are frontloaded with information regarding special needs students who are going to be placed in their classrooms. This would allow new teachers to better prepare themselves, which would reduce the amount of stress their first year.

The focus group results indicated that principals want to know strengths and weaknesses and individual needs of teachers when they take the job. They discussed having a survey for new teachers to complete.

Question 6: In considering your level of preparedness for your first year, what roles should school districts play in supporting/developing new teachers for the classroom? Teachers in this study felt that districts should offer strong mentoring programs and sustained support throughout their first year. Additionally, teachers reported an appreciation for an initial district orientation that allowed them to learn district-specific processes and expectations. They felt districts should offer opportunities for observations of other teachers throughout the year. Most of the participants talked about the need for help with classroom management techniques the first year and felt campuses should provide support through the mentoring program addressing these needs. They also felt it was important for principals to know about their individual needs as new teachers and to offer professional development throughout the year to help them improve and grow as teachers.

The focus group spent a good amount of time on this question and indicated that the district should provide more mentor teachers in order to keep the mentor/teacher ratio low. A suggestion was also made to provide mentors by subject area or grade level. They appeared very concerned about what the district and each campus should and could be able to do to provide stronger support for new teachers. They discussed, too, the importance of growing all new teachers from day one and to provide support as soon as the mentor and principal realize a new teacher is struggling.

Question 7: What was your greatest stressor/fear when you entered the classroom your first week on the job? Teachers in this study felt most stressed about making a serious mistake during the first week, like legal mistakes regarding special education students, or general routine mistakes. They talked about wanting to please their principal, so they stressed about getting "in trouble" the first week. Several also stressed about connecting with their students the first week. Those teachers had a strong focus on building relationships with their students and felt that was the most important thing the first week. Almost all of them stressed about anticipating poor student behavior and not knowing how to handle it.

The focus group felt that new teachers were most stressed about student behavior and classroom management. They also recalled their own fears as first-year teachers and how important it is to reassure new teachers about that first week. They recognized that teachers feel overwhelmed by end of the staff development week, which it typically the week prior to students returning. The principals in the focus group shared a great deal of concern about better supporting new teachers the first few weeks of school.

Question 8: What, if any, district support helped you the most during your first year of teaching? Teachers were clear that their campus mentoring programs helped them the most their first year. The teachers indicated that the relationships they built with other teachers, whether on their team or not, were very important. The common thread was that teachers had strong support on their campuses to help them with their jobs and to be successful their first year.

The focus group felt that the greatest help would be a strong mentoring program and continuing support from other teachers and all campus administrators.

Question 9: How did you measure your own success your first year on the job? Surprisingly, this particular question drew discussion from participants about the importance of relationships. Although the state is strongly focused on different accountability measures like state assessments (STAAR in this case), almost every participant talked about the relationships they had built with their students as the number one measurement of success for them the first year. While a few considered student growth as their main measurement of success, even those teachers talked about the importance of student relationships to them and whether or not they viewed their year as successful or not.

The focus group was not asked this question.

Question 10: How do you think administrators measured your success your first year on the job? The teachers in this study felt their principals measured their success by their evaluations, observations, student test scores, and whether or not they took care of the day-to-day responsibilities.

The focus group felt that teachers think administrators measure their success by student test scores. However, the principals in the focus group responded that test scores are only one part of measuring teacher success. They stated that they want to see growth in teachers from one semester to the next and one year to the next, that the teachers are coachable, and that the teachers work to build positive relationships with students, parent, and coworkers.

Question 11: Overall, how could you have been better prepared for your first year in the classroom? While teachers in this study were clear that clinical experiences had the greatest impact on preparation, they also felt their programs should have offered *more* opportunity for hands-on experiences through observations, internships, and longer student teaching blocks. Participants felt more clinical experiences could have better prepared them for classroom management and working with special education students. They also felt strongly that their programs should have prepared them, at the very least through discussions, about the realities of other day-to-day responsibilities and stressors of teaching the first year.

The focus group felt that more extended opportunities for hands-on, realistic classroom experiences would better prepare the new teachers for the first year. Every principal felt strongly that teachers should get as much hands-on experiences possible before stepping into the classroom. The focus group suggested a full year of student teaching before new teachers step out on their own.

Question 12: What factors will impact your decision to stay or to leave the teaching profession during the first five years? Every teacher in this study immediately referred to their passion for teaching as the number one reason they have stayed in

education. It was evident by their words and genuine emotion that the reason they continued to teach was because of a deep love for working with children and making a difference in their students' lives. Participants also reported that, other than their passion for teaching, strong campus and administrative support greatly impacted their decisions to remain in teaching. Without strong, ongoing support, participants in this study believed their first year may not have been as positive.

Participants felt that teachers likely leave the profession after the first year because of weak preparation programs and lack of support from administrators or lack of a strong mentoring/support program for them. Since most teachers enter the field unprepared for many aspects of teaching, participants felt that without campus support to help them overcome the stress and to fill the preparation gaps, new teachers would likely give up and step out of the profession. Participants also felt that teachers who leave the profession likely do not have enough passion for working with students to overcome the first-year stressors.

The focus group felt having a strong support group on campus, including administrator support, would make a difference in a teacher's decision to leave or stay in education. The group felt like a supportive team atmosphere would likely make new teachers feel they could survive any first-year problems. The group also felt that the stress of accountability, lack of any type of support system, and not being ready for the daily stressors that come with teaching like time commitment, grading papers every day, planning, and dealing with parents are likely reasons teachers decide to leave so early in their careers. Principals felt that teachers who left the profession were not likely prepared to give up so much of their own time that is necessary to be an effective teacher.

Do significant gaps exist? The results of the focus group interviews parallel those of the teachers in almost every question. No significant gaps were found to exist between teacher needs and principals' perceived teacher needs for first-year teachers. It appeared that principals were in tune to first-year teacher needs. The surfacing issue for principals was finding time to devote to new teachers.

Themes

Three themes emerged regarding new teacher preparation and first-year teacher needs: 1) the lack of preparation for the realities of everyday teaching; 2) the significance of clinical experiences; and, 3) the importance of new-teacher support systems.

Theme 1: The Lack of Preparation for the Realities of Everyday Teaching. This theme emerged because all participants made comments throughout their interviews about being surprised at the everyday realities that teaching entails – things they were never told about and wish they had been. The everyday realities of teaching for this study based on responses included: classroom management; teaching in inclusion settings (special education students integrated into regular classroom settings); dealing with parents, general legal paperwork required for special education, 504, RTI, diversity in the classrooms, time management, number of hours required to get the job done, and the stress and feelings of being overwhelmed. This theme included references to realities of teaching in responses to every question except two: 2i, knowledge/ preparation in content area; and 9, measuring their own success.

Every participant talked about reality hitting them fairly hard from day one. They stepped into the classroom not realizing all the "stuff I'd have to deal with every single day, every week, every month, each semester." They talked about being exhausted,

stressed at the thought of calling a parent the first few times or sitting in on their first parent conference, and not knowing how to handle the special education students in their classrooms. They were not even aware, many times, that special education students had been placed in their classrooms until after the first few weeks of school. They felt overwhelmed at times with all the paperwork requirements for so many students and at dealing with the learning and cultural diversities in their classrooms.

"Realities of everyday teaching" was the greatest response to question 4, limitations to what educator preparation programs can prepare teachers for and to question 7, the greatest stressor the first week of school. While the consensus was that their college preparation programs could not 100 percent prepare them for many of the realities of teaching, they would have liked to have been much more informed ahead of time about the daily responsibilities of teaching. They shared the idea that they did not like feeling so shocked at some of the requirements and daily classroom struggles that teachers face. These same teachers stated that while the surprises did not drive them out of teaching, they felt their first year would not have been as stressful if they had at least been aware of many of these issues. Even in student teaching, they were not often exposed to many of these realities; many felt their supervising teachers took care of most of these issues behind the scenes or at times they (students) were teaching. In describing their feelings and reactions to these realities, participants used terms like shocked, surprised, slapped in the face, blown away, and speechless. Participant comments included:

1. "My program didn't prepare me for real life issues like dealing with parents. I was really nervous and scared about having to meet with a parent the first few times. I was afraid I'd say something that would get me fired."

2. "There seems to be disconnect between what new teachers perceive the job is going to be and the reality of the job."

3. "Subbing helped me tremendously in experiencing the realities of day-to-day teaching."

4. "I think the teachers who leave do so because they weren't prepared for the amount of work and stress that comes from being a teacher, especially the first few years."

5. "Those teachers who leave likely didn't have a clue what they were stepping into."

6. "It was shocking how stressed out I was (and still am) at times, but it doesn't mean I am going to give up."

Working with special education students in their regular education classrooms was another reality of teaching that was both a surprise and a stressor for new teachers. Most participants were not aware of what inclusion classrooms were, nor were they prepared to deal with them. They felt inadequate working with students with special learning or behavior needs because they had not been trained to do so. They felt frustrated about the lack of preparation for working with special education students in their classrooms, particularly because of the legal requirements that go along with doing so. On question 2e, preparation for working with special needs students/inclusion, participants gave a rating of 5.0 for importance to preparation and a 2.1 on how well their

own programs prepared them (two participant scores were removed because they were special education majors or minors, thus skewing this particular data). This area had the greatest gap between the level of importance to participants and how well their programs prepared them for this area.

Comments from participants included:

1. "My program never even touched on the diversity we'd face in the classroom, and my college was very diverse. That didn't make sense."

2. "A lot of teachers come in thinking 'this is what my class is going to be like…,' and are surprised when they step in and realize all the differences in the learning abilities. And it seemed like each student had an individual plan to follow. I was shocked."

3. "When I got my first job and my first class, I had not been prepared for the special ed kids that would be integrated into my classes; I felt thrown into it and not prepared at all. I didn't know what was going on. I just had to roll with it until I got some help."

4. "At the secondary level, if you have 150 students, and 30 of them are sped, and you have to run around all day trying to keep up with the paperwork, accommodations, and other stuff, it remains a struggle all year. I had no idea this is what it would be like. I'm good with it now, but I was just so shocked the first year. I thought, 'What?' "

5. "If you, as a student, walk into a teacher's classroom for observations, and you see all this stuff (inclusion) going on, you don't realize all the pieces that went into the preparation, including all the differentiation and sped

requirements unless someone taught you or told you to look for it. They could have told us to look for these things and talked to us about it."

Classroom management was also identified as a reality of teaching participants did not feel adequately prepared for. Participants rated classroom management as a 5.0 on level of importance to preparation and a 3.1 for how well their programs prepared them, which indicates that participants felt their programs did an average job of preparing them for classroom management. However, through responses and discussion during the interview process, participants indicated this was one of the weakest areas of their preparation. Nonetheless, for most, the lack of preparation for classroom management was considered a stressor their first year. According to the responses, some participants stressed over this before school even started. In question 1, "Overall, do you feel your program adequately prepared you for your first year of teaching...," six out of ten participants mentioned *not* being prepared for classroom management. Only one of the participants in the study had an actual classroom management course in her program. She reported that the course prepared her well for classroom management and that she went in with a plan in place for student behavior. Out of the 22 questions asked, responses to 16 questions included at least one reference to classroom management.

Participant comments included:

1. "Classroom management is everything a teacher needs to be able to teach. My observations included this as a focus, but we weren't given a guide for what to observe, and we never came together to talk about our observations."

2. "Teachers will always have to deal with different personalities. It would have been nice to at least get to talk about different scenarios. They could have given

us time to discuss as groups a variety of ideas and techniques for classroom

management. We just never really talked about it."

3. "I had a complete class dedicated to just classroom management. It was great.

This was something I worried about until I had the class. I felt confident when I

went into my first year of teaching."

4. "Even in student teaching we didn't really talk about classroom management. My

teacher was always there with me, so the students behaved."

5. "My student teaching helped me with classroom management because my teacher

gave me several weeks to myself as the 'real' teacher. It helped to build my

confidence and gave me ideas for my own class."

6. "School districts should include this in their new teacher prep week and then have

mentors work with them on it since we don't get it in our prep programs."

7. "I really worried about, 'What if I get there and I can't control them?' I didn't

really even know where to start. I felt like I just had to do my thing to make it

work."

8. "I don't think new teachers could ever get too much classroom management

training. Even just talking about different techniques they could use would have

helped so much. It's just so important."

Theme 2: The Significance of Clinical Experiences. It was clear in this study that

clinical experiences were critical to the preparation and development of the participants.

Clinical experiences in this regard includes student teaching, internships, observations,

volunteering, and any other hands-on experiences in which students can practice or

participate in real classroom situations. Out of 21 questions, all except three included at

least one comment related to clinical experiences. The three that did not include related comments were questions 9, 10, and 12: numbers 9 and 10 relate to measuring success as a teacher and teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession; number 12 asks about teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession. Clinical experiences, particularly student teaching, was given by every participant, including the focus group participants, as the most important component of teacher preparation programs and as having the greatest impact on their preparation for their first year of teaching. Teacher comments included:

1. "My student teaching program was amazing. It was great to be able to take over for a period of time. I did everything she did; she was a great model for me."

2. "Student teaching was the best experience for me because when my teacher would leave, I got to take completely over; I had to teach and she wasn't there to help. It gave me confidence and lots of practice."

3. "My literacy block (clinical experience) had the greatest impact because for the first time I got to go into classrooms and work with kids; I knew right away I was in the right profession. My literacy block professors were so awesome. This helped me build confidence and to get excited about teaching."

4. "The variety and types of schools we were sent into for observations and internships had a huge impact on me. I got to experience different school cultures, diverse students, diverse behaviors and learning abilities. I was shocked when some kids came to school on one campus and had no shoes. It was very sad. It made me really think about that end of the student spectrum.

It was really beneficial to have that kind of exposure. It would never have impacted me like it did if it had come from a textbook. I saw and experienced the reality of it."

5. "I would have preferred to have had more time in my student teaching. Mine was only eight weeks. It was helping me so much. I would have felt so much more prepared if I'd been able to stay with the teacher and the class for an entire semester. Just as I was getting confident, I had to leave."

6. "Observations were so beneficial to me because I got to see different teaching styles and different students. We spent one semester observing a selected teacher, then switched to another teacher the second semester. Then we had one semester of student teaching. If I'd been thrown into the classroom without that, I don't know how ready I would have felt. I just know after my experiences, I felt confident and ready to teach."

7. "I had two semesters of student teaching. I felt ready to go for my first job."

8. "I can't imagine stepping into the classroom for the first time and never having had any student teaching. I think I would've panicked. I was still nervous, but I think that's normal. Under the nerves, I felt prepared and ready to go. I was confident that I was going to be fine."

9. "My student teaching was great because it was all special ed, which is my certification. I learned so much through student teaching and observations. I learned all about paperwork, relationships with kids, behavior, and instruction. I even learned about setting up my classroom for best instruction. And, then

getting to work with the special ed kids was really great. I got a very clear

picture of what my job was going to be like."

Theme 3: The Significance of New Teacher Support Systems. New teacher

support emerged as a theme because it mentioned multiple times throughout the interview

process with every participant. Participants described relationships with other teachers

their first year of teaching that impacted their first year experiences. They also spoke

positively about the help and support they received from their grade level or subject area

teams. Even when discussing weaknesses of their preparation, participants indicated that

with strong campus support, they could overcome the weaknesses. Although there were

aspects of teaching that new teachers did not feel adequately prepared for, such as the

lack of preparation for the realities of teaching, as long as they had strong campus support

to help them with the issues, they did not allow the lack of preparation to hold them back.

As long as they knew they had administrative support and teachers they could depend on

for help, they reported to have positive experiences their first year.

One teacher who had struggled her first year with her students had indicated that

she returned the second year because of the team she worked with. Even teachers who

had poor student teaching experiences reported to have had positive experience their first

year when the support program had been so strong. The stronger the support, the better

the first-year experiences were reported to have been. Teacher support was mentioned by

every participant as having an impact on their decision to stay in the profession.

One teacher reported her mentor program to be very negative. She reported that

the mentor teacher was not supportive and had a bad attitude about helping her with just

about anything. This teacher was able to find support through her grade level team. She

reported that the level of support from her team was strong enough to make up for the lack of mentor support.

Principals recognized the significance of support for new teachers, as well. Nineteen out of 21 responses to question 12, factors that impact a teacher's decision to stay or leave the profession, from the focus group were directly related to new teacher support, including support from administrators. They were very concerned about making sure their new teachers received strong support from a mentoring program, their teams, and the campus administrators. They even talked about ideas to be able to better target their own support for their new teachers this year.

Participant comments included:

1. "I need to know that admin has my back if I do something wrong, like 504. I need to know that they are going to support me in cases like that."

2. "I had a group of unruly kids my first year, and my team helped me out so much. That support made my first year so much better. By the end of the year, the most unruly class became my favorite class. That's how much they helped me out. I wouldn't have made it that year without them."

3. "Even though there things I wasn't prepared for, like working with parents, my mentor teacher helped me out. She was so encouraging and supportive. I knew I could go to her anytime to get help. I was able to come up with game plans when I had problems after I talked to her. I really think some teachers end up leaving because they have no one to go to for help. That must be hard."

4. "Teachers leave because of lack of support; administrators throw them to the wolves; they are on their own from day one."

5. "When they don't have good mentors and strong support, they see that as administrators who don't care."

6. "The sped teachers were so supportive. I had a team of them that worked with me because I was new and knew nothing about 504, inclusion, or dealing with students with behavior problems. I had a lot of these kids in my classes throughout the day. I don't think I would have made it that year without that support. I probably would have done something illegal (laugh)."

7. "It was great having a strong team to help me with planning and learning about good teaching strategies."

8. "The Friday before school started, a few brand new teachers started crying because they felt so overwhelmed and scared. I spent time talking with them and reassuring them it was going to be okay. I made sure the mentor teacher spent time with them too. Their first day was fine, as was their first year. They need someone in the lead reassuring them that it's going to be okay."

9. "My mentor wasn't so good. She was in it for the money. But my grade-level team of teachers was great. They really helped me out with so much the first year. I was glad to have that. I just turned to them for help all year."

10. "I need to know that I can go to my principal if I have problems and that he/she will help me out and not judge me my first year."

11. "Establish a mentor program on campus. A lot of us are very prepared in content and instruction, but there's so much more to teaching than that. New teachers need lots of support in helping them navigate the first year."

12. "We know they are nervous about sitting in with parents the first year, so I offer to sit with them during conferences, either phone or face-to-face conferences. I remember being scared of that myself."

13. "I have a new teacher who is so thankful for his partner teacher. They work together on lesson plans. He told me he didn't know if he'd make it without that help."

14. "The new-teacher orientation at the beginning of the year helped so much. I didn't feel like I was alone. I was able to make connections with other new teachers on my campus. And, the time we spent with our mentors that week really helped me to feel better about going into my classroom for the first time. The mentor support all year was great. It really helped. I knew I could get help anytime – it took a lot of stress off my shoulders. I do my best now to help new teachers when they come in. I know how important it was to me my first year."

Conclusion

This study found that participating teachers stepped into their first year of teaching with mixed emotions, including excitement, hope, anxiety, and frustration. Overall, participants felt somewhat to adequately prepared for the classroom, although their first year was typically seen as a stressful year, no matter the level of preparation. The stress factors included lack of classroom management training and the surprise at the

realities of day-to-day teaching. The amount of stress felt was directly related to the strength of the preparation program and the amount and quality of support by the hiring campus. It was clear that the teachers wanted to perform well their first year and to make their principals glad that he/she hired him/her as a teacher.

Participants felt unprepared for the realities of day-to-day teaching, particularly classroom management and working in classrooms inclusive of special education students. This lack of preparation and awareness resulted in significant stress for teachers their first year. Participants felt strongly that programs should include additional clinical experiences that focus on classroom management techniques and inclusion. They reported that clinical experiences had the greatest impact on their preparation for the first year of teaching and felt strongly that preparation programs should include more opportunities for a variety of hands-on experiences and lengthier student teaching assignments.

Lastly, participants felt the administrative and mentoring support was critical to new teachers' first year experiences and to their decisions to remain in the profession after the first year. They stressed less when they had a strong support system around them. Participants reported that strong campus support made up for areas of teaching they had not been adequately prepared for. Having a group of teachers and a mentor teacher to help them throughout the year was positive, and they felt opportunities to observe good teachers on their campuses and to attend effective professional development during their first year was also helpful to them. All agreed that strong campus support during their first year in the classroom was pivotal in their decision to continue teaching.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the preparation and needs of first-year teachers in order to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. The study placed a focus on the effectiveness of traditional educator preparation programs for first-year teachers. Traditional educator preparation program practices were investigated through literature reviews and through the lenses of the participants of this study via guided interviews. Three themes emerged regarding new teacher preparation and first-year teacher needs: 1) the lack of preparation for the realities of everyday teaching; 2) the significance of clinical experiences; and, 3) the importance of new-teacher support systems. All three themes aligned with research findings from the literature review for this study.

Research shows that teachers enter the field confident and enthusiastic, only to find the job to be overwhelming, demanding, and stressful, and are often hit with workloads and expectations they were not prepared to handle (Nahal, 2010). Nahal (2010) went on to report that most teacher preparation programs do a poor job of preparing teachers for the realities of what is expected of today's classroom teachers. The participants in this study echoed Nahal's findings, so much so that this emerged as a theme in this study's findings: the lack of preparation for the realities of everyday teaching.

Classroom management was just one of the realities of teaching that participants in this study did not feel well prepared for. The NCTQ (2014) reported classroom

management as a critical set of skills that few novice teachers possess. Results of the NCTQ report (2014) also concluded that teacher education programs place little, if any, emphasis on actually training education students in classroom management. Although research indicates that teacher preparation programs are beginning to offer formal instruction in classroom management (Greenberg, 2014), only one of the ten participants in this study had a formal classroom management course. All others had either a small amount of classroom management integrated into the curriculum of other courses, or nothing regarding classroom management at all.

Another reality participants were unprepared was the learning diversity among students and the individualized teaching that was required of teachers, particularly for special education students.   New teachers in an NCCTQ 2008 report indicated they were not ready for what they found to be reality in terms of student diversity and the wide range of student needs they had to deal with (Goe & Stickler, 2008).   Participants in this study were not ready for the individualized planning and teaching required for the special education students included in their regular education classroom settings. Participants reported being unaware of what inclusive classrooms were or how to deal with them. This proved to be a stressor for first-year teachers. Findings from this study as well as other research (Goe & Stickler, 2008) suggest that teacher preparation programs should place a greater emphasis on teaching students with special needs in regular classroom settings.

Additionally, the reviewed literature pointed to clinical experience as the most critical component of teacher education (Picus, et al., 2012), as did this research study. All ten participants in this study reported that their clinical experiences had the greatest

impact on their preparation for the first year of teaching. And, like the literature reviewed, participants in this study also reported a desire for lengthier clinical experience opportunities. Participants echoed Levine's (2006) findings that a common thread among teachers is a desire to have "more, longer, earlier, and better-integrated field work experiences."

Participants in this study felt that clinical experiences helped to build their teaching confidence and competence, supporting Levine (2006) and the AACTE (2012) findings. It is evident from this and other research as well that preparation programs should recognize the importance of extended, high-quality clinical preparation of teachers in the development of high-quality, effective teachers.

Finally, as Ingersoll and Strong (2011) pointed out, teaching is complex work, and teacher preparation is rarely sufficient enough to provide all of the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching; a significant portion can only be acquired while on the job. Teachers in this study reported the same. They recognized that preparation for certain aspects of teaching were hard to hone in pre-service training. Like Ingersoll and Strong's (2011) study found, participants in this study also felt that strong mentoring programs could address the areas they felt the least prepared for when they stepped into the classroom for the first year such as working with diverse students, classroom management, and working with parents. This study also aligned with research by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) indicating that a relationship exists between participation in a campus mentoring program and a beginning teacher's job satisfaction, commitment, retention, or turnover. This study indicated that campus support programs had a tremendous impact on their first-year successes and on their decisions to remain in the

profession. The participants also felt that a lack of campus support for teachers was likely a reason new teachers left the profession after the first year. The National Teacher Council (2007) reported the same: high-quality support programs for new teachers increases the retention of first-year teachers.

Discussion of Results

Improving education in America must begin with developing a high-quality, sustainable teaching force. As was discussed in chapter two, evidence points to teacher quality as the single greatest leverage point for assuring that all students achieve at their highest level (Berry, 2004). This study looked at new teacher preparation, new teacher needs, and factors that impact a new teacher's decision to remain in or to leave the profession. The research questions were developed to provide evidence for the study's primary purpose: to better develop and retain a high quality teaching force for public schools. Results from this study provided answers to the three research questions.

1. <u>When entering the profession, what expectations and demands of teaching are new teachers most and least prepared for</u>? Participants in this study felt most prepared for delivering quality instruction and employing the general pedagogies of teaching and felt they had adequate foundations in their content areas. They felt their opportunities for clinical experiences, although limited in some cases, best prepared them for their first year of teaching. They had opportunities to observe and shadow good teachers delivering good instruction, then they applied what they learned, but with the teacher as their coach. The practice teaching helped build confidence and hone strategies they had learned in their coursework. All but one participant reported very positive

student teaching experiences. The one participant who reported a negative experience ended up doing well her first year of teaching because of the campus support she received and her determination to be a good teacher. The impact of the clinical experiences was substantial to participants' overall preparation.

Participants felt least prepared for general realities of teaching such as classroom management, working with special education students, and other realities of day-to-day teaching, such as paperwork required for special student populations, time requirements, and dealing with parents. A surprise was that participants rated classroom management as a 5 for importance and a 3.3 on program effectiveness, which indicated that they perceived their educator programs as having done an average job of preparing them for this classroom management. Yet, when talking about needs and lack of preparation in the interview process, participants spoke emphatically about feeling underprepared for classroom management. A possible reason for this disconnect could be that it was the second question of the interview and the first question asking them to rate their college program.

In addition to classroom management and working in inclusive classrooms, the amount of paperwork, the time requirements, dealing with parents, and the general stresses of teaching also came as a big surprise to the majority of the participants during their first year of teaching. Regardless of the surprises, these teachers remained in the classroom and had good experiences filled with many learning moments their first year. Most reported

having a good team of teachers or a strong mentor to help them navigate those waters.

2. <u>What should public school leaders know about teacher preparation programs in order to help new teachers meet the demands of the job?</u> Participants reported that they wanted their principals to know that they were not 100 percent prepared for teaching their first year, particularly with classroom management and working with special education students. Participants thought principals should ensure his/her own support to new teachers and to understand their need for strong, ongoing support throughout the year, including a strong mentoring program and a supportive team to plan with.

   Participants also reported that it was very important to them as a first-year teacher to know what the principal's expectations were of them the first year on the job. These teachers wanted clear communication regarding those expectations and continual support from the principal in their efforts to meet those expectations. They were happy and comfortable with administrators coming into their classrooms the first year for observations and walk-throughs, and they welcomed any feedback because they really wanted to do a good job.

   The participants also reported that they wanted the principal to realize they still needed training during the first year, and appreciated any staff development training that would impact their performance as a first-year teacher, particularly with content delivery, classroom management techniques, and working with special education students.

3. <u>How do teacher preparation and district support impact new teacher performance and their decision to leave or remain in the profession?</u> Effective teacher preparation and district support programs are vital to the success of new teachers, according to the results of this study. The participants in this study reported that clinical experiences had the greatest impact on their preparation. Most participants felt the more hands-on experiences provided to them, the greater the impact on their preparation for the first year. The same held true for strong campus support programs. Campus support was reported as a factor in their decision to remain in the profession after the first year. They reported that a lack of campus and administrative support would have likely been detrimental to their first-year experiences and could have very easily been a reason they may have chosen to leave the profession. Campus and administrator support seemed to override any weaknesses in their teacher preparation programs. New-teacher support appeared to help these teachers by boosting self-confidence and self-reliance as a first-year teacher. It is important to note, too, that participants talked about their "passion for teaching" when discussing their own decisions to remain in teaching. Every participant in the study responded to the question, "Why did you decide to remain in teaching" with something related to their own love of and passion for teaching and working with students.

Recommendations for Practice

Public Education Leaders

New teachers have a need for strong, ongoing campus support from the first day they step onto the campus. It is imperative for districts and individual campuses to develop a strong, effective mentoring program on each campus that enables quality, experienced teachers to work closely with novice teachers. In addition, new teachers should be given opportunities to observe good teaching throughout the year, and the observation process should be well structured to include observations, reflections, and time to debrief with the mentor teacher. It is also critical that new teachers have a team of teachers to plan with. New studies show that not only do new teachers benefit from collaboration, but that teachers at any experience level stand to gain from collaborative work (Berry, et al., 2007).

Secondly, districts should ensure that new teachers receive proper training in classroom management techniques and in working with special education students as soon as possible, preferably before the school year begins. The training should be ongoing throughout the first year. In addition, mentor teachers should conduct roundtable discussion with new teachers to talk about the other daily realities of teaching, both general and district-specific. Mentors should help prepare them for aspects like working with parents. They should also discuss stressors of first-year teachers and certain aspects specific to that campus or the job in general that can cause new teachers to feel overwhelmed. This type of collaboration will help to build confidence in new teachers and will build good relationships among the new teachers with their mentors, coworkers, students, and parents.

Additionally, school district leaders should survey new teachers each year to better understand their needs, and evaluate campus support programs throughout the year and at the end of the year for program improvements. Programs should be flexible enough to meet varied needs of new teachers. District leaders should carefully select and train teacher mentors to offer new teachers the strongest support for the first year.

Finally, teachers in this study focused heavily on their passion for teaching as the number one reason they remained in the profession. School leaders should recognize, celebrate, and nurture this passion for teaching for all teachers on campus.

Educator Preparation Program Leaders

This study indicates that traditional teacher preparation programs should restructure parts of their programs by including an emphasis on more clinical experiences and a focus on preparing teachers for the realities of day-to-day teaching. Based o their perceptions, traditional educator preparation programs for the teachers in this study did not adequately prepare them for daily realities such as dealing with classroom management, working in classrooms inclusive of special education students, time requirements for teaching, working with parents, and dealing with required daily paperwork, thus indicating a disconnect between college teacher preparation curriculum and the responsibilities of today's teacher.

Education leaders in teacher preparation programs should make it a priority to work with their local public school districts, including teachers, to learn and understand the realities of public education and classrooms today. The needs of public education should drive teacher preparation program structure. Increasing the amount and purpose of clinical experiences may offer greater opportunities for students to experience more

realities of teaching. Students in this study appreciated and learned from any opportunity to be in the classroom, whether observing, volunteering, interning, or student teaching; they wanted and needed the hands-on experiences early on in the programs, as often as possible, and in a variety of classroom settings. Public school districts, teacher preparation programs, and new teachers should work together to design clinical experience frameworks.

Additionally, teacher preparation programs should include at least one course in classroom management techniques. Participants in this study felt a need for classroom management preparation. The one participant who had a classroom management course reported that course as being as important as her clinical experiences. She entered the classroom ready to take charge of her classroom and with a classroom management plan in place.

To add to this, college programs should require a course for general education students to be prepared to work with special education students in their classrooms. It is more likely than not that a new teacher will step into a classroom their first year and have special education students placed in that classroom for instructional purposes. This can be overwhelming to a new teacher who was not prepared in any way to individualize the learning or to deal with the paperwork requirements for each special education student. Teacher preparation programs should realize that inclusion is a norm for today's classroom structure, and, thus, should prepare students to be able to work effectively within these settings.

Other training needed for new teachers is in data-driven decision making processes for instructional planning. Most schools utilize student performance data throughout the school year in making best decisions for instruction.

Recommendations for Further Research

Although this study resulted in useful data that may benefit school districts and teacher preparation programs, additional research should be considered with regards to developing and retaining a high-quality teaching force for America's classrooms.

First, this study looked at a combination of elementary and secondary certified teachers. A study should be conducted for each of the two levels for a more specific look at elementary-specific and secondary-specific program effectiveness. Some of the results indicated that there were significant differences in how elementary and secondary participants viewed their levels of preparation in certain aspects of teaching, such as content area preparation. Elementary teachers as a whole felt their programs prepared them very well for content (4.0), while secondary teachers as a whole felt much differently (2.5). The differences in levels of preparation would likely impact the needs of elementary and secondary first year teachers differently. Such a study would also give information specific to each of the two programs for improvements at the college level.

Next, this study focused only on teachers who completed a traditional educator preparation program. With the growing popularity of alternative certification programs (ACPs), a study on the effectiveness of ACPs and the needs of first-year teachers who completed their certification through an ACP would benefit public school leaders. It is likely the needs are much different than those who graduated through a traditional preparation program, particularly because typical ACPs do not require clinical

experiences for their candidates before placing them in classrooms. It would be useful to conduct research using the same interview instrument as this study on ACP teachers and compare the levels of preparation and teacher needs. Since Texas has one of the largest number of ACPs in the nation, districts in this state are now hiring from applicant pools that include as many alternatively certified teachers as traditionally certified teachers. Campus leaders should be aware of the differing needs of these two types of teachers in order to build appropriate support programs.

Additionally, while participants in this study were teachers who remained in the profession, additional studies focusing on teachers who left the teaching profession within the first five years would benefit efforts to improve teacher preparation and retention. Teachers who left the profession within the first five years should be interviewed for reasons they chose to leave. Interviews would allow for more specific and detailed responses than would survey questions. It would be important to hear from those teachers and to engage them in discussion about their experiences for clarification of their responses and opportunity to ask additional questions. Interviewing the teachers who left teaching would give researchers detailed information on why they left the profession and what, if any, actions would have kept them in the classroom. Results should be isolated by those who left teaching after their first year, second year, third year, fourth year, and fifth year to determine if negative aspects of teaching change throughout the first five years. If new teachers left after the first three years, what happened that caused them to leave after three years? Do the reasons differ from those who left the profession after the first year? Results should also be viewed by type of schools that the teachers left, such as urban/suburban/rural, socio-economic status, enrollment, student

and teacher demographics, and high/mid/low performance levels. This would allow school districts and campuses to evaluate their own impact on new teachers during their first five years of teaching. It would also give a view of possible trends in types of schools teachers are likely to leave and why they leave them. Results from this type of study would allow school districts to be proactive in efforts to retain quality teachers for their students.

Lastly, this study raises a question about the impact that teaching in classrooms inclusive of special education students has on teachers. Based on the amount of concern raised from participants' stress of stepping into a regular education classroom that includes special education students, it would be beneficial to conduct research on the effects these classroom responsibilities have on the retention of new teachers, and perhaps all teachers. Managing a classroom with so many individual education plans (IEPs) and meeting the legalities of teaching special education students can place an enormous amount of extra work on regular education teachers and can be overwhelming and stressful even to veteran teachers. Inclusive classrooms has resulted in a much different level of responsibility and expectation for regular education teachers. It is possible that stress from being pulled in so many directions and the expectation to teach to such a variety of learning abilities would have a tremendous impact on a teacher's decision to leave the profession, including teachers beyond the five year mark. As one principal in the focus group of this study put it, "Not so long ago teachers had 30 students in a class and one lesson plan; now it seems like teachers have 30 students in a classroom and 30 lesson plans." Although this may be an exaggeration, it is close to the reality of today's classrooms. And, now with requirements of Response to Intervention (RTI) to

address struggling learners' needs, teachers are likely to be required to develop individual learning plans for struggling learners who fall under the RTI umbrella. Does the stress from these growing responsibilities and increasing levels of accountability impact a teacher's decision to leave? If so, how can education leaders address the issues?

Conclusion

College preparation program leaders, public school leaders, and teachers should come together to create solutions for better preparing and retaining new teachers as a first line of defense to the teacher drop-out crisis. Together, these three groups should study and understand the current and future direction of education, including how to best prepare teachers for the challenges of classrooms of today and tomorrow. There is no doubt that as public education changes, so do the demands and needs of teachers. One thing remains constant, however - teacher quality is the most influential school-based factor in improving student learning (Berry, 2004). If America is to improve student achievement, as is the basis for ongoing legislative action regarding education, then leaders must begin by improving the quality of teachers in America's classrooms. It is imperative that education leaders from public schools, leaders from educator preparation programs, and teachers work alongside each other to create a roadmap to preparing and retaining a high-quality teacher workforce, thus providing every classroom in every district in America with a great teacher.

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Appendix A

Interview Instruments

Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers:
What Public Education Leaders Should Know

Teacher Interview Questions:

1. Overall, do you feel that your teacher education program adequately prepared you for your first year of teaching? (elaborate)

2. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important do you feel it is for the university programs to prepare new teachers for dealing with the following areas their first year of teaching; and, on a scale of 1-5, 1 being very weak and 5 being very strong, rate how well your program prepared you for each area: (elaborate on each)

   a. Classroom management?

   b. Student assessment?

   c. Data disaggregation?

   d. Diversity in the classroom?

   e. Special needs students in the general ed classroom (inclusion)?

   f. Teacher evaluations?

   g. General instructional preparation and practices?

   h. Content/subject area knowledge?

   i. Instructional practices/methods in your content area?

   j. Student teaching?

   k. Discuss other, if any, teacher expectations you feel your program did or did not adequately prepare you for.

3. What element(s) of your teacher preparation program had the greatest impact on preparing you for teaching? (elaborate)

4. What, if any, are the limitations to what educator preparation programs can prepare new teachers for? (explain)

5. What do school district leaders need to know about your level of preparedness for your first year of teaching?(elaborate)

6. In considering your level of preparedness for your first year, what roles should school districts play in supporting/developing new teachers for the classroom? (elaborate)

7. What was your greatest stressor/fear when you entered the classroom your first week on the job? (explain)

8. What, if any, district support helped you the most during your first year of teaching? (elaborate)

9. How did you measure your own success your first year on the job? (explain)

10. How do you think administrators measured your success your first year on the job? (explain)

11. Overall, how could you have been better prepared for your first year in the classroom? (elaborate)

12. What factors will impact your decision to stay or to leave the profession during the first five years? (explain)

Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers:
What Public Education Leaders Should Know

Focus Group Interview Questions:

1. Overall, do you feel that teacher education programs adequately prepared your new teachers for their first year of teaching? (elaborate)

2. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important do you feel it is for the university programs to prepare new teachers for dealing with the following areas for their first year of teaching: (elaborate on each)

   a. Classroom management?

   b. Student assessment?

   c. Data disaggregation?

   d. Diversity in the classroom?

   e. Special needs students in the general ed classroom (inclusion)?

   f. Teacher evaluations?

   g. General instructional preparation and practices?

   h. Content/Subject area?

   i. Instructional practices in content area?

   j. Student teaching?

   k. Discuss other, if any, teacher expectations you feel teacher prep programs do or do not adequately prepare new teachers for.

3. What element(s) of teacher preparation program generally has the greatest impact on preparing new teachers for teaching? (elaborate)

4. What, if any, are the limitations to what educator preparation programs can prepare new teachers for? (explain)

5. What do school district leaders need to know about the level of preparedness for the first year of teaching? (elaborate)

6. In considering the general level of preparedness for a first-year teacher, what roles should school districts play in supporting/developing new teachers for the classroom? (elaborate)

7. What do you feel is the greatest stressor/fear when a new teacher enters the classroom the first week on the job? (elaborate)

8. What, if any, district support helps the most during the first year of teaching? (elaborate)

9. How do you measure a new teacher's success their first year on the job? (elaborate)

10. Overall, how could new teachers have been better prepared for their first year in the classroom? (elaborate)

11. What factors do you think will impact a new teacher's decision to stay or to leave the profession during the first five years? (explain)

Appendix B

Approvals for the Study and Consent to Participate in the Study

UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON

DIVISION OF RESEARCH

September 28, 2015

Ms. Shirley Hitt
c/o Dr. Angus MacNeil
Dean, Education

Dear Ms. Shirley Hitt,

Based upon your request for exempt status, an administrative review of your research proposal entitled "Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers: What Public Education Leaders Should Know" was conducted on September 9, 2015.

At that time, your request for exemption under **Category 2** was approved pending modification of your proposed procedures/documents.

The changes you have made adequately respond to the identified contingencies. As long as you continue using procedures described in this project, you do not have to reapply for review. * Any modification of this approved protocol will require review and further approval. Please contact me to ascertain the appropriate mechanism.

If you have any questions, please contact Alicia Vargas at (713) 743 - 9215.

Sincerely yours,

Kirstin Rochford, MPH,
CIP, CPIA Director,
Research Compliance

*Approvals for exempt protocols will be valid for 5 years beyond the approval date. Approval for this project will expire **September 27, 2020**. If the project is completed prior to this date, a final report should be filed to close the protocol. If the project will continue after this date, you will need to reapply for approval if you wish to avoid an interruption of your data collection.

Protocol Number: 16017-EX

Request for Permission to Conduct Study in School District

August 24, 2015

Superintendent, _____ ISD
RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study in _____ ISD

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study in_____ ISD. As you are aware, I am currently enrolled in the Education Leadership doctoral program at the University of Houston and am in the process of writing my doctoral thesis. The study is entitled *Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers: What Public Education Leaders Should Know.*

I am asking for permission to interview ten teachers from the secondary level who have one - three years teaching experience and have completed a traditional educator preparation program. Additionally, I plan to interview a focus group consisting of secondary campus administrators and experienced teacher mentors. If approval is granted, teacher participants will be interviewed individually in their classrooms either during their conference periods or before or after school. There will be no interruption to their instructional schedules. The focus group will be interviewed together at a date, time, and place to be decided. The interview process should take no longer than 45 minutes. No costs will be incurred by either the school district or the individual participants. The interviews will take place this fall.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I have included a copy of the interview questions I plan to use. You may contact me at _____ if you need additional information.

If you will allow me to proceed with my research in Huffman ISD, please sign below.

As always, I appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Shirley Hitt Dupree

Enclosures

cc:Dr. Angus MacNeil, University of Houston

Approved by:

_____   _____   _____

       Printed Name   Signature   Date

Request for Permission to Conduct Study on Campus

Campus Principals

_____ ISD

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study on Your Campus

Dear Principal:

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study with selected teachers and on your campus. I am currently enrolled in the Education Leadership doctoral program at the University of Houston and am in the process of writing my doctoral thesis. The study is entitled *Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers: What Public Education Leaders Should Know.*

I am asking for permission to individually interview ten teachers from the secondary level who have one, two, three, or four years' teaching experience and who have completed a traditional educator preparation program. Additionally, I plan to interview a focus group consisting of secondary campus principals. If approval is granted, teacher participants will be interviewed individually in their classrooms either during their conference period or before or after school. There will be no interruption to their instructional schedule. The focus group will be interviewed together at a date, time, and place to be determined by the group. The interview process should take no longer than 45 minutes for the teachers and 90 minutes for the principal focus group. No costs will be incurred by either the campus or the individual participants. The interviews will take place this fall.

This project has been reviewed by the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713) 743-9204. If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me at _____, or by phone at _____. Information on the rights of human subjects in research is available through the UH Institutional Review Board at http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/. You may also contact my program chair, Dr. A. MacNeil, at amacneil@central.uh.edu.

If you agree, please sign below, and return the signed form to me via inter-office mail.

Sincerely,

Shirley Hitt Dupree

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Angus MacNeil, University of Houston

Approved by:

▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔▔   _____   _____

    Printed Name, Title   Signature   Date

Email Message to Ask for Volunteers

From: Shirley Dupree
Sent: Sunday, October 04, 2015 8:23 PM
To:
Subject: Volunteers needed to help with research

Hello!

I am asking for your help by allowing me to interview you for a research project I am conducting for my doctoral thesis entitled "PREPARING AND RETAINING QUALITY TEACHERS: WHAT PUBLIC EDUCATION LEADERS SHOULD KNOW."

Please read the attachments - one explains the research project in detail, and the other includes the interview questions.

I am looking to get a group of 10 teachers currently in their 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th year of teaching and who graduated from a traditional educator preparation program to answer questions regarding their preparation program and their needs as a first-year teacher.

I am hoping to have the interviews completed on or before October 16. I will work around your schedules. The interviews are designed to take no more than 45 minutes.

I ask that you read both attachments, then email me back to let me know if you are willing to participate. We can schedule your interview date and time once I hear from you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Shirley Hitt Dupree

Email Attachment Asking for Participants/Volunteers

Dear _____ ISD Educator:

I need your help. I invite you to participate in a research study entitled *Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers in America: What Public Education Leaders Should Know*. I am currently enrolled in the Education Leadership program at the University of Houston, and am in the process of writing my doctoral thesis. The purpose of the research is to determine how effective traditional teacher preparation programs are in preparing new teachers for the first year of teaching. I hope to use this information to help Huffman ISD improve our new-teacher mentor/support program and to ultimately develop and retain high-quality teachers for every classroom in our district.

I am looking for ten secondary teachers to interview who are in the second, third, fourth, or fifth year of teaching and who graduated from a traditional teacher preparation program. I am hoping to get five elementary and five secondary teachers to participate.

Your participation in this research project will be completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or, if you do participate, you may choose to not answer particular interview questions. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total. No one other than the researcher will know your individual answers to the interview questions.

If you would like to participate in this project, please email to let me know. Also, please let me know if you would prefer to be interviewed during your conference period, before school, after school, or at another time. Please indicate what day of the week works best for you for an interview, and include your conference period time if you choose to be interviewed during your conference period. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Please get back with me for scheduling your interview as quickly as possible.

If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me at sdupree@huffmanisd.net, or by phone at 281-324-7601 or 281-460-6312 (cell). Information on the rights of human subjects in research is available through the UH Institutional Review Board at http://www.uh.edu/research/compliance/irb-cphs/. You may also contact my program chair, Dr. A. MacNeil, at amacneil@central.uh.edu.

Sincerely yours,

Shirley Hitt Dupree

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

PROJECT TITLE:

Preparing and Retaining Quality Teachers: What Public Education Leaders Should Know

You are being invited to take part in a research project conducted by Shirley Hitt Dupree from the Department of Education Leadership and Policy at the University of Houston. This project is part of a doctoral thesis and is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Angus MacNeil.

NON-PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

Taking part in the research project is voluntary and you may refuse to take part or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may also refuse to answer any research-related questions that make you uncomfortable.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the various aspects of teacher preparation and training experiences that new teachers bring with them to the classroom so that school districts can better address new teacher needs in their mentoring and support programs designed to develop and retain quality teachers for their students. The duration of the study will be approximately three months. The participants will only be asked to participate for a 45 minute interview to take place in one meeting.

PROCEDURES

The participants in the study include: 1) second and third year secondary teachers who earned certifications through a traditional teacher education program; and, 2) secondary campus administrators. The teachers will be interviewed individually. The campus administrators will be interviewed as part of a focus group. If you are a teacher, you will participate in the individual teacher interview process. If you are a campus administrator, you will participate in the administrator focus group process.

Procedures of the study will include the following: 1) obtain permission from a select school district to conduct the study; obtain permission from the university's Human Subjects Committee; 3) identify second and third-year teacher participants in the participating district; 4) obtain permission from campus principals to interview identified teachers; 5) invite identified teachers to participate in the study; 6) schedule interview meetings; 7) obtain consent from teacher participants at interview meeting and interview participating teachers; 8) identify secondary campus administrators for the focus group;

9) schedule administrator focus group interview; 10) obtain consent from administrators in the focus group prior to the interview; 11) interview the administrator focus group; 12) collect and compile data from all interviews; 13) disaggregate data looking for themes, trends, commonalities; 14) compile and report findings.

Teacher interviews are designed to be completed within 45 minutes and in one meeting. Teacher participants will be interviewed individually in their classrooms either during their conference period or before or after school. There will be no interruption to the instructional schedule.

The administrator focus group will be interviewed together in the HHS principal conference room either before or after school. The interview process should take no longer than 90 minutes.

No costs will be incurred by either the campus or the individual participants. The interviews will take place this fall.

Interviews will be audio recorded. Participants will not be identified. Audio recordings will be destroyed once the project is completed. Interviews will not be shared with anyone other than the researcher.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your participation in this project. Each subject's name will be paired with a code number by the principal investigator. This code number will appear on all written materials. The list pairing the subject's name to the assigned code number will be kept separate from all research materials and will be available only to the principal investigator. Confidentiality will be maintained within legal limits.

RISKS/DISCOMFORTS

Your participation in this project is through a scheduled interview with no foreseeable risks.

BENEFITS

While you will not directly benefit from participation, your participation may help investigators better understand the needs of first-year teachers.

ALTERNATIVES

Participation in this project is voluntary and the only alternative to this project is non-participation.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT

The results of this study may be published in scientific journals, professional publications, or educational presentations; however, no individual subject will be identified.

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE OF AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES

If [SH1]you consent to take part in this study, please indicate whether you agree to be audio taped during the study by checking the appropriate box below. If you agree, please also indicate whether the audio tapes can be used for publication/presentations.

- ☐ <u>I agree</u> to be audio taped during the interview.
  - ☐ I agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
  - ☐ I do not agree that the audio tape(s) can be used in publication/presentations.
- ☐ <u>I do not agree</u> to be audio taped during the interview.

You may still participate in this study if you do not agree to be audio taped.

SUBJECT RIGHTS

1. I understand that informed consent is required of all persons participating in this project.

2. I have been told that I may refuse to participate or to stop my participation in this project at any time before or during the project. I may also refuse to answer any question.

3. Any risks and/or discomforts have been explained to me, as have any potential benefits.

4. I understand the protections in place to safeguard any personally identifiable information related to my participation.

5. I understand that, if I have any questions, I may contact Shirley Hitt Dupree at 281-324-7601. I may also contact Dr. Angus MacNeil, faculty sponsor, at 713-743-5038.

6. <u>Any questions regarding my rights as a research subject may be addressed to the University of Houston Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (713-743-9204)</u>. All research projects that are carried out by Investigators at the University of Houston are governed be requirements of the University and the federal government.

SIGNATURES

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions to my satisfaction. I give my consent to participate in this study, and have been provided with a copy of this form for my records and in case I have questions as the research progresses.

Study Subject (print name): _____

Signature of Study Subject: _____

Date: _____

I have read this form to the subject and/or the subject has read this form. An explanation of the research was provided and questions from the subject were solicited and answered to the subject's satisfaction. In my judgment, the subject has demonstrated comprehension of the information.

Principal Investigator (print name and title): _____

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____