CALCULATING TEACHER ATTRITION AND RETENTION

October 2019

HANOVER RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

To support partner districts seeking to monitor teacher retention, Hanover Research has reviewed the available secondary information on collecting and analyzing teacher retention data. The following report reviews best practices recommended in the secondary literature and provides case studies of retention data collection and used by school districts and regional education service agencies. This report includes the following sections:

- **Section I** reviews best practices for collecting data and calculating retention rates, including a case study of teacher retention data in the District of Columbia.
- **Section II** reviews best practices for using data to improve retention and instructional outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Basic teacher attrition formulas measure the percentage of teachers retained or not retained after one school year**. Districts can calculate total attrition by subtracting the current year's number of teachers from the prior year's number of teachers and then adding the number of newly hired teachers. The attrition rate is the total attrition number as a percentage of the prior year's number of teachers.
- **Teacher retention calculations should include data on mid-year attrition in addition to attrition between school years**. Data collection that occurs at a single point in time during the school year may fail to incorporate teachers who leave between the start of school and the date of data collection. However, mid-year attrition can be especially disruptive for students. Ongoing data collection throughout the school year can help districts monitor mid-year attrition and develop appropriate solutions. Districts can use monthly teacher salary data to monitor mid-year attrition.
- **Attrition data should support strategic retention management**. An effective retention management strategy facilitates the functional turnover of low-achieving teachers while minimizing the dysfunctional turnover of high-achieving teachers. To facilitate strategic retention management, the District of Columbia State Board of Education and Maricopa County Education Services Agency use district performance evaluations to collect data on teacher retention by performance rating.
- **Districts should use retention data to inform appropriate interventions that reduce dysfunctional attrition**. Districts can set targets for retention based on previous trends and retention rates at peer districts, and implement interventions when retention falls below the target. Depending on the specific factors contributing to attrition, interventions may include professional development, class size reductions, or efforts to improve overall school climate and working conditions.
- **Interventions to reduce attrition should address the specific factors causing teacher attrition within the district**. Districts should measure factors that may contribute to teacher attrition and use teacher surveys to examine the relationship between job context and retention. Districts can supplement survey data with information from focus groups and individual interviews to gain more detailed information on teacher working conditions and their relationship with retention outcomes.
- **Districts can ensure that retention calculations measure all teacher mobility within and outside the district by connecting teacher mobility calculations to human resources databases**. These databases should report the causes of attrition as well as teachers' post-attrition destinations. In particular, human resources databases should report teachers who are promoted to leadership

positions separately from teachers who retire or leave for a teaching position in another school or district.

SECTION I: COLLECTING DATA

In this section, Hanover Research reviews best practices for collecting teacher attrition and retention data. This section begins with an overview of turnover measures before discussing the importance of connecting teacher mobility data to human resources databases, including a case study of teacher attrition calculations in the District of Columbia.

OVERVIEW OF TEACHER TURNOVER MEASURES

Basic teacher attrition formulas measure the percentage of teachers retained or not retained after one school year.[1] Districts can use the following method to calculate annual teacher attrition rates:[2]

> Number of leavers is estimated by subtracting the number of teachers in year t from those in year t-1 and adding the number of new entrants to the teaching workforce in year t. The attrition rate is the number of leavers expressed as a percentage of the total number of teachers in year t-1.

However, annual attrition measures do not capture the cumulative impact of attrition over time.[3] Districts should supplement short-term measures of turnover with longitudinal measures that provide information on long-term trends in retention, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Summary of Measures of Teacher Turnover

Measure	Definition	Purpose
Short-Term Measures of Turnover		
Annual Turnover	Measured by the proportion of staff in year (t-1) who left the school by year t	Identify the proportion of teachers who leave from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year
Longitudinal Measures of Turnover		
Chronic Instability	"High" annual turnover, measured both by absolute and relative rates, for a certain number or percentage of years in a given band of years	Identify schools that perpetually struggle with high turnover
Cumulative Instability	Proportion of staff lost over time (e.g., 20% each year, totaling 60% of original staff in 3 years)	Identify the schools that lose the majority of their staff over time, and those that lose few staff over time.
Instability Entry and Exit	Low turnover one year, but move into high turnover status another year, or vice versa	Identify the schools that are more likely to fall into, or recover from, a period of high turnover
"Spell" of Instability	The number of consecutive years schools experience high turnover	Identify the average length of time that it takes for schools to stabilize once they experience high turnover
Episodes of Instability	"High turnover" status temporarily (e.g., two or more consecutive years of turnover) but return to stability	Identify schools that experience relatively short bouts of high turnover

Source: Education Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin[4]

[1] Holme, J.J. et al. "Policy Brief: Rethinking Teacher Turnover in Texas: Longitudinal Measures of Instability in Schools." *Education Research Center. The University of Texas at Austin*, 2017. p. 2. https://texaserc.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/31-Brief-Teacher-Turnover.pdf

[2] "Teacher Attrition Rate." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, May 2, 2017. http://uis.unesco.org/node/334809

[3] Holme et al., Op. cit., p. 1.

[4] Chart taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 2.

Annual attrition measures may also fail to capture mid-year turnover, leading to artificially low attrition rates.[5] Mid-year turnover has strong negative effects on student achievement, suggesting that schools should prioritize efforts to reduce mid-year turnover to improve achievement. A 2018 study of teacher turnover in North Carolina uses monthly salary data to identify the school in which teachers work for each month of the school year. These data allow researchers to analyze mid-year turnover separately from end-of-year turnover.[6] The study finds a substantial negative effect of mid-year turnover on student achievement on both the elementary and middle grades, but only a modest effect of end-of-year turnover.[7]

CONNECTING TEACHER ATTRITION TO HUMAN RESOURCES DATABASES

Districts can ensure that retention calculations measure all teacher mobility within and outside the district by connecting teacher mobility calculations to human resources databases. Incorporating these data into attrition calculations ensures that attrition calculations include teachers who move across schools in the district as well as teachers who leave the district. Databases should distinguish teachers who move to another school within the district from teachers who leave the district entirely.[8] Within-district mobility may reflect different causes than district-level attrition, and create different effects for students.[9] Movement among schools within a district does not affect overall human resources outcomes but may affect equity across schools.[10] Databases should also report teachers who leave the classroom for leadership positions separately from teachers who leave their school or district to avoid misclassifying promotions as dysfunctional turnover. For example, the Colorado Department of Education's statewide teacher retention report includes the categories listed in

Figure 1.2: Colorado Department of Education Retention Reporting Categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Left Job Category and District	Number of employees who left both their positions and the district
Left Job Category Only	Number of employees who left their positions but not the district
Conditional Turnover Rate	Percentage of employees who left both their positions and the school district
New to Job Category and District	Number of employees who are new to the district
New to Job Category Only	Employees who moved into a new position from another position at the same district

Source: Colorado Department of Education[11]

Managers of human resources databases should ensure that these databases include the cause of attrition, such as retirement or district reductions in force, as well as the post-attrition destinations of teachers, such

[5] Ibid., p. 1.
[6] Henry, G.T. and C. Redding. "The Consequences of Leaving School Early: The Effects of within-Year and End-of-Year Teacher Turnover." *Education Finance and Policy*, 2018. pp. 9–10. https://cdn.theconversation.com/static_files/files/269/withinyear_efp_final.pdf?1536242239
[7] Ibid., pp. 15–25.
[8] Finster, M. "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover:" Teacher Incentive Fund, US Department of Education, 2015. pp. 2, 9. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577276.pdf
[9] Finster, M. "Diagnosing Causes of Teacher Retention, Mobility and Turnover: Guidelines for TIF Grantees." Teacher Incentive Fund, US Department of Education, 2015. p. 5. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED577277.pdf
[10] Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 9.
[11] Chart contents taken verbatim with minor alterations to wording from: "News Release - CDE Teacher Turnover Report Now Reflects Internal Promotions." Colorado Department of Education, April 8, 2016. https://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/20160408turnover2

as retirement or movement to another school or district.[12] Identifying the causes of attrition for individual teachers can help districts identify the most common causes of attrition at the school and district level and plan appropriate interventions.[13] Section II of this report discusses interventions to address teacher turnover in greater detail.

Districts can also predict expected retention by using teacher surveys. Because the intention to leave an organization strongly predicts actual attrition, surveys of current teachers' attrition plans can predict attrition rates in the near future. Schools can measure attrition intentions by including a single survey item directly asking if teachers plan to look for a new job, or by including multiple items measuring constructs related to attrition such as thoughts of transferring to a new school or overall attachment to teaching.[14]

CASE STUDY – DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The District of Columbia State Board of Education (SBOE), which oversees District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and charter schools in the District of Columbia, provides an example of the use of human resources databases to collect data on teacher retention. The SBOE commissioned a study of teacher retention in 2018. This study aimed to provide the SBOE with high-level data on trends in teacher turnover and the relationship between teacher turnover and school achievement by examining attrition rates from the 2007-2008 to 2016-2017 school years.[15]

The study relies on DCPS's PeopleSoft human resources database to obtain data on teacher turnover in DCPS. This database reports employment for all employees included in the ET-15 pay plan of the Washington Teachers Union.[16] The authors note that mid-year reporting imposes limitations on the data collected, as PeopleSoft does not include data on teachers who leave before data are collected. Mid-year attrition may be especially disruptive for students, and the authors suggest that stronger data on mid-year retention would be beneficial for districts.[17]

Although 85 percent of ET-15 employees in DCPS are classroom teachers, this classification also includes many support personnel who work directly with students, such as counselors, librarians, instructional coaches, and student support professionals. The study reports data for all ET-15 employees as well as employees identified as classroom teachers through their job titles, although there was no significant difference in turnover rates between classroom teachers and all ET-15 employees.[18]

The PeopleSoft database reports turnover data at a single point in time midway through the school year at the school and district levels. PeopleSoft also reports whether teachers leaving a school left DCPS entirely or moved to another school in the district.[19] Figure 1.3 shows three-year, six-year, and ten-year average attrition rates by the number of years ET-15 personnel employed in DCPS for each school year remained in the district. From 2007 to 2017, an average of 60 percent of ET-15 personnel left the district within six years. However, three-year data trends suggest that attrition rates over two and three years may be decreasing.[20]

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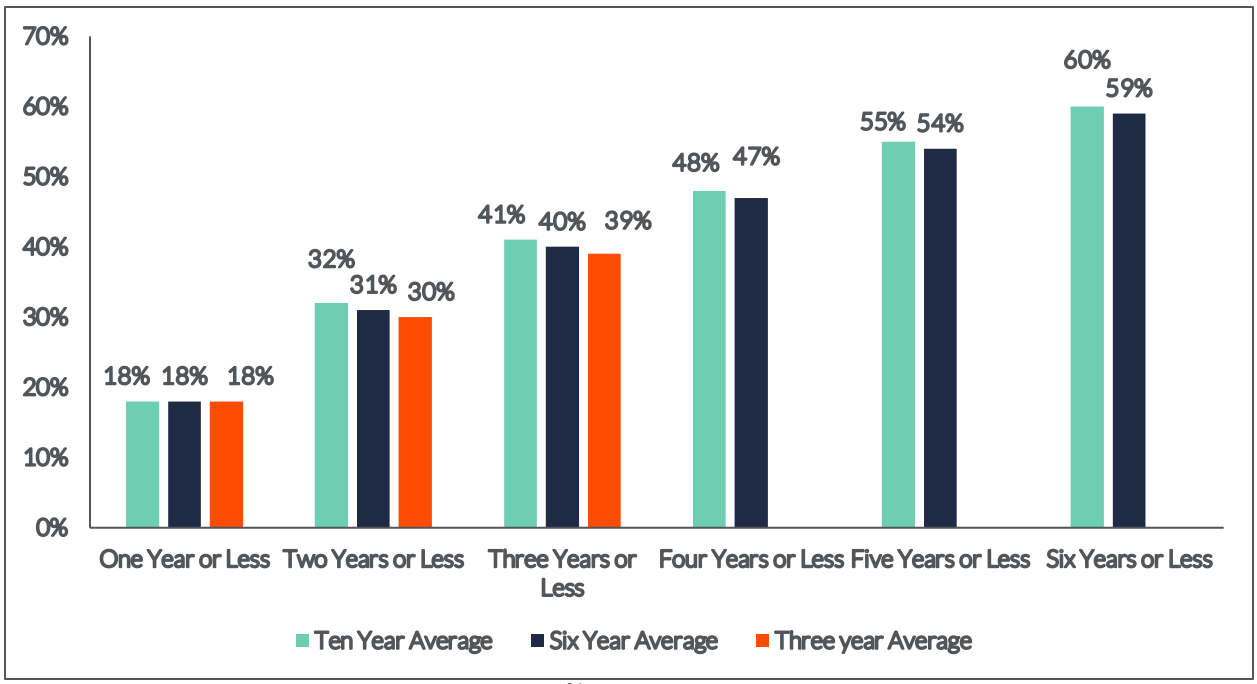
[12] Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 17.
[13] Finster, "Diagnosing Causes of Teacher Retention, Mobility and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 5.
[14] Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 18.
[15] Levy, M. "Teacher and Principal Turnover in Public Schools in the District of Columbia." District of Columbia State Board of Education, October 3, 2018. p. 10. https://sboe.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sboe/publication/attachments/SBOE%20Teacher%20Turnover%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf
[16] Ibid., p. 8.
[17] Ibid., pp. 42–43.
[18] Ibid., pp. 10–11.
[19] Ibid., p. 11.
[20] Ibid., p. 12.

Figure 1.3: DCPS Average Attrition Rates



Source: District of Columbia State Board of Education[21]

The SBOE report includes turnover data for individual schools and aggregates data to examine attrition trends by geographic ward, grade configuration, and the percentage of students classified as at-risk by DCPS. The report finds that teachers are more likely to leave individual schools in middle schools and schools with higher numbers of at-risk students.[22] Although researchers did not have access to teacher-level data on teacher performance ratings, the SBOE report uses aggregated data reported by DCPS to report retention rates by evaluation rating. The report finds that 98.6 percent of classroom teachers who received the lowest evaluation rating left their school within one year, compared to only 10.1 percent of classroom teachers who received the highest evaluation rating.[23]

To obtain data on teacher attrition in charter schools, the SBOE uses annual reports submitted by individual schools to the DC Public Charter School Board (PCSB). These data report overall attrition rates for each school year, but do not include teacher-level retention data. Therefore, the SBOE was unable to calculate longitudinal attrition rates for charter schools.[24] The SBOE reports annual attrition rates in charter schools ranging from 22 to 25 percent by year, somewhat higher than the average annual attrition rate of 18 percent in DCPS.[25]

[21] Chart contents obtained from: Ibid.
[22] Ibid., pp. 15–17.
[23] Ibid., p. 20.
[24] Ibid., p. 26.
[25] Ibid., p. 27.

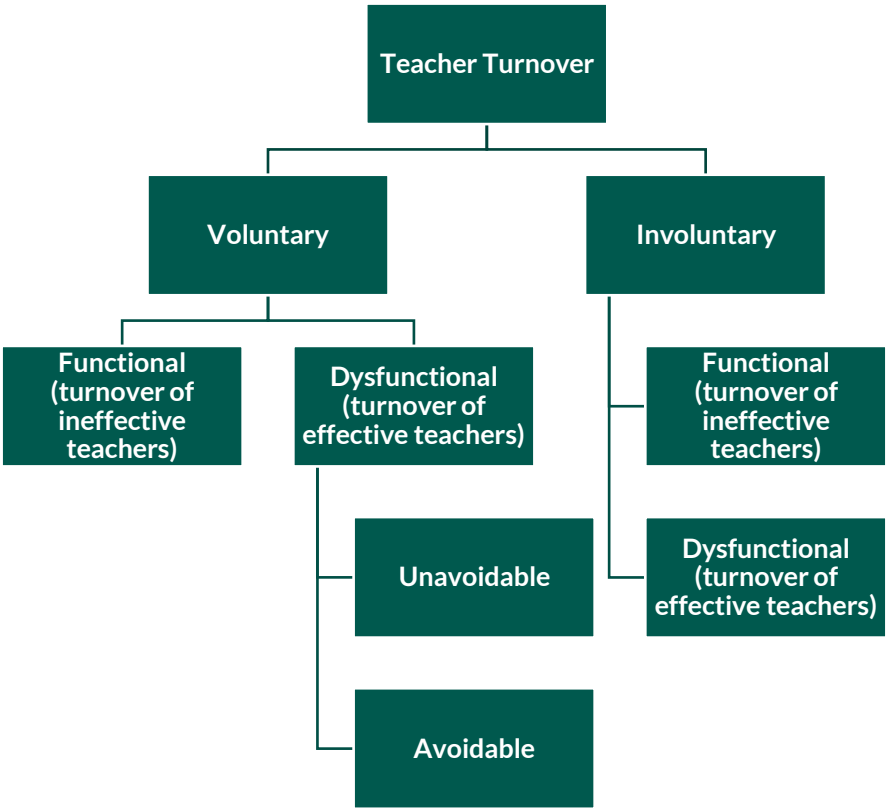
SECTION II: USING DATA TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT

In this section, Hanover Research discusses the use of retention data to improve retention outcomes. This section begins with a review of the use of data to support strategic retention, including a case study of strategic retention in Maricopa County Education Services Agency. This section then discusses the use of data to reduce dysfunctional attrition.

USING DATA TO SUPPORT STRATEGIC RETENTION

Analyzing the causes of attrition can help districts distinguish between functional and dysfunctional turnover. Although high levels of teacher attrition negatively affect student achievement, attrition can benefit students if new teachers are more effective than the teachers they replace.[26] Districts can use the typologies shown in Figure 2.1 to determine whether turnover is functional or dysfunctional. Functional turnover represents the attrition of low-achieving teachers, which improves net teaching quality, while dysfunctional turnover represents the attrition of high-achieving teachers. Dysfunctional turnover can also be classified as unavoidable or avoidable. Unavoidable turnover reflects causes such as death, retirement, or family relocation that districts cannot prevent, while avoidable turnover reflects working conditions that districts can improve. Although districts have historically classified turnover due to medical leave or childbirth as unavoidable, some districts have reduced these forms of turnover through flexible working arrangements.[27]

Figure 2.1: Typologies of Teacher Turnover



Source: Teacher Incentive Fund, U.S. Department of Education[28]

[26] Young, S. "Teacher Retention and Student Achievement: How to Hire and Retain Effective Teachers." *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 84:3, March 2018. p. 17. Accessed via EBSCOhost

[27] Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 9.

[28] Chart taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 8.

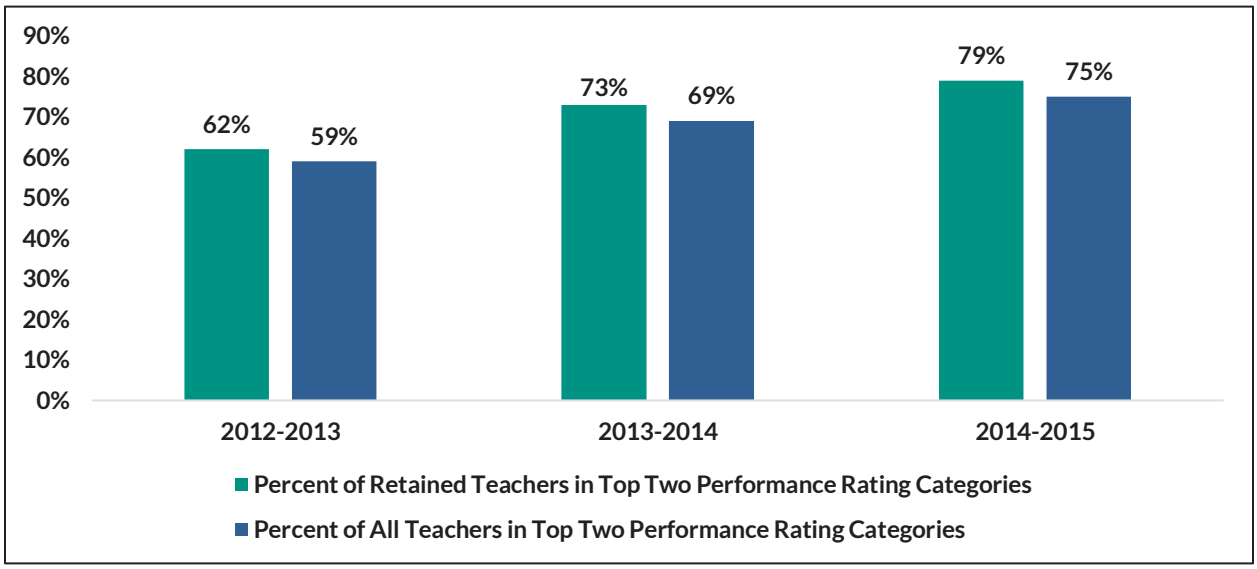
Connecting attrition data to teacher performance ratings allows districts to determine whether turnover is functional or dysfunctional in individual cases. Districts may need to merge turnover data with other data sources that report evaluation ratings for individual teachers.[29]

CASE STUDY – MARICOPA COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICES AGENCY

Maricopa County Education Services Agency (MCESA) in Arizona provides an example of the collection of multiple forms of data to examine trends in teacher retention. MCESA received funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) to measure the relationship between teacher turnover and teacher effectiveness in its member districts. The TIF also provided funding for member districts to implement a standardized teacher evaluation system, the Rewarding Excellence in Instruction and Leadership (REIL) Classification Program.[30] MCESA used data from this system to examine the relationship between retention and effectiveness at both the teacher and school levels.

To analyze the relationship between teacher retention and teacher effectiveness, MCESA compared the distribution of performance classifications for retained teachers to the distribution of performance classifications for all teachers. As shown in Figure 2.2, MCESA finds that teachers who received the top two ratings in the REIL Classification Program were consistently more likely to remain in the district the following year. Figure 1.1 also shows that the percentage of teachers receiving the two highest performance ratings increased from 2013 to 2015, suggesting that differential teacher retention may have contributed to an overall improvement in teaching quality.[31] MCESA also calculated cumulative retention rates to measure the percent of teachers who remain in the district over multiple years and finds that 66 percent of teachers who received the highest performance rating in 2013 remained in the district for at least three years, compared to only 26 percent of teachers who received the lowest performance rating.[32]

Figure 2.2: Performance Ratings for Retained Teachers and All Teachers in MCESA, 2013-2015



Source: Teacher Incentive Fund, U.S. Department of Education[33]

[29] Ibid., p. 18.
[30] Nicotera, A. et al. "Analyzing Teacher Retention by Performance Level and School Need Examples from Maricopa County." Teacher Incentive Fund, US Department of Education, 2017. p. 1. https://www.tifcommunity.org/sites/default/files/resources/analyzing_teacher_retention_by_performance_level_maricopa.pdf
[31] Ibid., p. 4.
[32] Ibid., p. 6.
[33] Chart contents obtained from: Ibid., p. 4.

In addition to calculating the variation in retention by performance level across schools, MCESA used the Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) school report card grades to compare retention in high-achieving schools to retention in low-achieving schools. MCESA finds that 85 percent of teachers receiving the two highest performance classifications were retained in high-achieving schools after the 2013-2014 school year, compared to 81 percent of teachers in low-achieving schools. In contrast, high-achieving schools retained only 63 percent of teachers receiving the two lowest performance classifications, compared to 73 percent in low-achieving schools.[34]

MCESA has used teacher retention data to support reforms to teacher compensation at three member school districts: Maricopa County Regional School District, Phoenix Elementary School District #1, and Wilson School District #7. These districts use the Opportunity Culture model to provide differentiated compensation and job duties to high-achieving teachers.[35] The Opportunity Culture model groups teachers into collaborative teams led by teachers with a strong record of achievement. Lead teachers receive partial release from classroom duties and additional pay to provide leadership and professional development for their colleagues.[36]

MCESA used TIF grant funding to support evaluation and human resources systems included in the Opportunity Culture reforms, while districts include funding for teacher salaries in their general fund budgets.[37] Participating districts also use teacher surveys to identify factors that affect attrition and develop appropriate responses.[38]

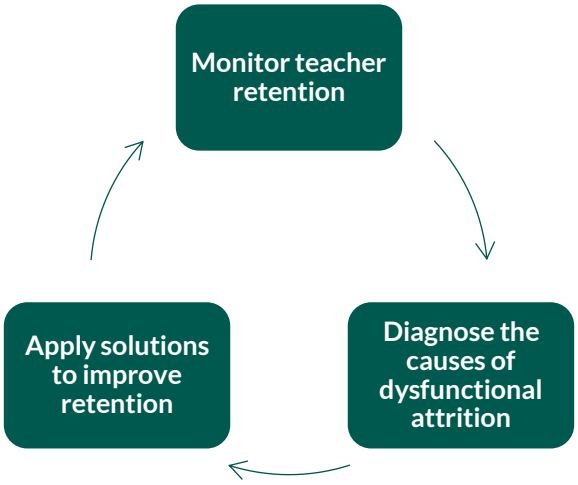
USING DATA TO IDENTIFY CAUSES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL ATTRITION

Districts can use retention data to determine when overall attrition is higher than desired and interventions to reduce attrition are needed. Districts should set target benchmarks for overall retention levels and implement interventions when retention falls below the target. For example, a district could decide to aim for an overall retention rate of 80-90 percent and begin implementing interventions to improve retention if the retention rate falls below 80 percent, with more intensive interventions if retention falls below 60 percent. Districts can identify appropriate retention targets by examining internal data to identify recent trends and by benchmarking retention rates at peer districts.[39]

Districts can use teacher retention data to identify the factors contributing to undesirable attrition and inform appropriate interventions.[40] The strategic retention management cycle shown in Figure 2.3 on the following page allows districts to monitor retention rates, identify the causes of attrition, and implement and monitor interventions to reduce dysfunctional attrition. Depending on the specific factors contributing to attrition, interventions may include professional development, class size reductions, or efforts to improve overall school climate and working conditions.[41]

[34] Ibid., p. 7.
[35] "Maricopa County, AZ." Opportunity Culture. https://www.opportunityculture.org/maricopa-county-education-service-agency/
[36] "Introduction to an Opportunity Culture." Public Impact, 2018. p. 7. https://www.opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Intro_to_OC_Slide_Deck_with_Speaker_Notes-Public_Impact-1.pdf
[37] "Maricopa County, AZ," Op. cit.
[38] "Teacher Retention Project." Office of the Maricopa County School Superintendent. http://schoolsup.org/teacher-retention-project
[39] Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 11.
[40] Ibid., p. 19.
[41] Ibid., p. 9.

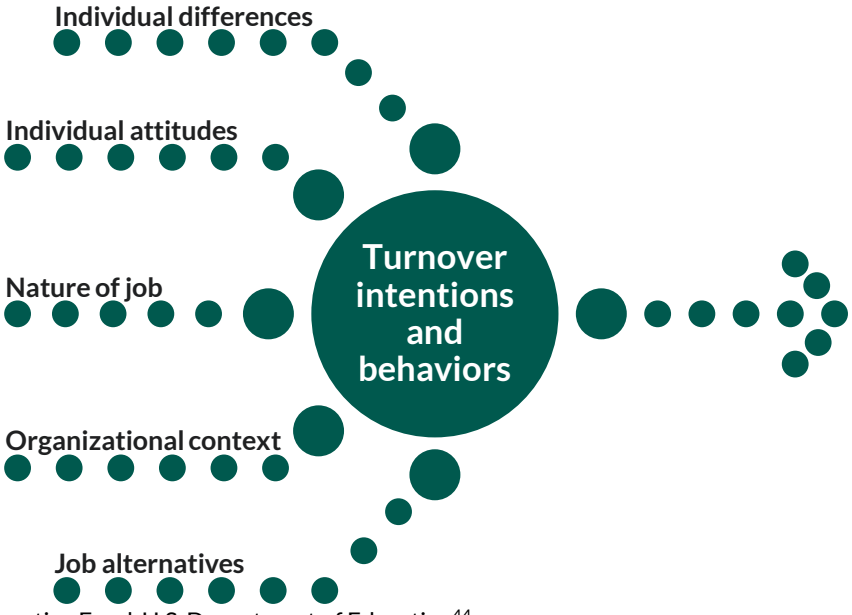
Figure 2.3: Strategic Retention Management Cycle



Source: Teacher Incentive Fund, U.S. Department of Education[42]

Accurately diagnosing the causes of attrition requires districts to connect retention data to data on factors that may be associated with teachers' decisions to leave their positions. As shown in Figure 2.4, individual teachers' decisions to leave their positions may reflect a variety of personal and organizational factors, including job satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, and engagement. To identify the specific factors driving retention in individual districts, district leaders should develop a retention framework that guides the collection and analysis of data related to factors believed to influence teachers' decisions to leave.[43]

Figure 2.4: Teacher Turnover Model



Source: Teacher Incentive Fund, U.S. Department of Education[44]

[42] Chart adapted from: Finster, "Diagnosing Causes of Teacher Retention, Mobility and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 3.
[43] Ibid., p. 4.
[44] Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., p. 3.

Districts should track the elements listed in Figure 2.5 to identify factors that may contribute to teacher attrition. Districts can use data dashboards to display these elements in a format that is easily accessible for stakeholders and decision-makers.[45]

Figure 2.5: Elements to Consider for Tracking Teacher Retention and Attrition

Factors	Examples/Measures	Rationale
Teacher Level		
Demographics	Age, race/ethnicity, gender	To monitor changes in diversity
Pre-Service Experiences	Type of teacher preparation program (TPP) attended	To assess potential differences in teachers' retention from different TPPs
Qualifications	Certification type, additional certifications	To assess differences in teachers' retention by types of qualifications
Experience Levels	Teaching experience within the profession, district, and school	To determine whether beginning or more experienced teachers are leaving
Performance Ratings	Teacher evaluation ratings, teacher observation ratings, student growth measures	To gauge the extent that high and/or low performers are staying, moving, or leaving
Psychological Factors	Job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job embeddedness, and turnover intentions	To predict teacher retention and turnover and identify potential solution strategies
School Level		
School-Level Demographics	Student demographics, grade ranges, locale	To monitor potential inequities in teacher retention and turnover across schools
School Climate	Climate surveys, student discipline	To assess the influence of school climate on teacher retention and turnover
Performance Levels	Achievement scores on standardized assessments	To evaluate influence of students' performance levels on teacher retention and turnover
Administrative Support	Leadership surveys, principal evaluation ratings	To consider the influence of school leadership on teacher turnover and retention
District Level		
Demographic Characteristics	Enrollment and enrollment change, student poverty level, percentage of minority students, percentage of bilingual students	To account for the extent that changes in student enrollment levels may influence teacher turnover; To assess how changes in demographics over time may be associated with teacher retention and/or turnover
Compensation Policies	Overall compensation levels, stipends for hard-to-staff schools	To determine to what extent changes in salary levels may influence teacher retention or turnover
In-Service Policies	Induction programs, peer assistance and review	To evaluate whether in-service policies are influencing teacher retention and turnover
Context Factors		
Alternative Employment Opportunities	Unemployment rates	To account for the fact that teachers' decision to stay or leave is influenced by other employment opportunities
Federal or State Policies	No Child Left Behind, teacher evaluation state statutes	To account for federal and state policies that may be influencing teacher retention

Source: Teacher Incentive Fund, U.S. Department of Education[46]

[45] Ibid., pp. 16–17.

[46] Chart taken verbatim with minor alterations in wording from: Finster, "Identifying, Monitoring, and Benchmarking Teacher Retention and Turnover," Op. cit., pp. 20–21.

Districts should select focus issues based on local priorities. For example, a district concerned about equitable access to high-achieving teachers may wish to focus on variation in attrition rates across schools, while a district concerned about teacher diversity could focus on the relationship between teacher demographic variables and retention.[47]

Districts can use teacher surveys to collect data on the relationship between job context and teachers' job satisfaction. In addition to measuring individual teachers' intentions, surveys can measure overall working conditions to identify conditions that may affect teacher retention.[48] For example, a 2019 survey of teachers in an anonymous school serving students with severe special education needs examines the relationship between job satisfaction and three aspects of job context associated with teacher turnover in the secondary literature.[49] The survey finds that teachers' overall job satisfaction correlates strongly with perceived support from administrators and colleagues, but less strongly with job design.[50] Based on these findings, the authors suggest that school leaders focus on building positive relations with teachers and engage teachers in shared leadership to reduce teacher attrition.[51] Districts can follow surveys with focus groups or in-depth interviews to gain more detailed information on teacher working conditions and their relationship with retention outcomes.[52]

CASE STUDY – SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Shelby County Schools in Tennessee provides an example of the use of focus groups to identify strategies to improve retention. In 2017, the district's Department of Research and Performance Management conducted focus groups with principals and teachers from schools that had demonstrated strong retention rates during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years to identify factors contributing to retention.[53] Figure 2.6 shows the number of focus group participants by grade level and position.

Figure 2.6: Shelby County Schools Focus Group Participants

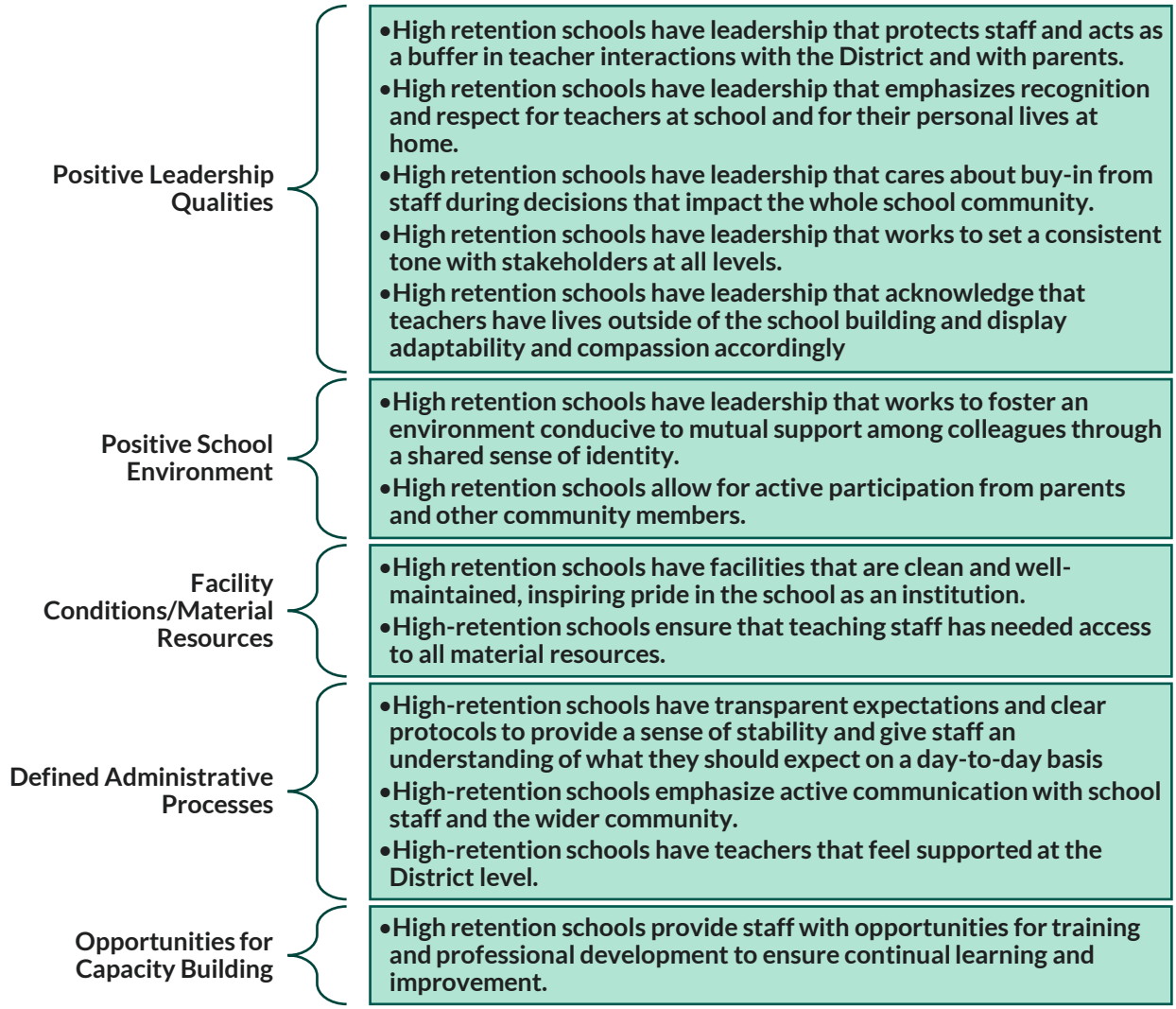
POSITION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Elementary School Principals	3
Elementary School Teachers	25
Middle School Principals	3
Middle School Teachers	25
High School Principals	3
High School Teachers	19

Source: Shelby County Schools[54]

Shelby County Schools analyzed feedback provided through focus groups to identify common characteristics of schools with consistently high retention. Figure 2.7 on the following page shows the qualities of high retention schools identified through focus groups.

[47] Ibid., p. 10.
[48] Finster, "Diagnosing Causes of Teacher Retention, Mobility and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 7.
[49] Ansley, B.M., D. Houchins, and K. Varjas. "Cultivating Positive Work Contexts That Promote Teacher Job Satisfaction and Retention in High-Need Schools." *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 32:1, March 2019. pp. 6–7. Accessed via EBSCOhost
[50] Ibid., pp. 11–12.
[51] Ibid., pp. 13–14.
[52] Finster, "Diagnosing Causes of Teacher Retention, Mobility and Turnover," Op. cit., p. 7.
[53] Anderson, J. "Teacher Retention Focus Group Findings." Shelby County Schools Department of Research and Performance Management, 2017. p. 1. http://www.scsk12.org/rpm/files/2017/RPM%20Paper_Teacher%20Retention%20Focus%20Group%20Findings.pdf
[54] Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid.

Figure 2.7: Qualities of High Retention Schools in Shelby County Schools



Source: Shelby County Schools[55]

The Department of Research and Performance Management created recommendations for Shelby County Schools to improve retention by developing the characteristics listed in Figure 2.7 above at other schools in the district. Figure 2.8 on the following page presents district-level recommendations to improve retention. These recommendations include both school and district-level strategies.

[55] Chart contents taken verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 2–6.

Figure 2.8: Shelby County Schools Recommendations for Retention

Positive Leadership Qualities

- Determine appropriate training and support to foster these characteristics across school leaders.
- Utilize retention rates and evaluation scores to establish a tiered training plan.
- Integrate these leadership qualities into principal hiring process and new leader development.

Positive School Environment

- Identify best practices strategies that other schools can adopt.
- Determine appropriate training and support to foster these environmental characteristics within schools.
- Leverage District marketing practices to generate school-level branding.
- Examine best-practice strategies for building community involvement within the school.
- Develop ways to strengthen communication practices with parents and the community.
- Work to ensure that parent-teacher organizations are meeting regularly.

Facility Conditions/Material Resources

- Identify gaps in maintenance and facility upkeep service at schools.
- Determine avenues to improve services under the current provider contract.
- Maintain open communicatin with staff to identify areas of greatest need.

Defined Administrative Processes

- Assess best-practice strategies for building up communication and administrative practices within schools
- ILDs and Principals building school communication plans and setting expectations for both school staff and community.

Opportunities for Capacity Building

- Provide school leaders with flexibility to create customized training opportunities that are meaningful to teachers.
- Incentivize participation in learning opportunities.
- Determine training and supports needed for school leaders to better utilize staff strengths and identify areas of potential growth.

Source: Shelby County Schools[56]

[56] Chart contents taken verbatim with very minor alterations to wording from: Ibid.

ABOUT HANOVER RESEARCH

Hanover Research provides high-quality, custom research and analytics through a cost-effective model that helps clients make informed decisions, identify and seize opportunities, and heighten their effectiveness.

OUR SOLUTIONS

ACADEMIC SOLUTIONS

- College & Career Readiness:
  Support on-time student graduation and prepare all students for post-secondary education and careers.
- Program Evaluation:
  Measure program impact to support informed, evidence-based investments in resources that maximize student outcomes and manage costs.
- Safe & Supportive Environments:
  Create an environment that supports the academic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of students, parents, and staff through a comprehensive annual assessment of climate and culture.

ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Family and Community Engagement:
  Expand and strengthen family and community relationships and identify community partnerships that support student success.
- Talent Recruitment, Retention & Development:
  Attract and retain the best staff through an enhanced understanding of the teacher experience and staff professional development needs.
- Operations Improvement:
  Proactively address changes in demographics, enrollment levels, and community expectations in your budgeting decisions.

LEADERSHIP SOLUTION

Build a high-performing administration that is the first choice for students, parents, and staff.

OUR BENEFITS

EXPERT
200+ analysts with multiple methodology research expertise

FLEXIBLE
Ongoing custom research agenda adapts with organizations' needs

DEDICATED
Exclusive account and research teams ensure strategic partnership

EFFICIENT
Annual, fixed-fee model shares costs and benefits

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