

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Dissertations

Theses & Dissertations

---

Fall 12-2016

## Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural Public Schools

Christine Kay Butler  
*Lindenwood University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Butler, Christine Kay, "Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural Public Schools" (2016). *Dissertations*. 251.

<https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/dissertations/251>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses & Dissertations at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact [phuffman@lindenwood.edu](mailto:phuffman@lindenwood.edu).

Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher  
Recruitment and Retention in  
Rural Public Schools

by

Christine Kay Butler

December 2016

A Dissertation submitted to the Education Faculty of Lindenwood University in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

School of Education

Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher  
Recruitment and Retention in  
Rural Public Schools

by

Christine Kay Butler

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
Lindenwood University, School of Education

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Shelly Fransen, Dissertation Chair

12-7-2016  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Sherry DeVore, Committee Member

12-7-2016  
Date


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Terry Reid, Committee Member

12-10-2016  
Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Christine Kay Butler

Signature:  Date: 1-10-17

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the committee members, supervisors, and other staff members of the Lindenwood University community who have offered assistance and countless hours of their time helping me and the other students enrolled in the doctoral program meet our goals. I would also like to thank the participants of my study who spent time answering survey questions and giving my study validity and purpose. My most sincere thanks goes to my family and especially to my mother, who has set high standards and expectations and has given me the courage and strength to reach any goal I dream to accomplish. My family has given of their time, sacrificed along with me during this process, and held my spirits high when I felt too overwhelmed to move forward in this process. For this I am forever grateful. During this step in my life, my school family has also been very supportive and a constant reminder of why I started this journey... to make a difference in the lives of children.

## **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to gain insight into the recruitment and retention strategies popularized due to the need to meet high-quality teacher demands.

Additionally, recruitment and retention strategies identified by administrators and tenured teachers working in rural public schools of Missouri as effective were collected through a survey. Administrators, as well as tenured teachers currently on staff in rural public school districts of Missouri, were the population of this study. Among 286 administrators, 95 administrative participants and 33 tenured teachers completed the survey. The survey responses were compared to determine if the administrative point-of-view was similar to that of the teachers involved in the study. The results of the survey indicated commonalities between the strategies administrators and tenured teachers found effective. The top-three mentioned strategies by both administrators and tenured teachers were school culture/climate, administrative support, and small class size. Teachers also indicated the community, skilled coworkers, access to technology, and adequate facilities were important factors in the determination of where they work; all of these factors were deemed of marginal importance or not mentioned by administrators. Those involved in the hiring process should be aware of the factors most important to teachers and shift focus if possible. The community near schools could also be used as a strategy to attract quality teachers and retain them long-term.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix
Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Background of the Study.....	2
Significance of the Study .....	6
Theoretical Framework.....	6
Statement of the Problem .....	8
Purpose of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	9
Definition of Key Terms .....	9
Limitations and Assumptions.....	10
Summary.....	12
Chapter Two: Review of Literature .....	14
Theoretical Framework.....	14
Recruitment and Retention Strategies.....	15
The Role of Leadership and Mentors on Retention.....	18
The Role of School Culture and Climate on Retention .....	20
The Role of Professional Development on Retention .....	21
The Role of Salary and Benefits on Retention.....	22
The Role of Class Size on Retention.....	23
The Role of Resources and Facilities on Retention.....	24

NCLB Impact on Teacher Quality.....	25
Teacher Quality .....	28
Alternative Certification.....	29
Teacher Preparation and Higher Education .....	30
Teacher Evaluation System and High-Stakes Testing .....	31
Summary .....	33
Chapter Three: Methodology .....	35
Problem and Purpose Overview .....	35
Research Questions .....	36
Research Design .....	36
Ethical Considerations .....	36
Population and Sample .....	37
Instrumentation .....	37
Data Collection .....	38
Data Analysis .....	39
Summary .....	40
Chapter Four: Analysis of Data .....	42
Study Design.....	43
Research Questions .....	44
Sample .....	45
Demographics .....	46
Analysis of Quantitative Data .....	48
Signing Bonuses .....	52



Relocation Assistance .....	53
Paid Insurance Benefits .....	55
Accountability .....	57
Tuition Reimbursement .....	59
Professional Development .....	61
Competitive Beginning Salaries .....	63
Competitive Salaries .....	65
Administrative Support .....	67
Shared Plan Time with Teaching Cohorts .....	69
Small Class Size .....	71
Childcare .....	73
Sick Leave/Personal Leave .....	75
Access to Innovative Technology .....	77
Positive, Supportive School Culture .....	79
Adequate and Functional School Facilities .....	81
Skilled Coworkers .....	83
Quality Mentoring Program .....	85
Summary .....	87
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations .....	89
Findings .....	90
Research Question One .....	90
Research Question Two .....	91
Research Question Three .....	92

Research Question Four .....	92
Conclusions .....	93
Implications for Practice .....	94
Recommendations for Future Research .....	95
Summary .....	96
Appendix A .....	101
Appendix B .....	103
Appendix C .....	105
Appendix D .....	106
Appendix E .....	108
References .....	110
Vita .....	121

## List of Tables

Table 1. <i>Demographics of Sample Population of Districts by Region in Missouri</i> .....	47
Table 2. <i>Demographics of Sample Population of Tenured Teachers by Years of Teaching</i> .....	48
Table 3. <i>Summary Statistics Table for Numeric Variables—Administrator Survey</i> .....	50
Table 4. <i>Summary Statistics Table for Numeric Variables—Teacher Survey</i> .....	51

## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Utilization of signing bonuses.....	52
<i>Figure 2.</i> Impact of signing bonuses .....	53
<i>Figure 3.</i> Utilization of relocation assistance .....	54
<i>Figure 4.</i> Impact of relocation assistance .....	55
<i>Figure 5.</i> Utilization of paid insurance benefits.....	56
<i>Figure 6.</i> Impact of paid insurance benefits .....	57
<i>Figure 7.</i> Utilization of accountability .....	58
<i>Figure 8.</i> Impact of accountability .....	59
<i>Figure 9.</i> Utilization of tuition reimbursement.....	60
<i>Figure 10.</i> Impact of tuition reimbursement .....	61
<i>Figure 11.</i> Utilization of professional development .....	62
<i>Figure 12.</i> Impact of professional development .....	63
<i>Figure 13.</i> Utilization of competitive beginning salaries .....	64
<i>Figure 14.</i> Impact of competitive beginning salaries.....	65
<i>Figure 15.</i> Utilization of competitive salaries .....	66
<i>Figure 16.</i> Impact of competitive salaries .....	67
<i>Figure 17.</i> Utilization of administrative support .....	68
<i>Figure 18.</i> Impact of administrative support .....	69
<i>Figure 19.</i> Utilization of shared plan time with teaching cohorts.....	70
<i>Figure 20.</i> Impact of shared plan time with teaching cohorts.....	71
<i>Figure 21.</i> Utilization of small class size .....	72
<i>Figure 22.</i> Impact of small class size.....	73

<i>Figure 23. Utilization of childcare</i> .....	74
<i>Figure 24. Impact of childcare</i> .....	75
<i>Figure 25. Utilization of sick/personal leave</i> .....	76
<i>Figure 26. Impact of sick/personal leave</i> .....	77
<i>Figure 27. Utilization of access to innovative technology</i> .....	78
<i>Figure 28. Impact of access to innovative technology</i> .....	79
<i>Figure 29. Utilization of positive, supportive school culture</i> .....	80
<i>Figure 30. Impact of positive, supportive school culture</i> .....	81
<i>Figure 31. Utilization of adequate and functional school facilities</i> .....	82
<i>Figure 32. Impact of adequate and functional school facilities</i> .....	83
<i>Figure 33. Utilization of skilled coworkers</i> .....	84
<i>Figure 34. Impact of skilled coworkers</i> .....	85
<i>Figure 35. Utilization of quality mentoring programs</i> .....	86
<i>Figure 36. Impact of quality mentoring programs</i> .....	87

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

Effective education policies and programs are in everyone's best interest (Dynarski, 2015). The need to improve upon current educational standards is backed by research, and research leading to action on a larger scale was the basis of the beginning of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era (Dynarski, 2015). From the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to NCLB and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the federal role in schools remains; however, the expansion of power to the states has sparked state reform efforts (McGuinn, 2016). Regardless of the name of the policy or program, the federal role in schools has continued to push toward accountability through student assessment and teacher evaluation (P. E. Peterson, 2016). Accountability measures are now issued from state governments instead of the federal government, but lawmakers have made it clear all students and teachers should meet high standards and expectations (McGuinn, 2016; P. E. Peterson, 2016).

Placing accountability for student achievement on schools has led to the 'trickle-down effect' of evaluating teachers based upon student success to ensure schools are not failing (Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2012). Not only has the stress of outcomes-based testing caused teachers to rethink career decisions, but the nation's schools were already facing teacher shortages before the increased demands of the federal government's sanctions took hold (Mihaly, McCaffrey, Sass, & Lockwood, 2013). Researchers have since concluded the strenuous standards placed upon school districts, teachers, and students may have paved the way for teachers to spend more class time teaching test-taking strategies in order to create students who are markedly better at taking standardized tests (Berliner, 2013).

Knowledge gained through research can be of use not only for identifying effective recruitment and retention strategies in rural public school districts in Missouri, but also for implementing ‘effectiveness research’ which improves educational outcomes (Dynarski, 2015). The act of researching relevant findings and then placing improvement science behind educational approaches can provide valuable information for districts (Dynarski, 2015). The recent passing of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015 allows states to work toward comprehensive support programs and improvements within school districts (Dynarski, 2015).

### **Background of the Study**

With the creation of the NCLB Act of 2001, public school districts were faced with annual mandates to meet targeted educational standards by 2014 (Vinovskis, 2015). Goals established by the original NCLB Act of 2001 to increase accountability were as follows: to create and launch a challenging nationwide curriculum; to set high expectations for all students; to strengthen the professional qualifications of teachers; and to overcome the continued achievement gaps among racial and ethnic groups, children in poverty, special education students, and English language learners (Menken, 2013). School performance at both teacher and student levels has been considered of the utmost importance for many public school districts facing sanctions (Menken, 2013). Researchers have indicated the necessity of goals focused upon increasing student achievement and the use of data to identify curricular and instructional improvements (P. E. Peterson, 2016).

The educational system moved toward a more defined focus on accountability with the reauthorization of the NCLB Act of 2001 (Vinovskis, 2015). As late as 2015,

policymakers supported the heritage of the original law with the expectation every school should be held accountable for the academic performance of its students (DeNisco, 2015a). Additional discussions among legislators have resulted in proposals regarding school choice and competitive grants (Rhor, 2013; Yager, 2012). The Obama administration-coined phrase “Race to the Top” has been adopted by multiple states in addition to School Improvement Grant Programs that may be fundamentally affected or discontinued altogether as accountability measures continue to be impacted by new legislation (Rhor, 2013; Yager, 2012).

Greater weight has been placed upon student test scores versus the previous standard of teacher performance and observations in the classroom (Rhor, 2013; Yager, 2012). The teacher role in student performance remains substantiated and proven; however, the federal government has interceded with stronger emphasis placed upon the performance of students instead of the abilities of teachers in America’s classrooms (Rhor, 2013). As recently as the 2015 budget request by the Obama administration, increased importance has been placed upon equal access to the best teachers for all students, which further demonstrates policymakers will continue to address accountability measures in the public school system in the immediate future (DeMonte & Hanna, 2014). In order to achieve academic goals, administrators must address barriers limiting the ability to recruit and retain effective teachers in all content areas (Berry & Hess, 2013).

Although the history of the teaching profession reaches back to the 1630s when the ability to read and write was the only skill set necessary, it was not until the 1840s when reform occurred and focus upon teacher quality became essential in teacher



preparation (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Béteille, 2012). The demand for teachers has changed since the post-World War II era when there was a great need for elementary school teachers (Blazer, 2012). There is now an oversupply of elementary school teachers, yet at the secondary level in inner city and rural schools, the need for specific subject-matter teachers has increased (Blazer, 2012). Those areas include special education, mathematics, science, and fine arts (Blazer, 2012).

Alternative teacher certification has been deemed necessary in meeting high-demand areas in recruiting, training, and retaining teachers (Blazer, 2012). Each state defined an alternative route through which an individual already holding a minimum of a bachelor's degree can teach without completing a college-based teacher education program (Redding & Smith, 2016). Strategies such as recruitment of nontraditional teacher candidates and alternative certification have been supported through the Title I and Title III federal programs, both of which were based on NCLB high-quality teacher mandates (Berry & Hess, 2013). According to researchers Redding and Smith (2016), nearly every state has some form of alternative route to teacher education. The involvement of alternatively certified teaching programs has become customary across the nation (Redding & Smith, 2016). Although some programs differ drastically, one in five new teachers has reached the classroom through a program other than a traditional four-year undergraduate degree (Kamenetz, 2014). The alternative certification programs are under great scrutiny regarding the quality of the teachers these programs are producing; all the while, the growth of the alternately certified teacher path is occurring at a time when the federal government is stringently imposing quality control upon teachers in the nation's schools (Kamenetz, 2014).

Researchers are now trying to determine the effectiveness of teachers entering through alternative methods (Blazer, 2012). Common attributes of effective teachers include characteristics of the teacher as an individual; classroom management strategies; and the methods with which a teacher plans, teaches, and monitors student progress and potential (Stronge, 2013). Essentially, researchers have indicated ample teachers are available, but discerning highly qualified candidates and then retaining them has proven difficult for many school districts (Berry & Hess, 2013).

In a 2013 article written for *Educational Leadership* describing how to improve schools, DuFour and Mattos stated, “Teacher quality is one of the most significant factors in student learning” (p. 34). The compelling need to establish sufficient student preparedness and achievement has increased the call to entice promising educators to rural school districts (P. E. Peterson, 2016). Therefore, to meet the ongoing challenges of required student achievement gains as mandated by NCLB, effective teachers must be incorporated into the school system (Clifton, 2013).

State education agency alternative certification programs and the general public are in agreement that when making decisions about meeting the challenges of NCLB, public confidence in schools is closely related to the effectiveness of teachers in those schools (Koehler, Feldhaus, Fernandez, & Hundley, 2013). Public educators have been placed under scrutiny due to the public perception of the need to improve schools (Clifton, 2013). In order to gauge teacher effectiveness, state departments review student test scores; as test scores fall, demands upon teachers rise, all in an effort to ultimately increase test scores (Clifton, 2013). Without highly qualified teachers, the ability to meet

the demands of NCLB and accompanying proficiency targets will be difficult (Berry & Hess, 2013).

### **Significance of the Study**

Educators in public schools have continued to face issues of student achievement as it relates to teacher effectiveness (Stronge, 2013). These same educators are motivated to improve teacher effectiveness to increase student achievement (Hudson, 2013).

Teacher shortages and a high turnover rate in the teaching profession have made it increasingly difficult to build a staff and to create a positive school culture conducive to a constructive student learning atmosphere (Hudson, 2013). The results of this study may assist educators in understanding the practices currently in use in rural public Missouri schools, as well as developing plans regarding recruitment and retention of effective teachers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Based on the theoretical framework of the constructivist theory (Bruner, 1966) and the social development Theory (Vygotsky, 1962), a foundation for a solid mentoring experience is established. Components of these cognitive learning theories relating to social interaction were selected to examine practices of recruiting and retaining effective teachers. Bruner (1966) reported educators need opportunities to experience interaction with colleagues and time to examine new information. Support from colleagues and valuable mentoring experiences must be present in order to foster effective teachers (Schein, 2010). Education, much like many other occupations, relies heavily on peer-group evaluation, which preserves and protects the culture of the occupation (Schein, 2010). A stronger emphasis placed upon social factors impacting and contributing to the

learner strongly validates the emphasis for a substantial mentoring experience to accompany the beginning stages of effective teachers (Vygotsky, 1962).

In a 1968 study funded by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Hunt (as cited in Collins, Deist, & Riethmeier, 2009) discussed the importance of providing the beginning teacher with necessary assistance:

The beginning teacher needs assistance if he is to do a good job. We have got to stop kidding ourselves, teacher training institutions, however excellent, won't and can't prepare teachers for the full and immediate responsibilities they face the day they enter the classroom in September. Some of us recognize this, but thus far our attempts to bridge the gap between the theory of the teacher training institutions and the reality of the everyday classroom situation have been almost totally ineffective. (p. 131)

Schargel (2013) urged principals to establish a mentoring network, stating, "The best principals make the best mentors" (p. 11).

The existing organizational culture is a great influence on beginning teachers (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) described an organizational culture:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal investigation that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 17)

This shared, basic cultural understanding is desirable for the group and essential for the leader (Schein, 2010).

Organizational socialization is created when new members learn to react and behave as part of the current organizational culture (Schein, 2010). A cultural routine is more likely to develop with staff longevity (Schein, 2010). This lends itself to the constructivist theory, which suggests teacher identity signifies the changing norms and standards in society and is developed by a reform of value and practice to adjust to the surrounding culture (Bruner, 1966). This was further substantiated by Schein (2010), who noted effective teachers are created through trial and error of previous staff.

### **Statement of the Problem**

School districts have continued the effort of recruiting and retaining effective educators to provide every child with an appropriate education by highly qualified teachers as mandated by NCLB (Menken, 2013). Research indicated essentially the only way to get better teachers is to hire the best or to create better teachers out of current employees (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2013). The shortages of effective teachers in both rural and urban areas, as well as in certain disciplines, make this challenge even more difficult (Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016). According to Mihaly et al. (2013), colleges and universities have continued to expend great effort to graduate a sufficient number of qualified educators to fill positions left by retiring educators. With the expansion of student achievement expectations, it is necessary to hire the most qualified staff and the highest-performing individuals for the classroom (Schargel, 2013).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into recruitment and retention practices popularized due to the need to meet mandated high-quality teacher rankings in public schools. The intention of this study was to identify teacher recruitment and

retention strategies endorsed as effective by the body of educational literature, to identify strategies administrators regard as effective for teacher recruitment and retention, and to identify recruitment and retention strategies deemed most significant to tenured teachers. Additionally, recruitment and retention strategies utilized by administrators in rural public school districts were examined.

**Research questions.** The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by public school administrators?
2. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by rural public school teachers?
3. What are the perceived reasons for teachers leaving the rural public school districts of Missouri?
4. What are the strategies of teacher retention used in rural public schools in Missouri as identified by administrators and tenured teachers?

### **Definition of Key Terms**

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

**High quality.** To be considered high quality, a teacher must obtain full state certification as a teacher or pass the state teacher licensing examination and hold a license to teach in the state (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], n.d.).

**Kurtosis.** Kurtosis is the measure of the tail behavior of a distribution (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Positive kurtosis signifies a distribution is more prone to outliers, and

negative kurtosis implies a distribution is less prone to outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013).

**Rural.** The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) (2016a) defined rural as districts serving fewer than 600 students; districts with 20% or more of the children served by the Local Education Agency (LEA) from families with incomes below the poverty line; and districts with a designated school locale code of 6, 7, or 8, which are categories designated by the National Center of Education Statistics to identify the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of each school district. For the purpose of the study, Missouri school districts meeting any of these qualifications were considered rural.

**Skewness.** Skewness is the measure of asymmetry in the distribution of a variable (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Positive skewness indicates a long right tail, while negative skewness indicates a long left tail (Westfall & Henning, 2013).

**Tenure.** The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2012) defined tenure as the act, right, manner, or term of holding something (as a landed property, a position, or an office), especially a status granted after a trial period to a teacher that gives protection from summary dismissal.

### **Limitations and Assumptions**

The following limitations were identified in this study:

**Factors beyond the scope of the study.** There was an expectation of the survey sample population to respond honestly on survey questions; however, it should be taken into consideration survey bias can occur with dishonest answers provided by survey participants. Due to the failure of some respondents to answer with candor, results may

not accurately reflect the opinions of all members of the included population. It was assumed that during this study, participant gender did not significantly affect perceptions.

**Sample size.** Only rural public schools located in Missouri were included in the study. The survey only included questions about recruitment and retention of certified staff. Approximately 250 administrators and the available tenured teacher population at each district were requested to participate in this study. Due to the small and unique sample available for this study, results may not be generalizable beyond the specific population from which the sample was drawn.

**Survey.** Those involved in the recruitment and retention of teachers were asked to respond to the administrator survey items, and the available tenured teachers from each district were asked to respond to the teacher survey items. This included staff involved in the hiring process such as directors of programs, principals, or superintendents, and tenured teachers, respectively. In each district, the superintendent was contacted prior to the release of the survey to obtain contact information for staff involved in the hiring process for the district/building included in the survey sample population and contact information of any tenured staff included in the sampling.

**Time.** This study accounts for the views of those administrators involved in the hiring process and of tenured teachers at one particular point in time. Responses of participants may have varied depending on the particular academic school year, the activities with which the individual administrator or teacher were involved, the political climate the individual was experiencing at the time of participation in the survey, or factors beyond the scope of the study.



The following assumption was accepted:

1. The responses of the participants were offered honestly and without bias.

### **Summary**

It is clear the federal government strives to make changes and to respond to the specific teacher shortage areas apparent across the nation (Berry & Hess, 2013). The need to continue efforts to positively impact student achievement is ever-present (P. E. Peterson, 2016; Rhor, 2013). This study is viewed through the constructivist and social development theories of Bruner (1966) and Vygotsky (1962). The focus on social interaction provided a basis for an essential mentoring experience to lay groundwork for effective teachers to emerge (Schargel, 2013). This was also evident in the studies of Schein (2010) in regard to school culture affecting teacher retention. Schein (2010) suggested beginning teachers adapt to the surroundings of their predecessors. The school culture as an organization creates effective teachers through the trial and error of previous staff (Schein, 2010).

In the review of literature found in Chapter Two, the most prevalent recruitment and retention strategies are discussed. The main topics include the role of leadership and mentors, school culture and climate, and the role of professional development. Salary and benefits, class size, resources, and facilities are examined. The impact of NCLB on teacher quality and the effects of alternative certification, teacher preparedness and higher education, teacher evaluation systems, and high-stakes testing are shared as well.

In Chapter Three, the methodology used to conduct the study is presented. Specifically, surveys were created to identify effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public school districts in Missouri as indicated by administrators

and tenured teachers. Presented in Chapter Four is the analysis of the data, and in Chapter Five, the findings, conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

In the review of literature, effective recruitment and retention strategies are described. Specific areas of interest regarding this topic include teacher preparation in relation to higher education programs, the mentoring process for new teachers, the value of collaborative mentoring programs in regard to retention of effective teachers, the role of leaders as support for beginning teachers as well as those with experience, the incentives teachers value when choosing a school district, and the impact of retention efforts in rural public schools. The framework for this study was viewed through the lens of the mentoring process for beginning teachers, Bruner's (1966) constructivist theory, and Vygotsky's (1962) work on social interaction.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Through the constructivist theory of Bruner (1966) and the social interaction of learners discussed in Vygotsky's (1962) work, the direct correlation of the necessity of a mentoring experience accompanying a teaching practice is evident whether prior to placement, during the transitional period of student teaching, or during the teaching practicum. This is supported through a recent review of literature on recruitment and retention practices of school districts in the United States. Mentoring, class sizes, and the level of administrative support can impact a teacher's decision to remain in a school district (Hughes, 2012).

Mentoring and induction programs, especially those with collegial support, create lower teacher turnover rates among beginning teachers (Hughes, 2012). This incorporates the work of Vygotsky (1962) on the social interaction of learners, thereby necessitating a strong mentoring experience in order to create the most effective teachers

in the nation's schools. In addition, Schein (2010) implied the culture of the organization enacts its own reform, causing the identity of the teacher to be influenced by current members of the organization.

### **Recruitment and Retention Strategies**

Historically, teacher recruitment and retention have been wrought with problems including difficulty recruiting the best candidates, limited funding to support teacher education programs, lack of coordination in colleges and universities to support teacher education programs, and limited pre-service teaching experiences for prospective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Research has confirmed inadequate teacher preparation and support, poor salaries, and poor working conditions all contribute to higher rates of teacher attrition (Hudson, 2013). In addition, in some areas, too few educators are available to meet the growing demand (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Colleges and universities are unable to fill openings created by retiring educators and ongoing teacher turnover in public school systems (Mihaly et al., 2013). Rural education specifically has policymakers concerned, as research has clearly indicated higher levels of poverty and lack of available resources further feed teacher shortages in rural areas (Gallo & Beckman, 2016). The additional barriers of inadequate facilities, increased class sizes, and lack of quality learning materials directly correlate to the quality of teachers rural school districts are able to attract (Gallo & Beckman, 2016).

Retention of effective teachers is viewed by many researchers as multi-faceted; it includes, but is not limited to, the teacher preparation process, the hiring process (familiarity with the district, staff, and environment), compensation, working conditions, and the role professional development plays in career preparation (Feiman-Nemser,

2012). Some of the nation's most skilled teachers indicate salary incentives alone will not aid in recruiting or retaining good teachers for high-needs schools (Berry & Hess, 2013). Other strategies or incentives should be considered when attracting effective teachers, such as improved working conditions, effective principals, skilled coworkers, small class sizes, high-quality professional development, and resources necessary to manage a classroom properly (Berry & Hess, 2013).

Tompkins and Beauchamp (2006) reported data on recruitment and retention and identified four major areas of initiatives for recruitment: "salary, bonuses, and other financial incentives; targeted recruiting using scholarships, alternative licensing, and increased probability options; ways to connect prospective candidates to districts; and other initiatives unique to particular states" (p. 34). Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) suggested school leaders learn characteristics, school attributes, and district traits to aid in the effectiveness of retaining existing teaching staff. Hawks (2016) proposed principals who are proactive and dedicated to professional growth and excellence for themselves, their staff, and their students retain teachers at a higher rate than their peers.

In 2013, teacher retention was presented as a challenge by Schargel, who described teachers as people with a desire to help others. Schargel (2013) stated educator acceptance of salaries based on years of experience rather than job performance or skills further substantiates desire and leads them to the profession, not high salaries or ease of work load. Researchers have indicated initiatives such as "...salary supplements, career and performance pay plans, pay for additional training, induction and mentoring programs, recognition programs, improvement to standards preparation programs, and better working conditions" may impact teacher retention efforts (Tompkins &

Beauchamp, 2006, p. 35). The same indicators are not present in discussion with the educators themselves (Tompkins & Beauchamp, 2006).

Salary as an important factor in the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators is still argued by researchers (Schargel, 2013). According to Schargel (2013), “If we want more highly qualified educators we need to pay them more. This will increase their supply” (p. 120). Teachers are more likely to remain in a school district if they feel they are a valuable and important part of student success (Darling-Hammond, 2012). The recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers is part of the process of improving teacher effectiveness, an ongoing and deliberately planned progression (Stronge, 2013).

In regard to the outlook of the life expectancy of a classroom teacher’s career, Phillips (2015) reported nearly half of the nation’s teachers leave the classroom within their first five years as educators. Many teachers are unable to reach a level of experience commensurate with success, as most leave the teaching profession before reaching the seven-year mark (Ermeling & Graff-Ermeling, 2016). This was further substantiated by both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Institute for Research (AIR), which found younger teachers are leaving the teaching profession at a rate 51% higher than are older, more experienced teachers (Behrstock-Sherratt, Bassett, Olson, & Jacques, 2014). When considering Missouri alone, nearly half of practicing teachers have 10 or fewer years of experience (MODESE, 2013).

An alarming number of teachers are leaving the profession in recent years as shown by data collected by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MODESE) regarding recruitment and retention of teachers in Missouri public

school systems (MODESE, 2013). The MODESE (2013) report presented to the Missouri General Assembly indicated between 30-40% of early educators with five or fewer years of teaching experience left the classroom. The National Center for Education Information presented a comparison study of data collected from 2005 and 2011 which indicated an increase of 8% for those who left the profession with five or fewer years of experience in the classroom; additionally, attrition of those with 25 or more years' experience dropped by 10% in the six-year gap (Feistritzer, 2011). This substantiates a need for additional attention when considering attributes that attract the best candidates and for desirable strategies for teacher retention within school districts (Feistritzer, 2011).

### **The Role of Leadership and Mentors on Retention**

Loeb et al. (2012) indicated support and influences within the school community help determine whether a teacher will remain in a school or leave, as well as whether or not teachers retain the enthusiasm to teach or become discouraged. Support from effective leaders, as well as involvement and interest in classrooms, are all important and repeated elements noted in case studies as reasons teachers remain within a particular school system (Loeb et al., 2012). DeAngelis, Wall, and Che (2013) reported beginning teacher programs impact not only job satisfaction, commitment, and retention, but also help teachers perform better at classroom management, keeping students on task, and producing student academic achievement gains.

Watson (2015) reported college prepares beginning teachers to develop curriculum and to teach within the discipline of the degree program chosen; however, college does not prepare future teachers for dealing with low morale or getting parents to partner with the school. Mentors are an integral part of the beginning teacher learning

process and should be a focus of public schools (Watson, 2015). School administrators define and influence working conditions and can change the perceptions of beginning teachers through mentorships, professional relationships, and positive influence (Pogodzinski, 2014).

Teacher leaders are becoming more prevalent as a fusion of the veteran teacher and administrative roles within districts allows teachers to influence change while remaining in the classroom (Bassett, Kajitani, & Stewart, 2014). Teacher leaders can encourage increased job satisfaction, teacher retention, and enhanced educational systems (Bassett et al., 2014). Although the teacher leader concept has long been used in many districts as part of mentoring programs, this role has now become formal and requires specific training and compensation in participating districts (Yaffe, 2014).

Chan (2014) suggested the development of an operational model for the induction of beginning teachers allows them to become well-established and empowers them, creating a sustainable career in the teaching field. A shared sense of leadership strengthens the commitment of the beginning teacher (Glennie, Mason, & Edmunds, 2016). Teachers with an assigned mentor are more likely to remain within a school district (Glennie et al., 2016). Human resources strategies, such as letting high-performing teachers know they are valued, can add two to eight years to teacher careers within a district (Herbert, 2012).

There are three main areas of difficulty for a beginning teacher when entering a new school system: adjustment to the organization and setting, classroom management, and lack of support from veteran teachers and other colleagues (Menon, 2012).

Beginning teachers indicated in Menon's (2012) study that the personality characteristics



of mentors and leaders are as important as skills and experience when providing guidance for those just entering education as a career. Menon (2012) suggested the leaders within a school district should encourage beginning teachers to take part and participate in the inner workings of the school system. Support from school leaders for the beginning teacher can strongly influence willingness to remain within a particular school district (Glennie et al., 2016).

### **The Role of School Culture and Climate on Retention**

The mismanagement of a school system is cited as the reason nearly half of departing teachers choose to leave (Wilson, 2014). Respondents to Menon's (2012) research indicated colleagues of some beginning teachers are not friendly or supportive, which is not conducive to positive collaboration among staff. Additional stress is created when newcomers face parental concerns about their abilities as teachers new to the field (Menon, 2012). School culture can directly impact the teacher's physical and mental well-being (Wilson, 2014).

A vital element in teacher retention is to create a culture of teachers who feel effective and a part of the policymaking process (Darling-Hammond, 2012). The leaders of a school system are the ultimate influence upon the level of collaboration taking place among staff (Menon, 2012). School leaders also determine the progression of the school unit through collaboration among staff members (Menon, 2012). An important consideration for teaching professionals is shared decision-making and collaboration, which can positively impact the school climate and lead to retention of teachers (Larrivee, 2012).

The ability to form good working relationships and to collaborate within a school community creates committed professionals and is a top suggestion of researchers for the recruitment and retention of quality teachers (Larrivee, 2012). The creation of an environment where teachers feel part of a group and where they are able to develop allies and form a bond of commitment allows hope for educators in the ever-changing world of education (Larrivee, 2012). The supportive relationships of staff are crucial to teachers feeling comfortable and reaching a level of job satisfaction (Wilson, 2014). These same relationships, when strained, can create mistrust and intimidation within the workplace (Wilson, 2014).

### **The Role of Professional Development on Retention**

The improvement of teachers has become a concern with teacher evaluation systems now linked to student achievement requiring rigorous professional development (Fertig & Garland, 2012). Many forms of professional development are used in school districts across America including seminars, coaching, and teacher leaders (Fertig & Garland, 2012). The funding spent on professional development across the country is extensive; however, the reliability of the trainings is questionable, as most are rated by teachers based upon whether or not they enjoyed the experience, not whether or not it impacted their ability to do a better job (Fertig & Garland, 2012).

A popular movement of collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is an effective tool, as PLCs allow for frequent meetings among colleagues to share accomplishments and difficult moments in the classroom (DeNisco, 2015b). Collaboration is a valued skill in society and is an effective learning practice for both teacher and student alike (Morel, 2014). Collaboration leads to job satisfaction and

allows teachers the opportunity to give and receive feedback leading to a common goal of improved teaching and learning (Morel, 2014).

Focusing on strengths of a school district versus deficits can shift the focus of professional development and should involve administrators and teachers in the decision-making process (DeNisco, 2015b). Acknowledgement of the one-size-fits-all approach to professional development can assist school districts in fine-tuning and researching alternate professional development opportunities through new technological advances (Greene, 2014). The need for administrative support with an importance placed upon professional development and the quality of teaching staff to stimulate change in at-risk populations of students is a primary concern in the nation (Graham, 2014).

### **The Role of Salary and Benefits on Retention**

The comparison of salaries and stability in education versus the private sector is attractive to many seeking degrees in education (Loeb et al., 2012). Teachers have sought to change the public view of the teaching field to one of professionals filling a multifaceted role that requires specialized education and skills (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). Research data indicate the field of education has reached such an expansion since World War II it is now considered one of the largest occupation opportunities in the nation (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

Aggressive hiring tactics have become commonplace in the nation's school districts (Yaffe, 2014). Recruitment efforts are often tied to salaries and benefits (Behrstock-Sherratt, Rizzolo, Laine, & Friedman, 2013). Benefits such as paid tuition and stipends for additional duties have broken through some barriers for potential teaching candidates (Loeb et al., 2012). Superintendents are using incentives such as

signing bonuses, subsidized housing, and on-site courses for additional certification (Yaffe, 2014). A performance-based retention bonus is an attractive incentive for staff to remain within the nation's more disadvantaged schools (Springer, Swain, & Rodriguez, 2015).

Teacher bonuses have been found to encourage teachers in more disadvantaged and challenging schools (Springer et al., 2015). Making teachers and administrators more aware of benefits such as signing bonuses in disadvantaged school systems could increase the teacher retention numbers in these districts (Springer et al., 2015). Although salary is often not the driving force in the teaching profession, it can be the deciding factor in choosing the district a teacher initially joins (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013). Salary is one of the most easily addressed factors in recruitment and retention efforts (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013).

### **The Role of Class Size on Retention**

The federal government has fully funded programs to reduce class sizes across the nation (Biddle & Berliner, 2014). Thousands of teachers have been hired through specified grant monies set aside by the federal government to impact class size in an effort to ultimately impact student achievement (Biddle & Berliner, 2014). The class-size reduction policy has a greater impact on lower-income and minority children (Schanzenbach, 2014).

Factors considered by teachers in determining satisfaction in the classroom include difficult classes, large classes, and limited resources (Larrivee, 2012). Increasingly, excessive class sizes will negatively impact student outcomes

(Schanzenbach, 2014). Research has supported the increased effectiveness of teachers in smaller classes; consequently, children learn more (Schanzenbach, 2014).

Within districts able to negotiate contractual agreements with prospective teachers, there are seven common components including the following: class size, additional duties, evaluations, preparation time, professional development, salary, seniority, and teaching assignments including transfer options (Warr, 2013). In Warr's (2013) study, administrators and teachers alike indicated class size is the most influential factor impacting student learning. Although class size can affect teacher retention, it is more aptly linked to salary and seniority within the district (Warr, 2013).

### **The Role of Resources and Facilities on Retention**

A lack of necessary supplies, including equipment, is problematic for beginning teachers (Menon, 2012). The reality of what is available to the classroom teacher is quite different from the student teaching experience and materials used during the teacher preparation experience at a university or college (Menon, 2012). Teachers are able to adapt to their school environments based upon the perception of working conditions including the materials and resources provided to do the job well (Pogodzinski, 2014).

School districts can contribute to the quality of instruction provided through the allocation of resources (Hill, 2015). Classroom organization and management can be positively impacted through resources as well (Hill, 2015). Classroom resources such as curriculum materials, guides, and test preparation practices are an important asset for instructional quality (Hill, 2015). The availability of these resources can directly impact teacher effectiveness and job satisfaction, which can be associated with job stress and teacher exodus (Pogodzinski, 2014).

Pogodzinski (2014) noted teachers seek working conditions that capitalize on their happiness; working conditions directly correspond to worker satisfaction and productivity. Limiting workload for new teachers is a valuable consideration as it is directly linked to teacher stress and future career decisions (Pogodzinski, 2014). The addition of administrative duties is of greater significance as it increases the measure of accountability (Pogodzinski, 2014).

### **NCLB Impact on Teacher Quality**

The trend to recruit and retain quality teachers has continued from the inception of NCLB through the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and into the current legislation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (McGuinn, 2016). Additionally, recruitment and retention of quality teachers is supported by Stronge's (2013) research, which indicated a direct correlation between the number of well-qualified, certified teachers and the state's student achievement in both math and reading on standardized tests. These added conditions point to the direct relational need for effective teachers in the classrooms of public schools; to further clarify, states should be designing curriculum and providing opportunities for instructional improvement in an effort to increase student achievement overall (P. E. Peterson, 2016).

The original NCLB Act of 2001 is summarized in the archived files of the United States Department of Education and describes then-president George W. Bush's wishes to provide an appropriate education for all children in public schools through bipartisan problem solving on accountability, choice, and flexibility in all federal education programs (Vinovskis, 2015). Specifically, the NCLB Act targeted increased accountability for states, school districts, and schools through public school choice for

parents and students, flexibility for state departments in federal funding expenditures, and emphasis placed upon reading (Vinovskis, 2015). The expectation of state and federal government is for every child to achieve at increasingly higher levels (Schargel, 2013). In order to meet this expectation, school districts must hire the most qualified, highest-performing applicants available (Schargel, 2013).

DeNisco (2014) reported the Obama administration's Race to the Top has sparked teacher evaluation system reform across the country, empowering administrators to release ineffective teachers. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future summarized its challenge to the American public to create school cultures in which students, teachers, administrators, and parents are collectively held accountable for improving student achievement (Ermeling & Graff-Ermeling, 2016). During a 2012 interview, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan expressed the level of importance in addressing the nation's educational system as a whole (Yager, 2012). Duncan's concerns focused on the prediction placing additional value on test scores and performance linked to the teacher evaluation system may eclipse student needs and ultimately punish teachers for circumstances not within their control (Yager, 2012).

Although testing remains a necessary evil, it is but one element of the equation which determines teacher effectiveness (Yager, 2012). In an article published by The Center for American Progress, DeMonte and Hanna (2014) reported efforts to get the best teachers into classrooms with students most in need of their skills, but this is not what is happening under the newest teacher evaluation system. This analysis brings to light an even more important and urgent issue of providing equal access to the nation's best teachers for poor students and students of color in order to effect change in the nation's

lowest-performing schools and populations (DeMonte & Hanna, 2014). This suggests student achievement on standardized state assessments can be predicted by the number of well-qualified, certified teachers preparing the students, as teachers are considered most influential to student achievement (Stronge, 2013). This has become President Obama's most recent target area, drawing attention specifically in his fiscal year 2015 budget request (DeMonte & Hanna, 2014).

Noted in Araya's (2015) work, the federal role in the educational system includes ensuring the effectiveness of the nation's teachers and administrators as a point of extreme importance in repairing schools. Also incorporated into the areas of importance is the improvement of student learning and achievement, which further links the value of quality teachers and strong leadership in school systems across America (Araya, 2015). As recently as January 2015, with the reauthorization of NCLB on the docket, legislators were still asserting the most important provision of the original NCLB was that schools be held accountable for the academic performance of all students (DeNisco, 2015a).

Signed into law in December 2015, the Reauthorization of the ESEA, now called the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), incorporated some changes from the previous versions of the law (Klein, 2015). The ESSA still requires testing at grades three through eight and once in high school; however, the accountability measures have changed giving states more control (Klein, 2015). One of the most significant changes from the original NCLB waivers is the lack of the federal government's role in the teacher evaluation system (Klein, 2015). There is, however, a new twist on the added indicators, which may include but are not limited to the following: student engagement, educator engagement, and post-secondary readiness (Klein, 2015). The government seems to be progressing



toward alleviating teacher evaluations through student outcomes, while still pressing forward on performance pay and other teacher-quality improvement programs (Klein, 2015).

### **Teacher Quality**

In 2008, the United States Department of Education issued new regulations regarding additional requirements for all states (P. E. Peterson, 2016). These supplementary requirements were in reference to the following categories: subgroup size, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, growth models, and higher-order thinking skills (Ingersoll et al., 2014). These added conditions pointed to the direct relational need for effective teachers in the classrooms of the public schools; to further clarify, states should be designing curriculum and providing opportunities for instructional improvement in an effort to increase student achievement overall (P. E. Peterson, 2016).

The expectation of state and federal governments is for every child to achieve at increasingly higher rates (Schargel, 2013). It is well-established teacher quality is directly related to student achievement (Feng & Sass, 2012). Stronge (2013) indicated a direct correlation between the number of well-qualified, certified teachers and the state's student achievement in both math and reading on standardized tests. In order to meet the expectation of increased student achievement, school districts must hire the most qualified, highest-performing applicants available (Schargel, 2013).

There is little evidence monetary incentives for teachers employed in advantaged school systems impact student achievement (Goldhaber, 2015). However, signing bonuses to place high-quality teachers in low-performing schools have improved teacher

retention in those school systems by 10-20% (Goldhaber, 2015). The suggestion quality teachers are willing to relocate to schools with a disadvantaged population by way of signing bonuses may positively impact the student achievement gap (Feng & Sass, 2012). It is worth mentioning this strategy needs to be tied directly to teacher quality for the desired outcome (Feng & Sass, 2012).

### **Alternative Certification**

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future summarized its challenge to the American public to create school cultures in which students, teachers, administrators, and parents are collectively held accountable for improving student achievement (Ermeling & Graff-Ermeling, 2016). Teacher shortages in both rural and urban settings and in the disciplines of math, science, and special education have added to the challenge for public school systems to recruit and retain quality teachers (Cowan et al., 2016). The national teacher shortage forces policymakers to create and encourage alternative teacher preparation programs (Blazer, 2012).

The estimated nearly one-third of newly hired staff entering through alternative methods creates doubt in the abilities of the nation's teachers, which has led to uncertainties about teacher education programs preparing the nation's teachers (Greenberg, Walsh, & McKee, 2014). Redding and Smith (2016) found there is likely to be a higher turnover rate among alternately certified teachers versus traditionally certified. Many inner city and rural school districts are seeking applicants with alternative teacher certification to meet needs (Blazer, 2012). Realistically, the growing list of teacher shortage areas in Missouri published by the MODESE indicate teacher shortages, especially in the disciplines of special education, mathematics, science, and

fine arts, have become a challenging problem for district administrators (Greenberg et al., 2014). In addition, in some areas, too few educators are available to meet the growing need (Mihaly et al., 2013).

Colleges and universities are unable to fill openings created by retiring educators and ongoing teacher turnover in public school systems (Mihaly et al., 2013). Rural and urban public school administrators must exhibit resourcefulness and aggression in their hiring practices to find appropriately certified staff to fill classrooms (Hudson, 2013). Training requirements are critical for teacher candidates entering the field through alternative certification methods (Hung & Smith, 2012). Support systems, such as mentoring or colleagues sharing materials, can alleviate stress for the beginning teacher (Hung & Smith, 2012).

### **Teacher Preparation and Higher Education**

The significance of quality teachers is critical to the success of students (Ravitch, 2016). According to Department of Education data, more than 90% of the nation's teachers have certification in regular education (Ravitch, 2016). However, only 39% of America's teachers have degrees in an academic field; the need for well-educated teachers is as important as having well-trained teachers, according to Ravitch (2016).

Blazer (2012) estimated nearly one-third of newly hired staff enter through alternative methods. The abilities of the nation's teachers, as measured by student learning, have led to recent doubts about teacher education programs and preparation of teachers (Greenberg et al., 2014). Feiman-Nemser (2012) stated life-long teachers, as well as those who had an extended preparatory length of up to a year of student teaching experience, have a direct positive impact on student learning.

Multiple factors have been implicated in the nation's concerns about education, with teacher preparation targeted as one of the most widely recognized obstacles impacting teacher quality (Gallo & Beckman, 2016). A rigorous and focused program which includes repeated classroom experiences, differentiation in the classroom, and effective behavior management techniques produces better-prepared teachers (Lacey, 2015). The MODESE set clear standards for the student teaching experience in an effort to better prepare teachers entering the field in Missouri (Lacey, 2015). The areas considered most critical in the student teaching experience are content knowledge, differentiated instruction, using data to inform instruction, and classroom management (Lacey, 2015).

Often colleges and universities prepare new teachers in developing curriculum, teaching a particular discipline, and helping students succeed (Watson, 2015). Critical skills such as learning to work with others in both the school and community, scheduling time to get organized, or dealing with low morale among colleagues should be a focus as well (Watson, 2015). Teacher preparation is an integral part of the reform in placing quality teachers in schools (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013). Teacher preparation programs are the initial determining factor of whether or not certain types of teachers join the profession; the more selective the systems, the higher quality candidates are created (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013).

### **Teacher Evaluation System and High-Stakes Testing**

Across the country, legislators are working to tie teacher evaluations directly to student achievement (Rhor, 2013). The education reform is directly tied to the Obama administration's Race to the Top, which placed greater emphasis upon student

achievement and movement away from traditional teacher evaluation systems (Rhor, 2013). Still, the responsibility has been placed on school administrators to fill classrooms with high-quality teachers, which can only be done through a rigorous teacher evaluation system (DeNisco, 2014).

The new systems in place are moving toward a more scientific approach of incorporating data collected during teacher observations, through student performance, and through effective practices (Clifton, 2013). As indicated in research conducted regarding high-stakes testing and its effects on teacher retention efforts, one of the more prominent factors reported by teachers as problematic is the pressure of high-stakes testing (Thibodeaux, Labat, Lee, & Labat, 2015). The power to release ineffective teachers has become more prevalent in the past several years in part due to the competition in place tying federal funding to teacher evaluations and student performance (DeNisco, 2014).

A new approach to the teacher evaluation tools available to administrators is videotaping classroom instruction; this digital format of evaluating offers an alternative form of feedback and can lead to marked professional growth (Yaffe, 2014). This method offers teachers an opportunity to watch themselves in action and reflect; administrators are able to view and play back if necessary during the evaluation process (Yaffe, 2014). Preliminary evidence supports the digital approach as a convenient and reliable source of evaluating teachers (Yaffe, 2014). Administrators should rigorously evaluate teachers versus having a complacent attitude about the evaluation system; this will lead to positive school culture and allow leaders to transform and invigorate the teaching staff (Pascopella, 2013).

Teachers are becoming more skilled at helping students prepare for tests to meet the accountability measures set in place by the Obama administration (Nichols et al., 2012). The increased pressures of testing influence classroom-based teaching practices differently depending upon the curricular area (Nichols et al., 2012). Math is influenced more prevalently than any other area (Nichols et al., 2012). It is plausible teachers are becoming better instructors and students are becoming better trained at taking state assessments (Nichols et al., 2012).

Researchers from the Educational Service and several universities found student performance as a reliable source of determining teacher effectiveness (Dyril, 2013). The long-term impact of high-stakes testing is unknown; however, undesirable effects of student perceptions toward studying and learning are suggested (Nichols et al., 2012). The continued use of an accountability system based upon student test scores calls for continued research to determine the impact of pressures upon student motivation, development, and achievement (Nichols et al., 2012).

### **Summary**

Throughout the literature, repeated problems of recruitment and retention practices imply little progress has been made to remediate the difficulties (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Teacher shortages have had a negative impact upon teacher effectiveness in public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Steps should be taken to ensure public schools implement strategies to address teacher recruitment and retention problems (Berry & Hess, 2013).

This study was designed with a quantitative approach to collect and analyze data concerning recruitment and retention strategies in the rural public school districts of

Missouri. Data included the current recruitment and retention strategies in place in rural Missouri public schools, as well as those strategies impacting tenured teachers and their reasons for remaining in the teaching profession in rural public schools of Missouri.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

A quantitative method of research involving a descriptive approach to analyze and describe findings was used in this study. The research was focused on questions derived from educational theory and practical literature review. A field-tested survey was completed, collected, and analyzed to identify teacher recruitment and retention strategies currently in use in rural public school districts in Missouri.

The administrator survey (see Appendix A) and tenured teacher survey (see Appendix B) consisted of questions surrounding the recruitment and retention strategies discussed in the literature review. Survey responses were collected and analyzed for the most successful recruitment and retention strategies leading to retention of effective teachers in rural public Missouri school districts. Additionally, the findings from the study were reviewed, and literature from Chapter Two was presented to support or refute those findings.

#### **Problem and Purpose Overview**

The continued effort of school districts to recruit and retain effective teachers as mandated by legislation has led to a more in-depth realization of the teacher shortage in the nation (Menken, 2013). School districts are focusing more energy upon leadership, mentoring, and resources to entice quality teachers to remain in America's classrooms (DeAngelis et al., 2013). Teacher leaders have transitioned to a formal role in many districts with specific training to mentor new teachers to assist in adjusting to the organization (Menon, 2012; Yaffe, 2014).



**Research questions.** The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by public school administrators?
2. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by rural public school teachers?
3. What are the perceived reasons for teachers leaving the rural public school districts of Missouri?
4. What are the strategies of teacher retention used in rural public schools in Missouri as identified by administrators and tenured teachers?

### **Research Design**

This quantitative study involved a descriptive approach to analyze and describe findings. The strategies applied to this study included a survey created to elicit responses related to recruitment and retention strategies at work in Missouri rural public schools. A researcher-made survey was designed in a checklist format for both the administrators and teachers included in the sample group regarding the most effective strategies for teacher recruitment and retention. Each teacher was also provided with an open-ended prompt to elicit the reasons he or she remained in the school district. An appropriate analysis of the most popular recruitment and retention practices used in rural public school districts was completed.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The participants of this study were provided an Informed Consent form (see Appendices D & E) which acknowledged participants' rights would be protected. This form guaranteed participant identity would be kept confidential and allowed participants

to withdraw from the research project at any time. All data collected were kept secure and will be destroyed three years after completion of the project.

### **Population and Sample**

Upon IRB disposition approval, invitations to participate in the study were sent to designated human resources or building-level administrators as represented in the current Missouri School Directory whose districts fit the criteria as rural for the purposes of this study. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016a) defined rural as districts serving fewer than 600 students; districts with 20% or more of the children served by the Local Education Agency (LEA) from families with incomes below the poverty line; and districts having a designated school code of 6, 7, or 8. The locale codes are categorized and designated by the National Center of Education Statistics to identify the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of each school district (MODESE, 2016a).

For the purposes of this study, Missouri public school districts meeting any of these qualifications were considered rural. A sampling of tenured teachers currently employed in these same school districts was elicited. Of the estimated 200-250 districts identified as meeting the criteria of rural for the purpose of this study, approximately 250 participants were identified as being involved in the hiring process. An unknown number of additional participants were derived from the tenured teachers of these same rural public school districts to complete an online survey.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey was developed using recruitment and retention strategies noted repeatedly in the literature review. Strategies noted were positive indicators for higher

teacher retention rates, as well as successful recruitment strategies currently in place in rural public school districts. The survey was developed on SurveyMonkey, a web-based program utilizing a secured database that is password-encrypted and protected. This survey included a checklist of the most prominent strategies for recruitment and retention in the literature review. The survey was field-tested by five district administrators, both active and retired, for internal validity.

Teacher participants were selected to increase the probability of characteristics being equally distributed among the teacher group. Teachers were eliminated if they specified through the survey tool they were not in tenure status. If teachers were in tenure status, the survey tool allowed participants to continue answering questions. Teachers indicated the most likely and least likely practices to influence personal reasons for remaining in the profession and in their current school districts. Open-ended questions were included pertaining to the reasons teachers chose to remain in their current districts. Teachers were allowed to further explain their choices to remain in the teaching profession.

### **Data Collection**

In order to ascertain the practices of those involved in recruitment and retention of teachers employed within rural public school districts in Missouri, it was necessary to gather information through a survey instrument. For the purpose of this study, those surveyed were involved in the hiring process in districts and were familiar with the strategies used to recruit and retain effective teachers.

Invitations to participate were sent with the survey to those administrators involved in the hiring process and to tenured teachers identified by those administrators.

Survey items were designed to address the strategies deemed most effective by the educational literature review. Each survey was created in SurveyMonkey and sent with an invitation to administrators and teachers included in the sample population. Two weeks following the initial inquiry to participate, the survey was sent again to any public school administrators or teachers who had not responded, in an effort to increase the number of respondents.

Of the original 286 district-level contacts meeting criteria, 33.2% responded (95 participants), 0.3% opted out (1 participant), 8% (23 participants) of the emails did not reach the designated participants, and 60.5% (173 participants) did not respond. The reminder email was sent out to the 244 remaining participants who did not originally respond approximately two weeks after the original request. The population of participants responding to the administrator survey was considered acceptable, and data analysis ensued at the close of the survey window. Of the 95 participants included in the administrative survey, 33 teacher respondents were located and participated in the tenured teacher survey meeting criteria of rural public school districts in Missouri. All 33 respondents answered all questions of the teacher survey.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey responses. Descriptive statistics were defined by Bluman (2014) as the collection, organization, summarization, and presentation of data. Teacher and administrator survey responses were collected, analyzed, and compared to learn the most commonly used and popularly identified recruitment and retention strategies for each group.

For the purpose of this study, survey items were delivered through an online survey tool. Surveys were sent to those administrators identified in the rural public school districts as being involved in the hiring process and familiar with the districts' recruitment and retention practices, as well as to a sampling of tenured teachers fitting the description of staff in the profession for an extended period of time. The survey item results were collected through SurveyMonkey. The survey responses were stored in a secure database that is password-encrypted and protected. The data were compiled and analyzed using the Excel statistical package.

Then, invitations were sent to the sampling of tenured teachers employed within the rural elementary school districts in the 2011-2012 Missouri School Directory, as provided by the administrators included in the study. A checklist of strategies was provided and an open-ended response question was included in the online survey to offer an additional opportunity for participants to describe their personal reasons for remaining in the teaching profession.

The responses to the open-ended question on the teacher surveys were collected and analyzed. The commonly reported responses were ranked and presented to provide insight into noted recruitment and retention strategies.

### **Summary**

The intent of this study was to describe the recruitment and retention strategies considered effective by the body of literature and to analyze those in practice in the rural public school districts of Missouri. This study may provide insight for those involved in strategic planning for recruitment and retention of effective teachers through practices or policies. Surveys were created to obtain responses about teacher retention and

recruitment in rural school districts. The sample included 95 administrators and 33 tenured teachers. Descriptive statistics were applied to determine the most effective and least effective retention and recruitment strategies.

An analysis of the data is presented in Chapter Four. In Chapter Five, the findings and conclusions are discussed. Implications for practice and recommendations for future research are provided.

## **Chapter Four: Analysis of Data**

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the recruitment and retention practices endorsed as effective by the body of educational literature, to identify strategies administrators regard as effective for teacher recruitment and retention, and to identify recruitment and retention strategies deemed most significant to tenured teachers in rural public schools in Missouri. Historically, teacher recruitment and retention have been wrought with problems including difficulty recruiting the best candidates, limited funding to support teacher education programs, lack of coordination in colleges and universities to support teacher education programs, and limited pre-service teaching experiences for prospective teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Driving the need for effective recruitment and retention strategies are the increasing expectations of schools to employ high-quality teachers and growing teacher shortages impacting the available pool of effective educators (Schargel, 2013). In this study, specific research regarding the need for quality teachers, the programs used in public schools to recruit said teachers, and the mentoring programs in place to support new teachers has been reviewed and compared to the data obtained through the survey collection.

Chapter Four includes an analysis of data collected through a survey regarding administrative practices in recruitment and retention, those strategies teachers reported have impacted their willingness to remain in rural public schools, as well as data from comparative studies regarding effective recruitment and retention strategies. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and evaluate administrative and teacher responses regarding the various strategies that impact recruitment and retention (Bluman, 2014).

## Study Design

Surveys were administered to evaluate personal perceptions of administrators involved in the hiring process and of tenured teachers in rural Missouri public school districts. Each of the surveys, administrator and teacher, included the following strategies regarded by the body of educational literature as most important in the recruitment and retention of quality teachers in public schools:

- signing bonuses, relocation assistance, paid insurance benefits
- accountability, tuition reimbursement, professional development
- competitive beginning salaries, competitive salaries, administrative support
- shared plan time with teaching cohorts, small class sizes, childcare
- sick leave, personal leave, access to innovative technology
- positive/supportive school culture, adequate and functional school facilities
- skilled coworkers, quality mentoring program
- an option for individual responses not given as a choice

The administrator survey consisted of a checklist including the recruitment and retention strategies deemed most effective through educational literature review. The survey instrument invited individuals to share if each district utilized the listed strategies and whether or not these strategies were effective in recruiting and retaining quality teachers in their school districts. Administrators were also invited to share their perceptions through a checklist of why quality teachers chose to leave their districts in the past. Responses were submitted anonymously to encourage candor.

The teacher survey was designed to eliminate non-tenured teachers as participants. Only teachers in tenure status were asked to complete the entire survey



instrument indicating the number of years spent teaching in Missouri public schools, how long they had been teaching within their current school districts, and which of the recruitment and retention strategies listed from a body of educational literature review impacted their decision to stay within their districts. Tenured teachers were given the opportunity to provide answers through open-ended responses indicating three reasons why they chose to remain within their current school districts.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the recruitment and retention strategies discussed in literature and considered most relevant in America's school districts. The strategies for teacher recruitment and retention used by administrators in rural public schools in Missouri and the strategies identified by tenured teachers as those influencing their choices to remain in the districts of employment were obtained. Results were evaluated through descriptive statistics.

**Research questions.** The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by public school administrators?
2. What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by rural public school teachers?
3. What are the perceived reasons for teachers leaving the rural public school districts of Missouri?
4. What are the strategies of teacher retention used in rural public schools in Missouri as identified by administrators and tenured teachers?

## Sample

The size and scope of the study was limited by Missouri's rural public school districts. Those meeting any of the following qualifications were considered rural: districts serving fewer than 600 students; districts with 20% or more of the children served by the Local Education Agency (LEA) from families with incomes below the poverty line; and districts with a designated school locale code of 6, 7, or 8 (MODESE, 2016a). The locale codes are categories designated by the National Center of Education Statistics to identify the latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of each school district (MODESE, 2016a).

Participants were selected by sending the survey to the superintendents of the districts meeting rural qualification status (MODESE, 2016a). Tenured teachers were contacted via their superintendents forwarding the survey to high-quality tenured teachers within their districts. The survey link was included with the email request; therefore, no demographic data were available other than the assumption all participants were regarded as highly-qualified by their administrators and were given the opportunity to participate.

Initially, 286 participating school district administrators were contacted and asked to participate in the administrative survey. Of the original 286 contacts meeting criteria, 33.2% responded (95 participants), 0.3% opted out (1 participant), 8% (23 participants) of the emails did not reach the designated participant, and 60.5% (173 participants) did not respond. A reminder email was sent out to the 244 remaining participants who did not originally respond approximately two weeks after the original request.

The population of participants responding to the administrator survey was considered acceptable, and data analysis ensued at the close of the survey window. In

addition to the 95 participants included in the administrative survey, 33 teacher respondents were located and participated in the tenured teacher survey.

### **Demographics**

Regarding the inclusion of participants across Missouri, distribution of school districts across the state was achieved. Distribution was determined using the Area Supervisors of Instruction model from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016b). There were no known participants from Region A, which included Jefferson County, St. Charles, St. Louis County, and St. Louis. The remaining Regions B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I made up 97% of the districts surveyed for this study with 3% unidentified:

- Region B included Cass, Clay, Jackson, and Platte counties;
- Region C included Barry, Barton, Cedar, Christian, Dade, Dallas, Douglas, Greene, Jasper, Laclede, Lawrence, McDonald, Newton, Ozark, Polk, Stone, Taney, Vernon, Webster, and Wright counties;
- Region D included Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Camden, Cole, Cooper, Gasconade, Howard, Lincoln, Miller, Moniteau, Montgomery, Morgan, Osage, and Warren counties;
- Region E included Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Ripley, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Scott, Stoddard, and Wayne counties;
- Region F included Bates, Benton, Carroll, Henry, Hickory, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Ray, St. Clair, and Saline counties;

- Region G included Crawford, Dent, Franklin, Howell, Iron, Maries, Oregon, Phelps, Pulaski, Reynolds, Shannon, Texas, and Washington counties;
- Region H included Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess, DeKalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Livingston, Mercer, Nodaway, and Worth counties; and
- Region I included Adair, Chariton, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Linn, Macon, Marion, Monroe, Pike, Putnam, Ralls, Randolph, Schuyler, Scotland, Shelby, and Sullivan counties.

Table 1 provides a view of the distribution of school districts participating in this study across Missouri.

Table 1

*Demographics of Sample Population of Districts by Region in Missouri*

Region	Number of Districts Reporting from Region	% Population
A	0	0%
B	7	7%
C	19	20%
D	7	7%
E	10	11%
F	14	15%
G	13	14%
H	9	9%
I	13	14%
Unknown	3	3%
Total	95	100%

Regarding the tenured teacher population included in this study, 33 respondents participated meeting the criteria of five to seven years of teaching experience. An unknown number of respondents could have participated; however, the survey tool eliminated any participants indicating they had taught four years or fewer in the public school system. All other respondents were allowed to continue with the survey tool. An adequate distribution among tenured teachers was achieved for the three areas of consideration included in this study: five to seven years of teaching experience, eight to 15 years of teaching experience, and 16 to 20 years of teaching experience. Table 2 provides a view of the distribution of tenured teachers included in this study.

Table 2

*Demographics of Sample Population of Tenured Teachers by Years of Teaching*

Years Teaching	Number of Teachers	% Teacher Population
1-4	0	0%
5-7	10	30.31%
8-15	9	27.27%
16-20	14	42.42%
Total	33	100%

### **Analysis of Quantitative Data**

One purpose of this study was to identify the recruitment and retention strategies administrators of Missouri rural public schools perceive as most effective and those tenured teachers perceive as having an impact on their decisions to remain in a district. When asked to determine if the listed recruitment and retention strategies were utilized

within their school districts, administrators responded with a strong consensus the most effective recruitment and retention strategies were School Culture/Climate, Administrative Support, Small Class Sizes, and Salaries/Benefits. This coincides with the tenured teachers' responses that the recruitment and retention strategies that impacted their decisions to remain within a district were School Culture/Climate, Administrative Support, Small Class Size, and Community/Love Where They Live.

The exception was that Salaries/Benefits were less important to the tenured teachers in decision making than was choosing a community where they love to live. Three additional areas teachers considered of substantial importance in the decision-making process to remain in a school district were Coworkers, Technology, and Facilities. Each of these received the lowest response of effectiveness on the administrator survey.

Descriptive statistics are typically used to describe or summarize data as an exploratory method to examine the variables of interest (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Descriptive statistics provide summaries of data and are used to answer descriptive research questions (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Intellectus Statistics version 1.01 was used for data analysis and narrative interpretation (Statistics Solutions, 2016).

Tables were created to represent the summary statistics for both the administrative and teacher surveys. Further descriptive discussion follows with detailed figures describing the statistical summary of each recruitment and retention strategy discussed. Skewness and kurtosis were also calculated and included in Table 3 and Table 4 to provide further analysis features. When the skewness is greater than or equal to 2 or less

than or equal to -2, the variable is considered to be asymmetrical about its mean (Westfall & Henning, 2013). When the kurtosis is greater than or equal to 3, the variable's distribution is markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013).

Table 3

*Summary Statistics Table for Numeric Variables—Administrator Survey*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Signing Bonuses	1.01	0.18	95	0.00	2.00	1.71	28.46
Relocation Assistance	1.04	0.25	95	1.00	3.00	6.41	42.75
Paid Insurance Benefits	2.14	0.94	95	1.00	3.00	-0.27	-1.80
Accountability	1.59	0.78	95	1.00	3.00	0.86	-0.82
Tuition Reimbursement	1.20	0.50	95	1.00	3.00	2.47	5.23
Professional Development	1.95	0.86	95	1.00	3.00	0.10	-1.61
Competitive Beginning Salaries	1.86	0.92	95	1.00	3.00	0.27	-1.75
Competitive Salaries	1.88	0.93	95	1.00	3.00	0.23	-1.80
Administrative Support	2.22	0.96	95	1.00	3.00	-0.45	-1.75
Shared Plan Time	1.60	0.82	95	1.00	3.00	0.85	-0.96
Small Class Size	2.25	0.91	95	1.00	3.00	-0.52	-1.58
Child Care	1.07	0.30	95	1.00	3.00	4.37	20.03
Sick/Personal Leave	1.88	0.78	95	1.00	3.00	0.20	-1.33
Access to Innovative Tech	1.93	0.88	95	1.00	3.00	0.14	-1.67
Positive/Supportive School Culture	2.33	0.93	95	1.00	3.00	-0.69	-1.47
Adequate/Functional School Facilities	1.89	0.86	95	1.00	3.00	0.20	-1.59
Skilled Coworkers	1.77	0.82	95	1.00	3.00	0.45	-1.35
Quality Mentoring Program	1.83	0.82	95	1.00	3.00	0.32	-1.43

Table 4

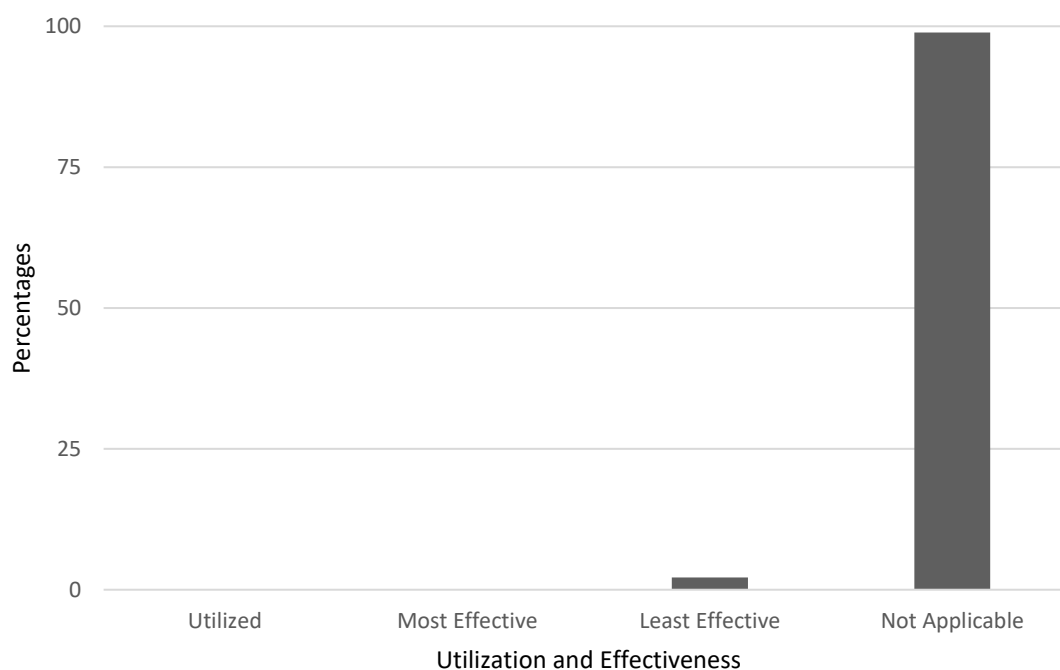
*Summary Statistics Table for Numeric Variables—Teacher Survey*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Signing Bonuses	1.42	0.56	33	1.00	3.00	0.84	-0.35
Relocation Assistance	1.30	0.53	33	0.00	2.00	0.20	-0.68
Paid Insurance Benefits	2.48	0.71	33	1.00	3.00	-1.00	-0.33
Accountability	2.15	0.76	33	1.00	3.00	-0.25	-1.16
Tuition Reimbursement	1.79	0.70	33	1.00	3.00	0.30	-0.88
Professional Development	2.15	0.62	33	1.00	3.00	-0.09	-0.42
Competitive Beginning Salaries	2.03	0.64	33	1.00	3.00	-0.02	-0.46
Competitive Salaries	2.06	0.70	33	1.00	3.00	-0.08	-0.92
Administrative Support	2.67	0.69	33	1.00	3.00	-1.76	1.46
Shared Plan Time	2.03	0.73	33	1.00	3.00	-0.04	-1.06
Small Class Size	2.61	0.70	33	1.00	3.00	-1.47	0.65
Child Care	1.61	0.66	33	1.00	3.00	0.60	-0.63
Sick/Personal Leave	2.36	0.65	33	1.00	3.00	-0.51	-0.68
Access to Innovative Tech	2.30	0.81	33	1.00	3.00	-0.60	-1.18
Positive/Supportive School Culture	2.67	0.74	33	1.00	3.00	-1.79	1.30
Adequate/Functional School Facilities	2.45	0.67	33	1.00	3.00	-0.80	-0.45
Skilled Coworkers	2.55	0.67	33	1.00	3.00	-1.14	0.09
Quality Mentoring Program	2.09	0.63	33	1.00	3.00	-0.06	-0.44

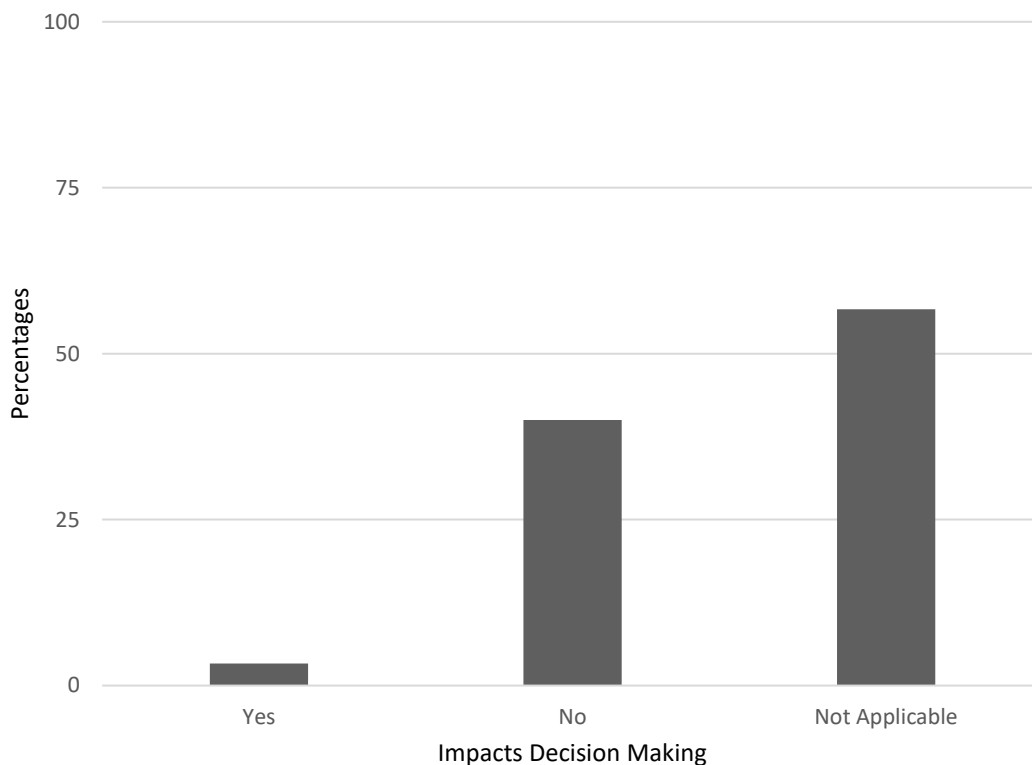


## Signing Bonuses

Although discussed in research as a valuable tool for disadvantaged and challenging schools (Springer et al., 2015), signing bonuses were found to be of little significance in this study. Of the administrators included in this study, 98.9% noted this recruitment and retention strategy as not applicable for their school districts. An additional 96.6% of the teacher population stated signing bonuses were not applicable or did not impact their decisions to remain with their current school districts. The following figures indicate this recruitment and retention strategy is largely unavailable in the rural school districts of Missouri as demonstrated by both administrator and teacher surveys.



*Figure 1.* Utilization of signing bonuses in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 91$ .

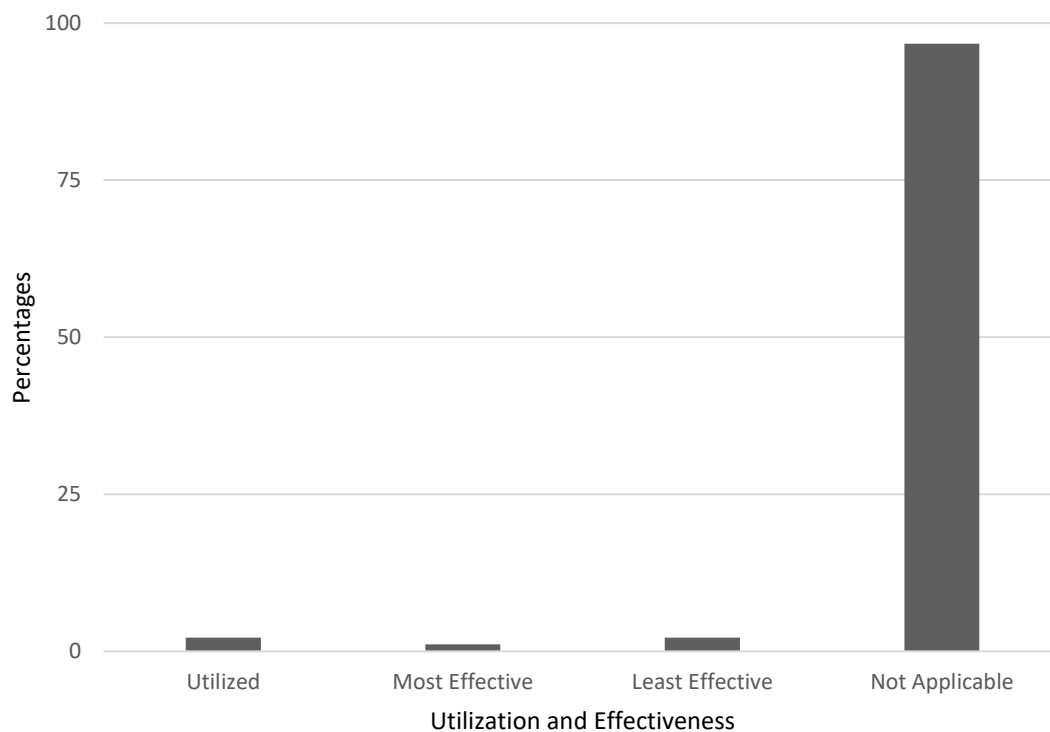


*Figure 2.* Impact of signing bonus on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

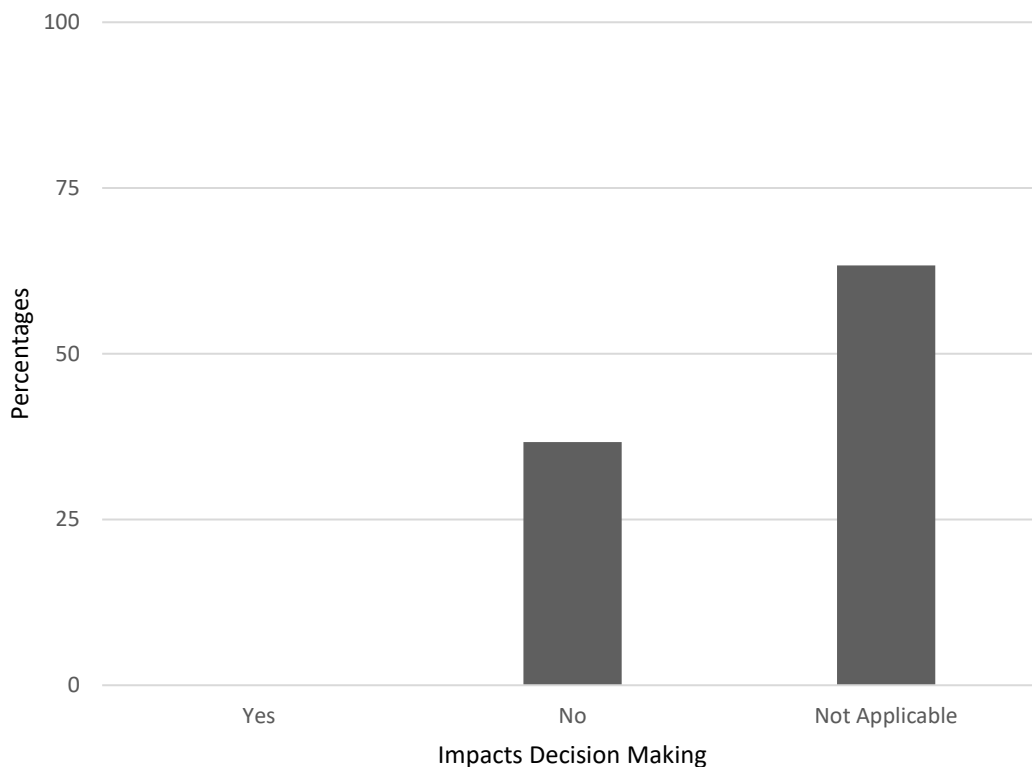
### **Relocation Assistance**

Hard-line hiring tactics such as subsidized housing or relocation assistance are being used in hard-to-staff schools across the nation (Loeb et al., 2012; Yaffe, 2014). Public schools in rural Missouri, however, do not appear to be utilizing this incentive to a significant degree with only 2.2% of administrators indicating relocation assistance was utilized and 1.1% indicating this strategy as most effective in recruiting and retaining teachers. The teacher population further substantiated this with 100% declaring relocation assistance as not applicable or not having impacted their decisions to remain in their school districts.

The following figures further show the lack of use of this recruitment and retention strategy in the rural public schools of Missouri.



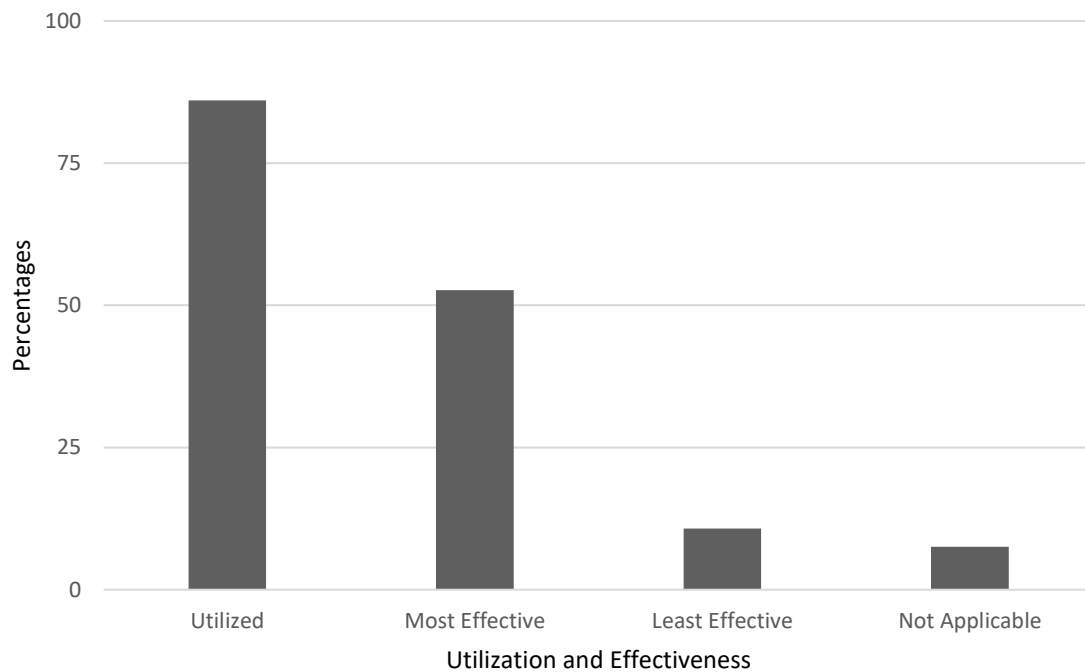
*Figure 3.* Utilization of relocation assistance in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 91$ .



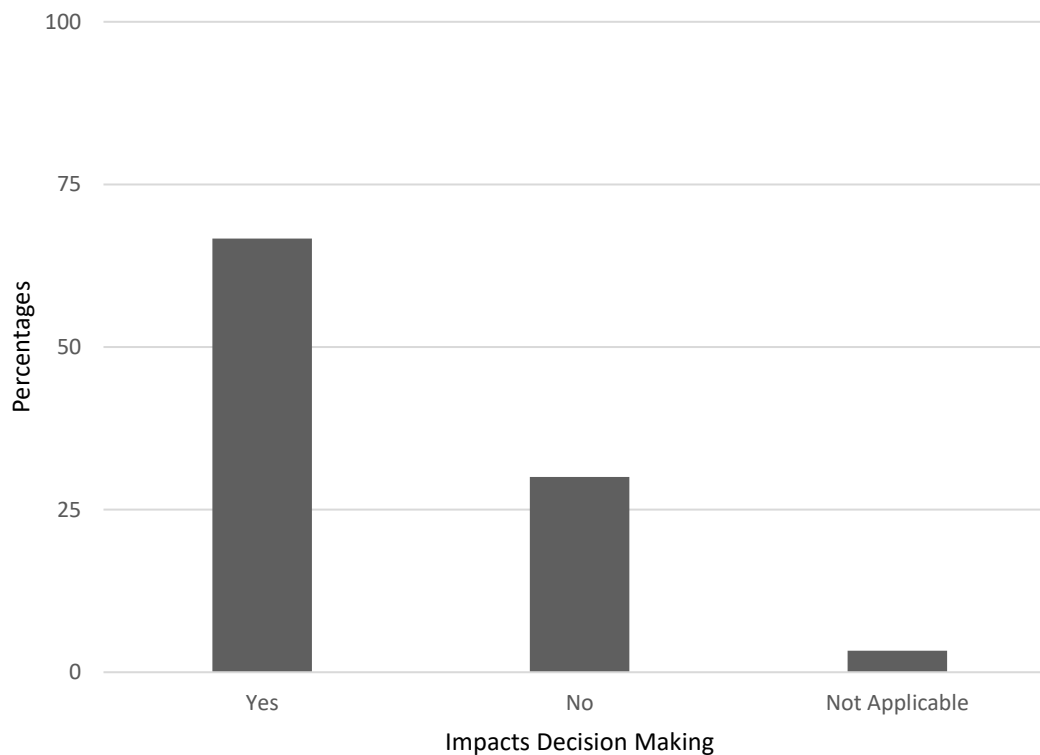
*Figure 4.* Impact of relocation assistance on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Paid Insurance Benefits**

Often incentives such as paid insurance benefits are used to attract quality teachers to the most disadvantaged school districts (Springer et al., 2015; Yaffe, 2014). Nearly 70% of the teachers surveyed for this study (66.67%) stated insurance benefits impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. While 86.02% of the administrators surveyed utilized this as a recruitment and retention strategy in their school districts, just over half (52.69%) felt it qualified as a most effective strategy. The following figures show a similar viewpoint in the effectiveness of this recruitment and retention strategy in attracting and retaining quality teachers long-term.



*Figure 5.* Utilization of paid insurance benefits in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 93$ .

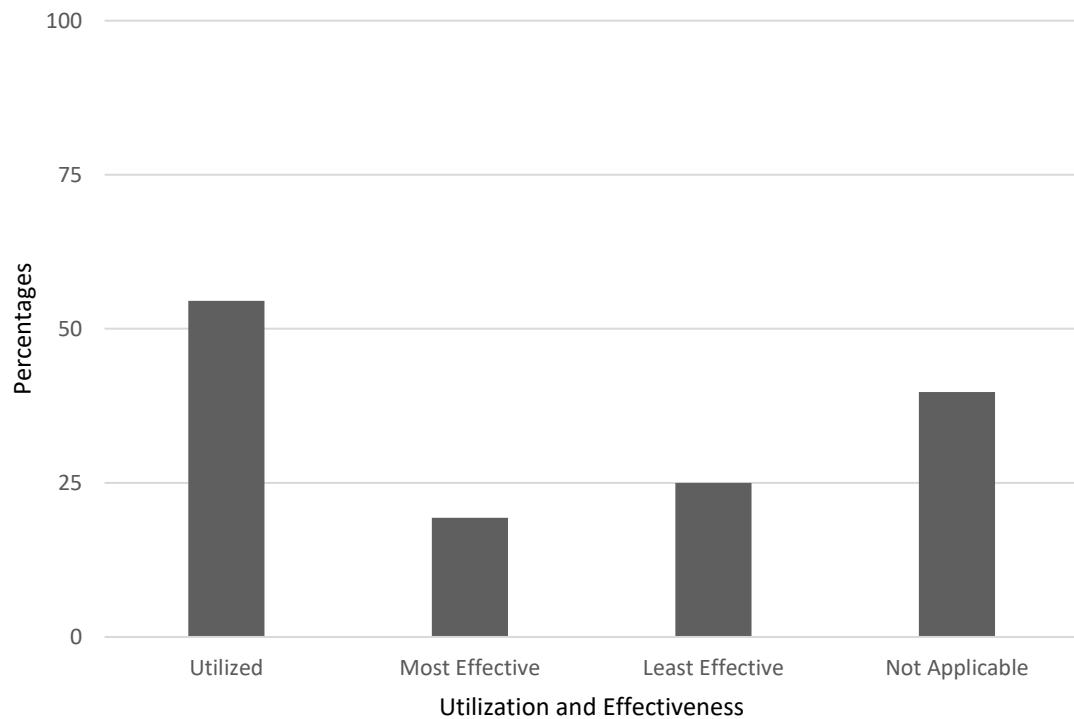


*Figure 6.* Impact of paid insurance benefits on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

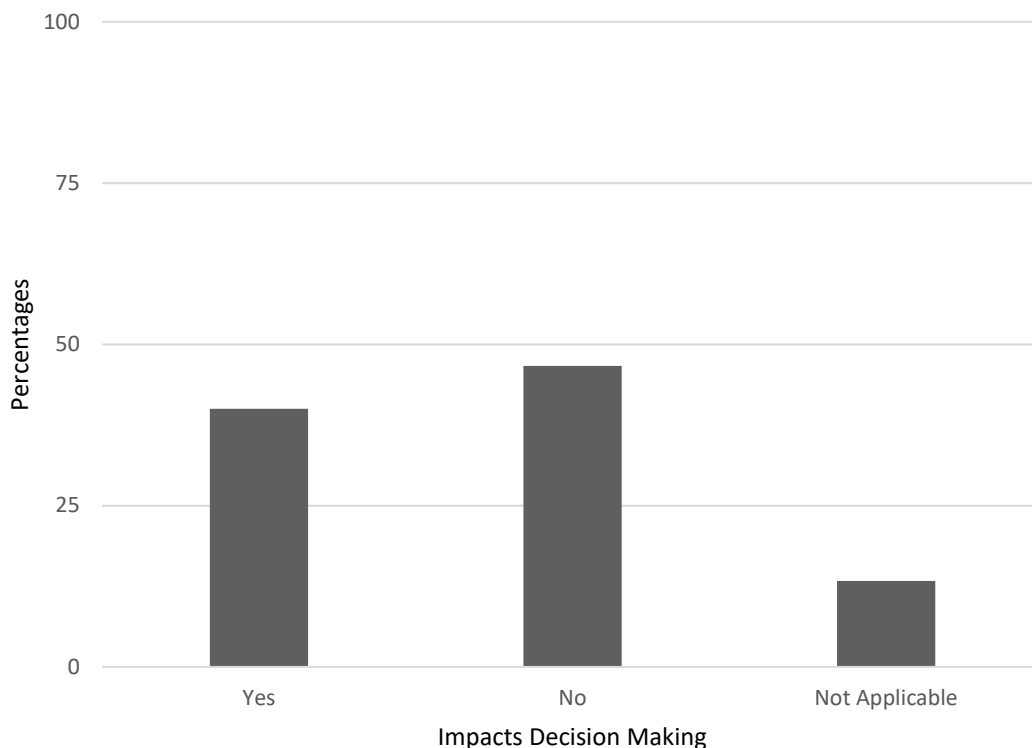
### **Accountability**

The accountability measures of the educational system have become more defined and have further impacted the role of the classroom teacher in regard to state assessments (DeNisco, 2015a). The accountability factor seems to relate to the decisions of teachers to remain in a district or not, as 40% of the teachers surveyed said accountability indeed impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. However, 46.67% indicated accountability did not impact their decisions to stay. More than half of the administrators surveyed (54.55%) utilized accountability in their districts, and 19.32% considered this recruitment and retention strategy as most effective.

The following figures show although this recruitment and retention strategy was indeed utilized, one-quarter of the administrators and nearly half of the teachers did not consider it most effective.



*Figure 7.* Utilization of accountability in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 88$ .



*Figure 8.* Impact of accountability on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Tuition Reimbursement**

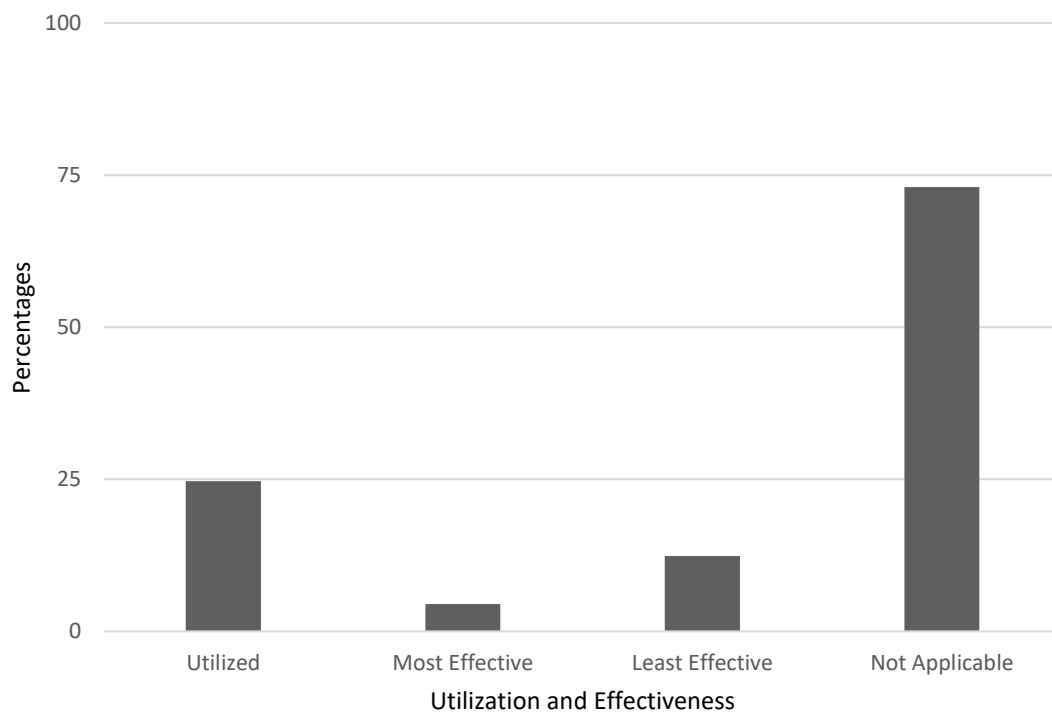
Although tuition reimbursement might be used as an incentive to recruit and retain quality educators (Loeb et al., 2012), less than one-quarter of the teachers surveyed said this strategy impacted their decisions to remain in their current districts.

Administrators followed suit; 24.72% utilized this recruitment and retention strategy, but less than 5% (4.49%) felt it was an effective measure to attract and retain quality teaching candidates.

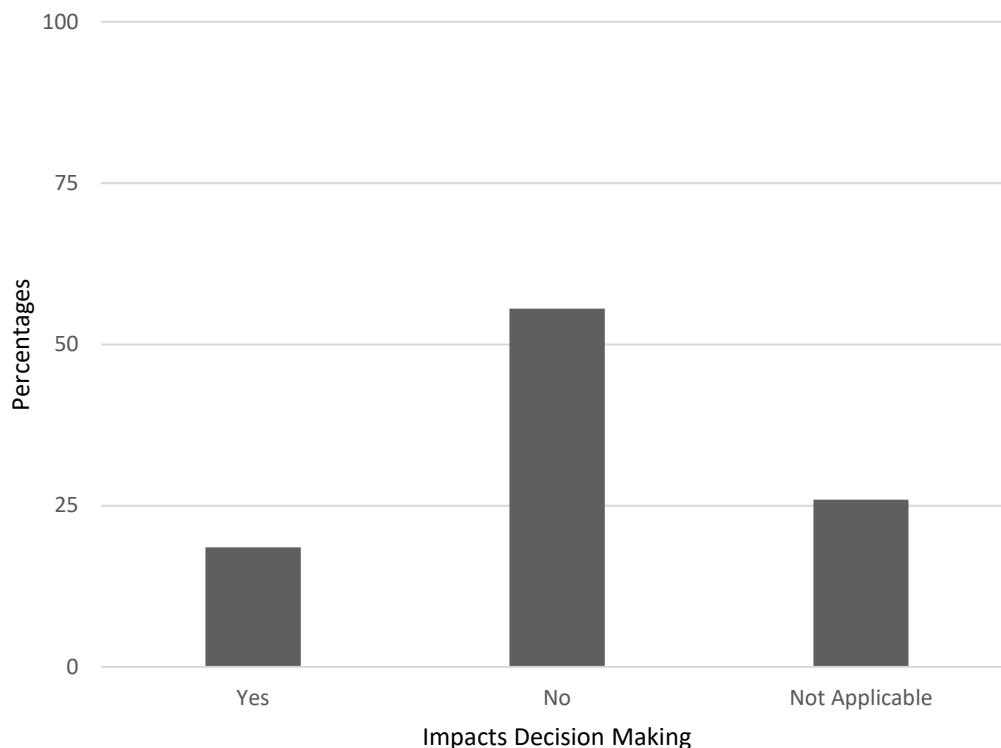
The following figures show utilization in nearly one-quarter of the districts surveyed, and only 18.52% of teachers surveyed stated tuition reimbursement impacted



their decisions to remain in their districts. Overall, it does not appear this recruitment and retention strategy is effective in rural public Missouri schools.



*Figure 9.* Utilization of tuition reimbursement in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 89$ .



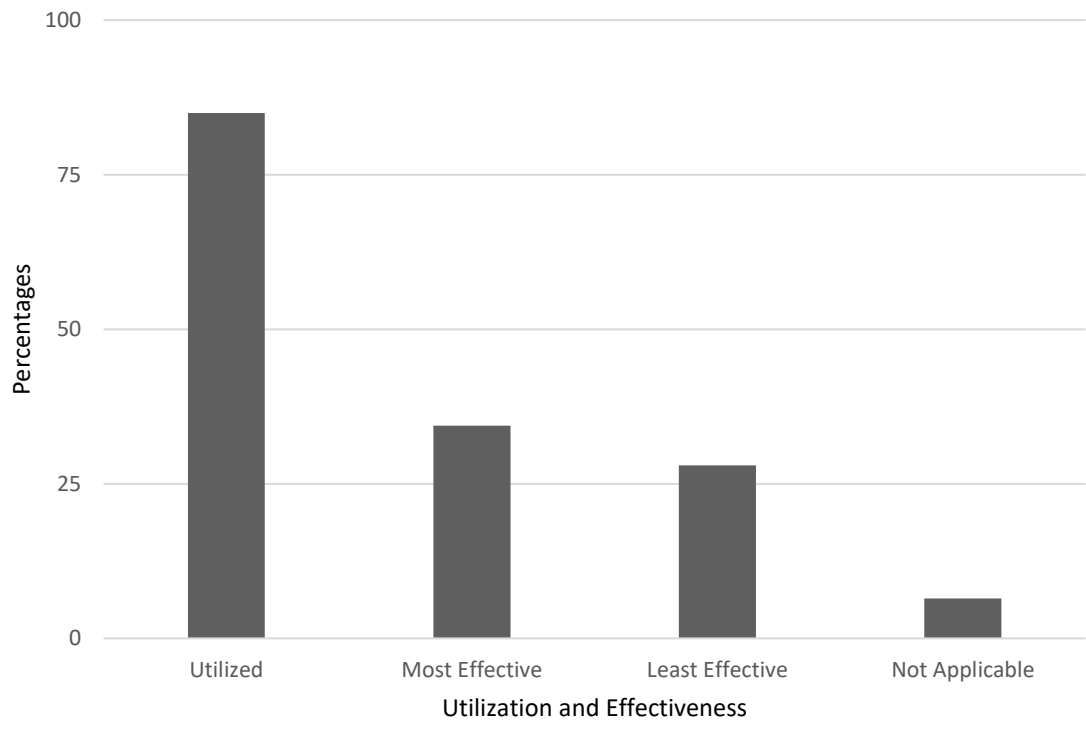
*Figure 10.* Impact of tuition reimbursement on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Professional Development**

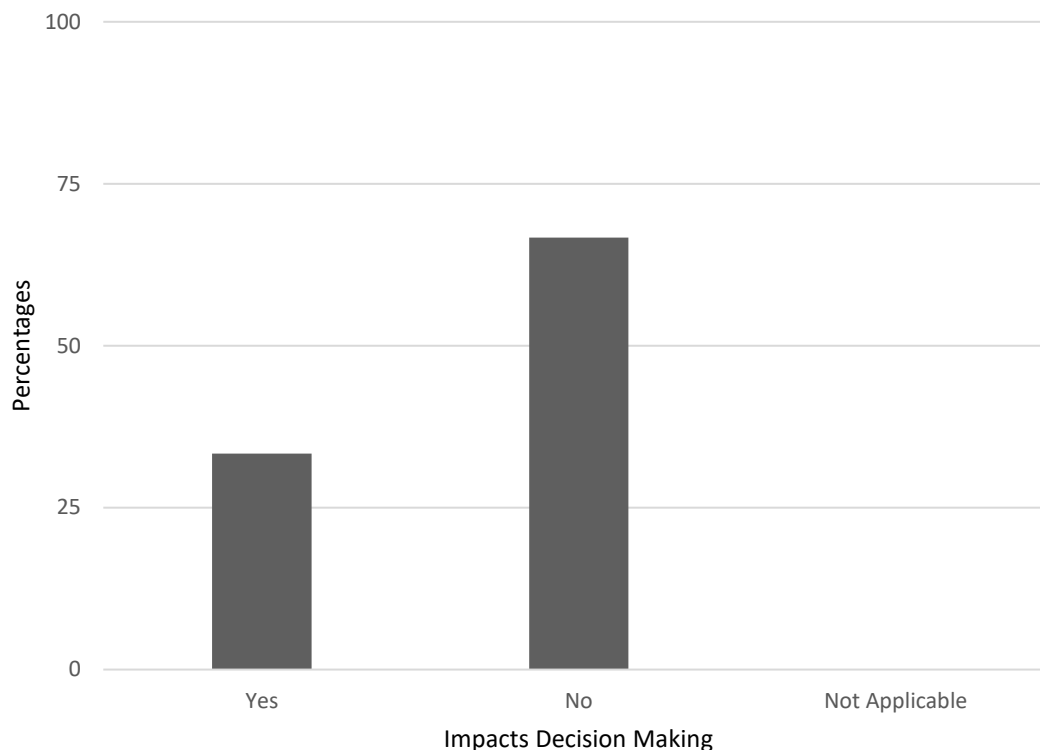
Research indicated professional development as one of the common components for teachers when considering a particular school district (Warr, 2013). Approximately one-third of the teachers surveyed (33.33%) felt professional development impacted their decisions to remain in their current districts. Similarly, 34.41% of the administrators agreed this was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.

The figures show while utilized and considered a somewhat effective recruitment and retention strategy with approximately one-third of administrators and teachers agreeing upon the effectiveness and impact of Professional Development in their

decision-making process, still two-thirds of the teachers stated this strategy did not impact their decisions to remain in a school district.



*Figure 11.* Utilization of professional development in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 93$ .



*Figure 12.* Impact of professional development on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

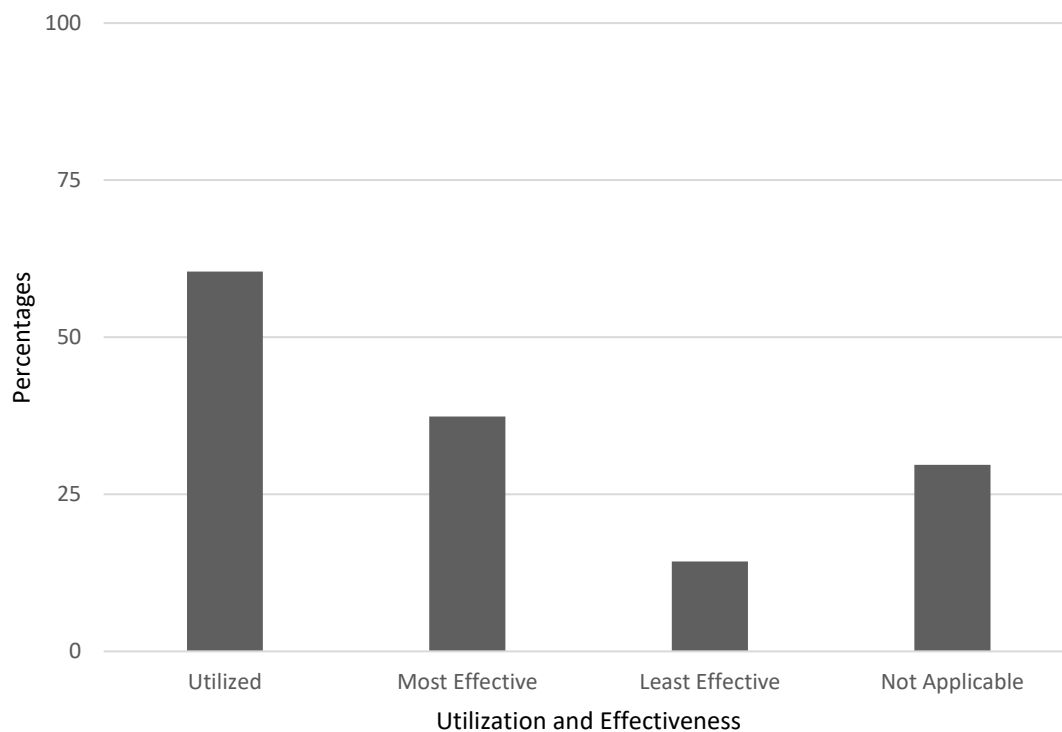
### **Competitive Beginning Salaries**

Warr (2013) indicated salary as one of the seven components from a teacher's perspective when making a decision about whether to remain with a school district.

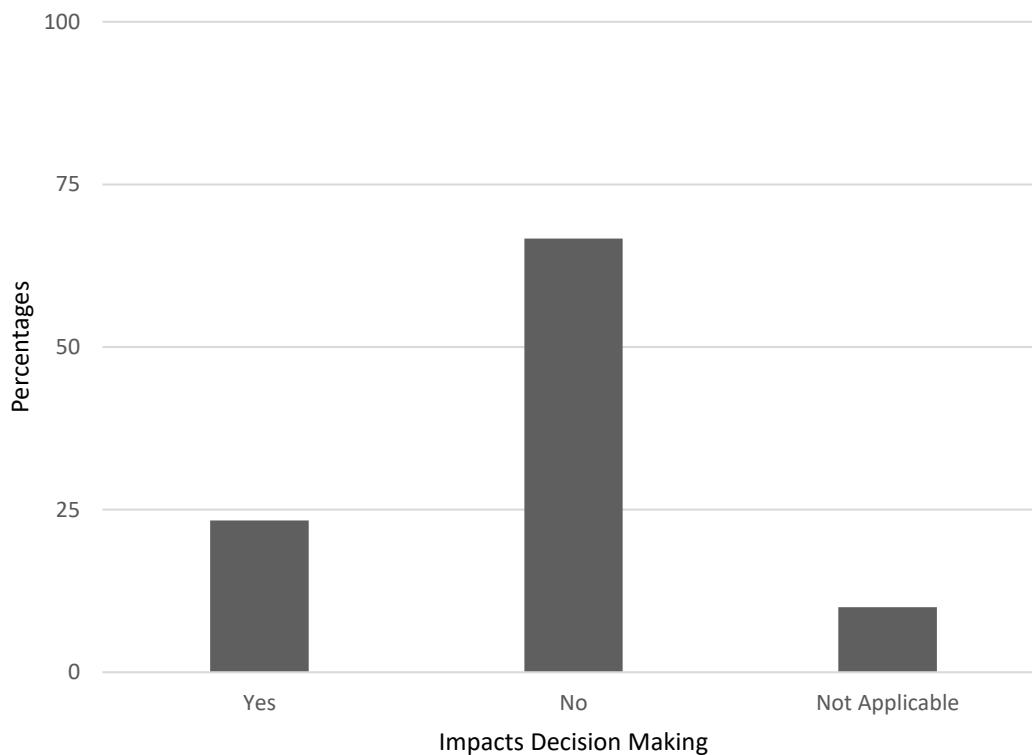
Nearly 70% of the teachers surveyed for this study indicated salary does not impact their decisions to remain in their current districts. However, nearly 40% of the administrators felt this was one of the most effective recruitment and retention strategies.

The figures show the administrator thoughts on the use of competitive beginning salaries and the feelings of teachers when considering whether or not this is a part of the

decision-making process to remain in a district. Teachers strongly indicated this was not an effective recruitment and retention strategy.



*Figure 13.* Utilization of competitive beginning salaries in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators in the hiring process.  $n = 91$ .



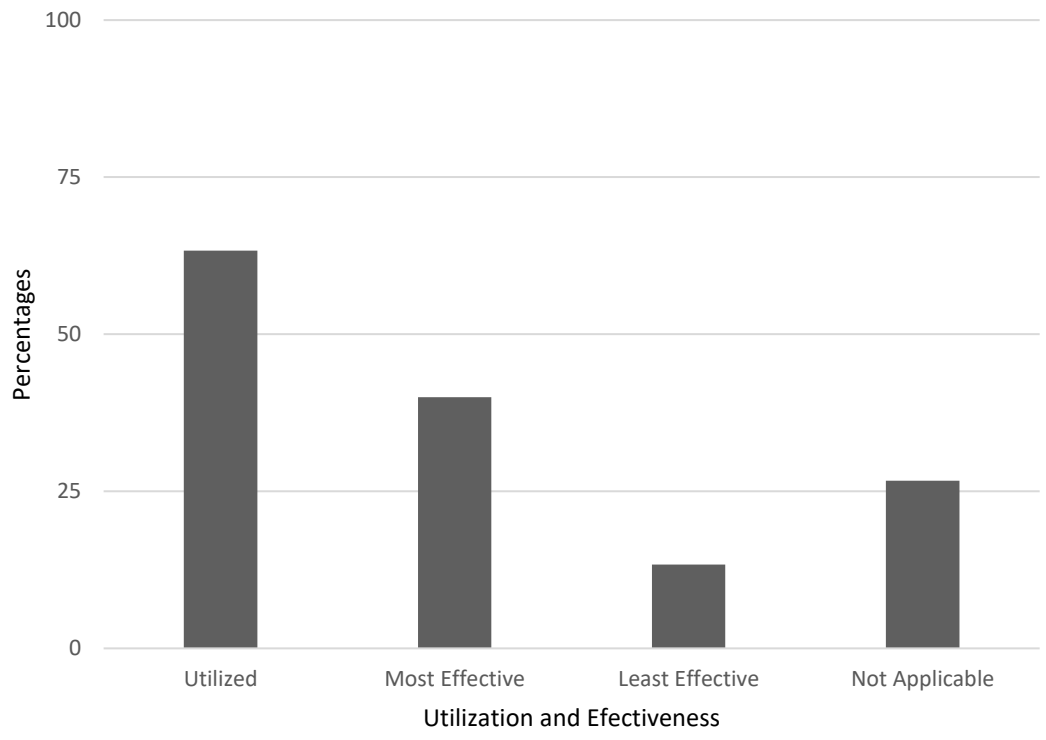
*Figure 14.* Impact of competitive beginning salaries on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Competitive Salaries**

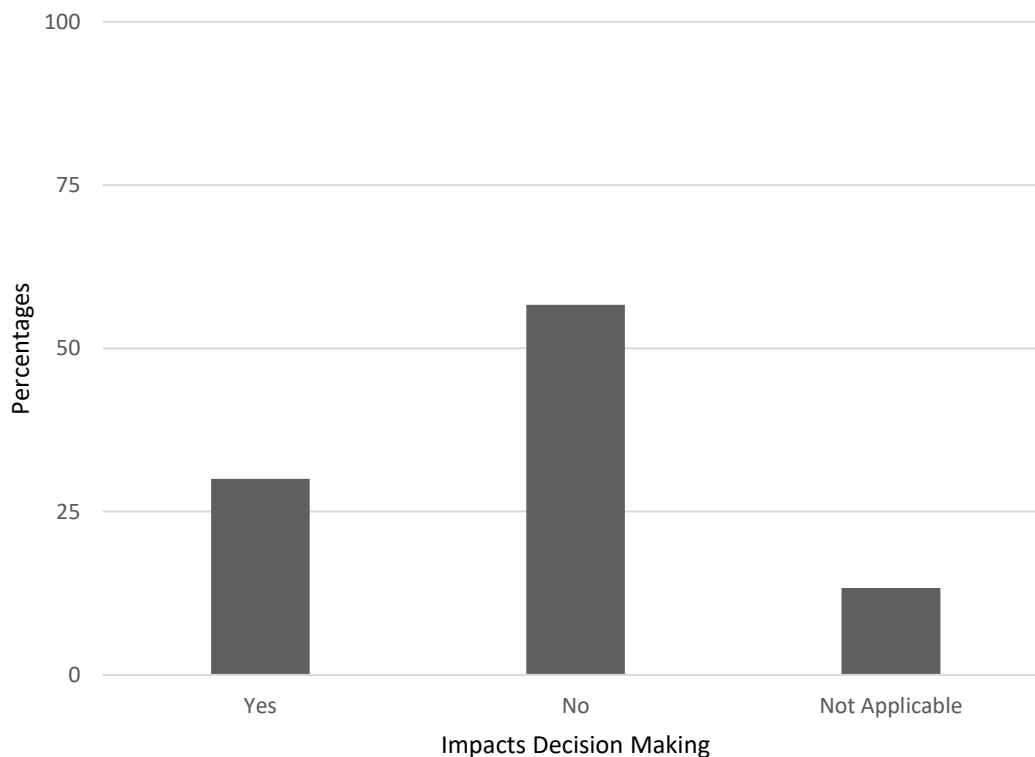
Researchers often mention salary as an important factor in decision making but not the driving force in a teacher's decision to choose or to remain in a school district (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013). Only 30% of the teachers surveyed for this study stated competitive salaries impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. The administrators surveyed indicated competitive salaries were utilized in 60.44% of the districts. Only 40% felt competitive salaries were a most effective strategy.

The figures show many rural school districts in Missouri utilized this recruitment and retention strategy to attract and retain effective teachers; however, just over half of

the teachers surveyed stated this recruitment and retention strategy did not impact their decisions to remain in a school district.



*Figure 15.* Utilization of competitive salaries in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 90$ .



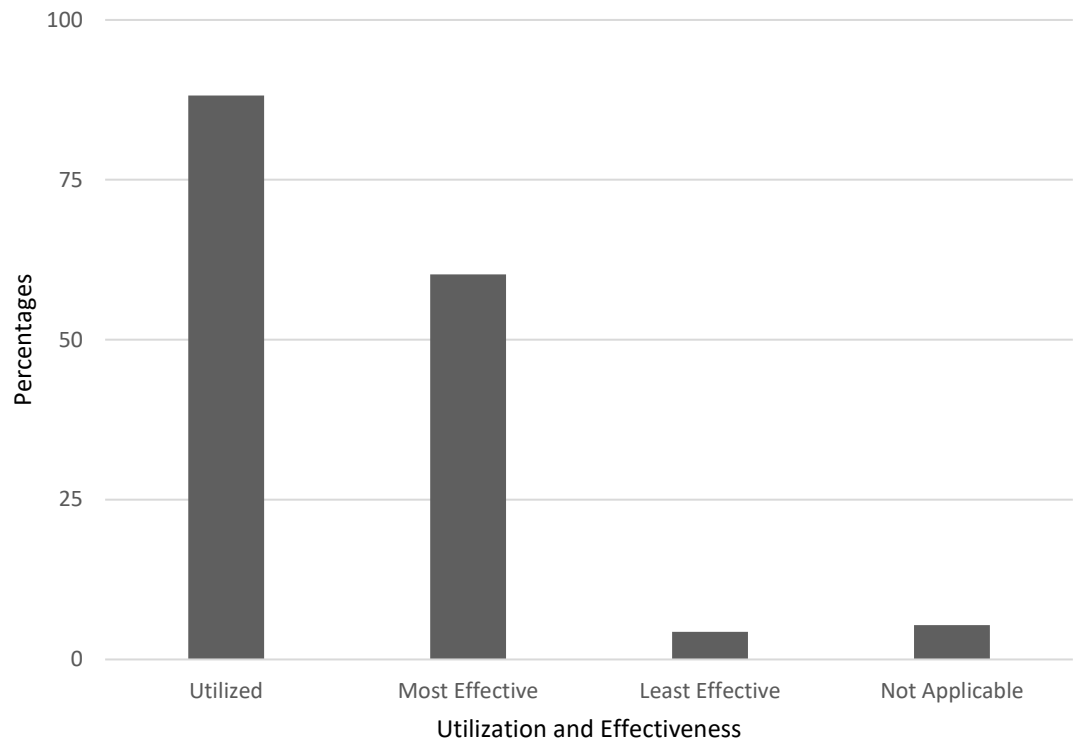
*Figure 16.* Impact of competitive salaries on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Administrative Support**

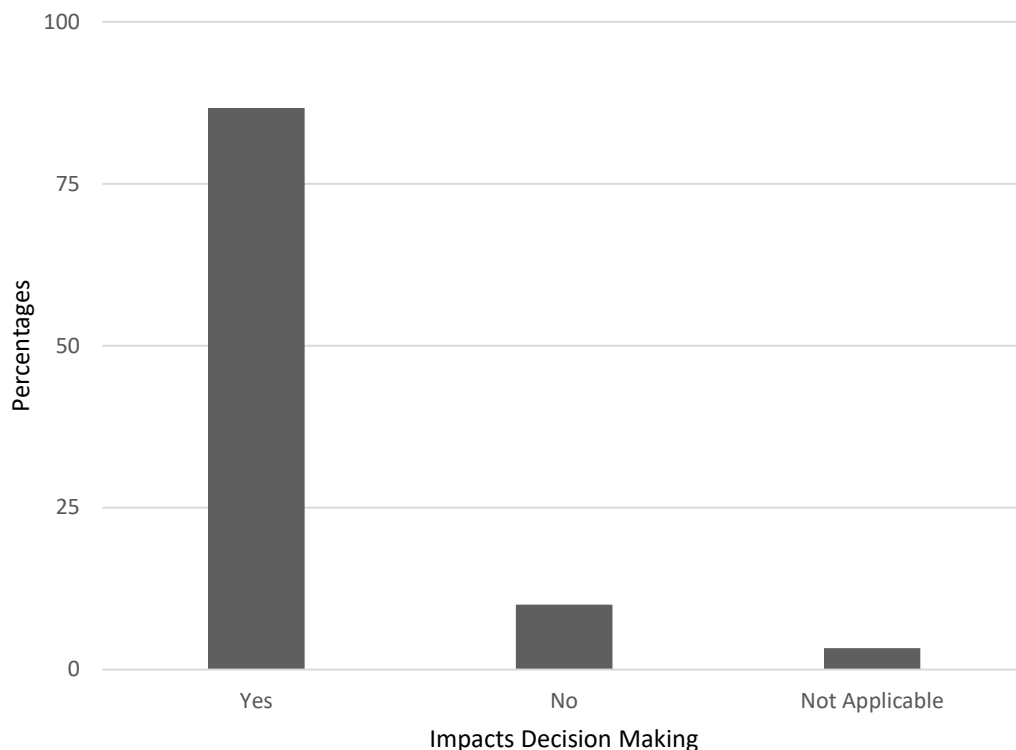
Administrative support is considered an integral part of providing worthwhile professional development and nurturing quality teaching staff in order to effect change in America's classrooms (Graham, 2014). The teachers surveyed for this study strongly concurred; 86.67% agreed administrative support impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. Marginally less, 60.22%, of the administrators surveyed felt administrative support was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy, even though 88.17% of the districts utilized this strategy of recruiting and retaining teachers.



The figures show a connection between administrators using this strategy as a recruitment and retention tool and effectiveness as a part of teachers' decision-making process when considering whether or not to remain in a school district with nearly 86.67% of teachers identifying this as an important part of their decisions to stay.



*Figure 17.* Utilization of administrative support in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 93$ .



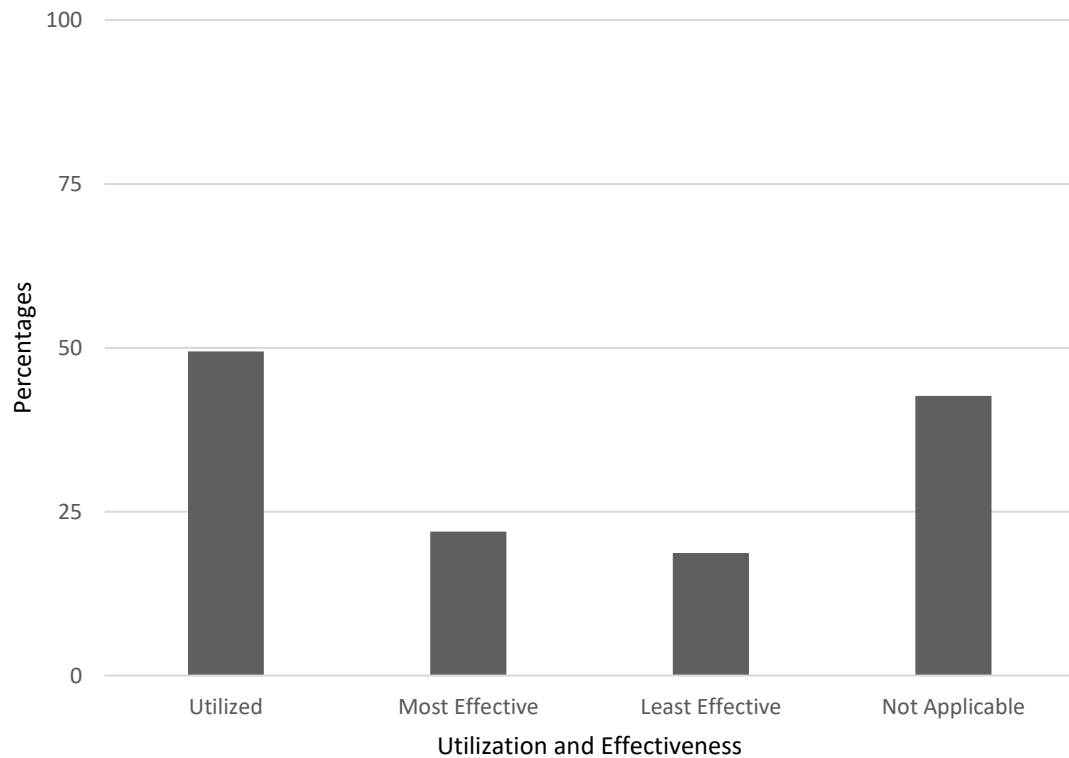
*Figure 18.* Impact of administrative support on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Shared Plan Time with Teaching Cohorts**

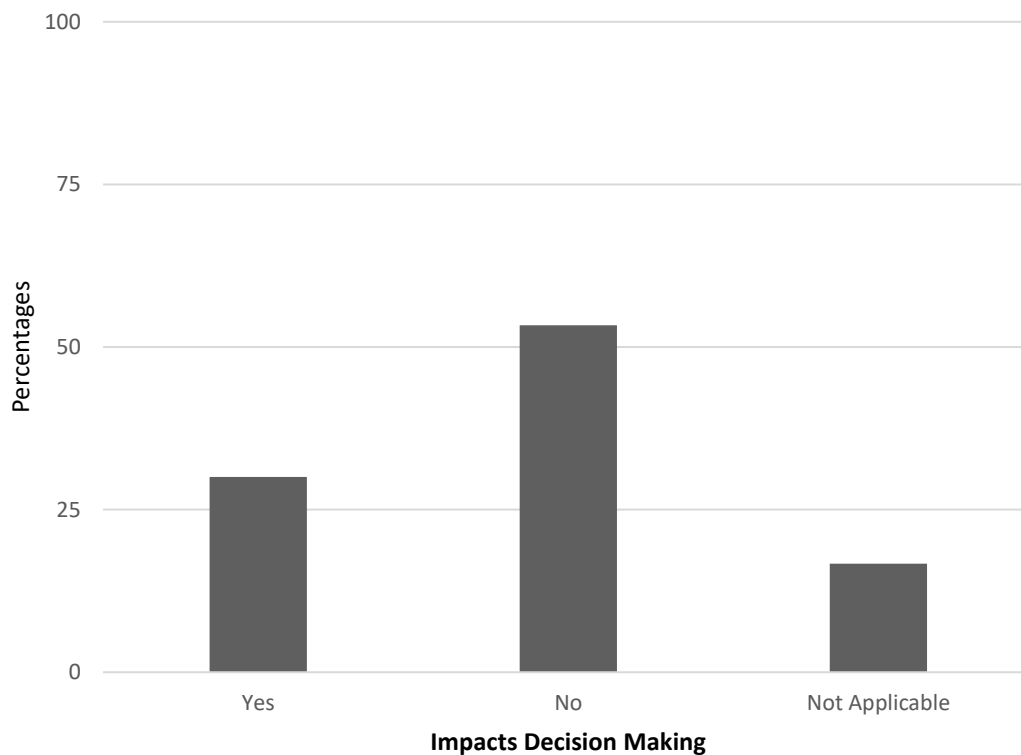
Although preparation time was mentioned by Warr (2013) as being an important component teachers consider when choosing a school district, 16.67% of the teachers surveyed stated shared plan time was not applicable in their school districts. Of the administrators surveyed, 42.86% stated shared plan time was not applicable in their districts. However, 30% of the teachers surveyed indicated shared plan time impacted their decisions to remain in their current districts.

Illustrated in the following figures, 21.98% of the administrators surveyed felt this was an effective recruitment and retention strategy, with 30% of the teachers surveyed

agreeing. However, over half (53.33%) of the teachers indicated this recruitment and retention strategy did not impact their decisions to remain in a school district.



*Figure 19.* Utilization of shared plan time with teaching cohorts in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 91$ .

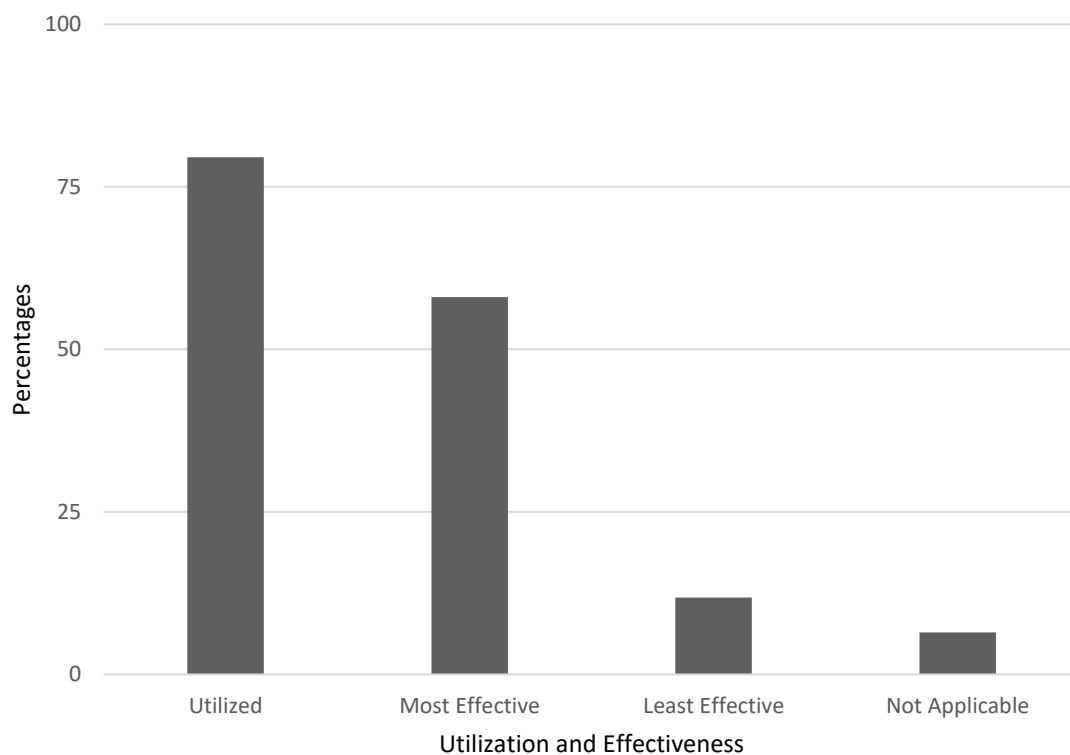


*Figure 20.* Impact of shared plan time with teaching cohorts on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

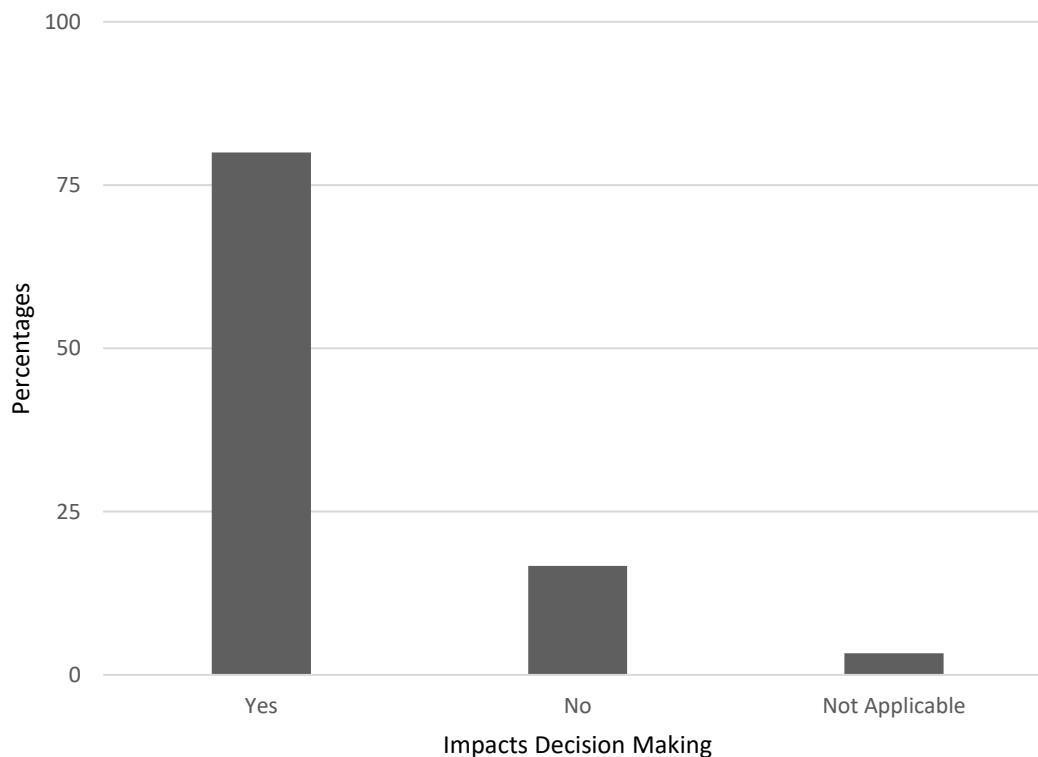
### **Small Class Size**

Berry and Hess (2013) indicated small class size as an important tool for good classroom management and something to be considered when a teacher chooses a school district. Class size has proven to be a valuable tool in increasing student achievement and has shown to have a great impact on the most disadvantaged schools (Schanzenbach, 2014). Warr (2013) noted class size as one of the components prospective teachers should consider when choosing a school district. Eighty percent of the teachers surveyed for this study indicated small class size impacted their decisions to remain in their current

school districts. Marginally fewer administrators (58.06%) felt small class size was one of the most effective recruitment and retention strategies, even though 79.57% of the districts utilized this strategy. Small class size was seen as an effective recruitment and retention strategy by administrators and teachers alike.



*Figure 21.* Utilization of small class size in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 93$ .

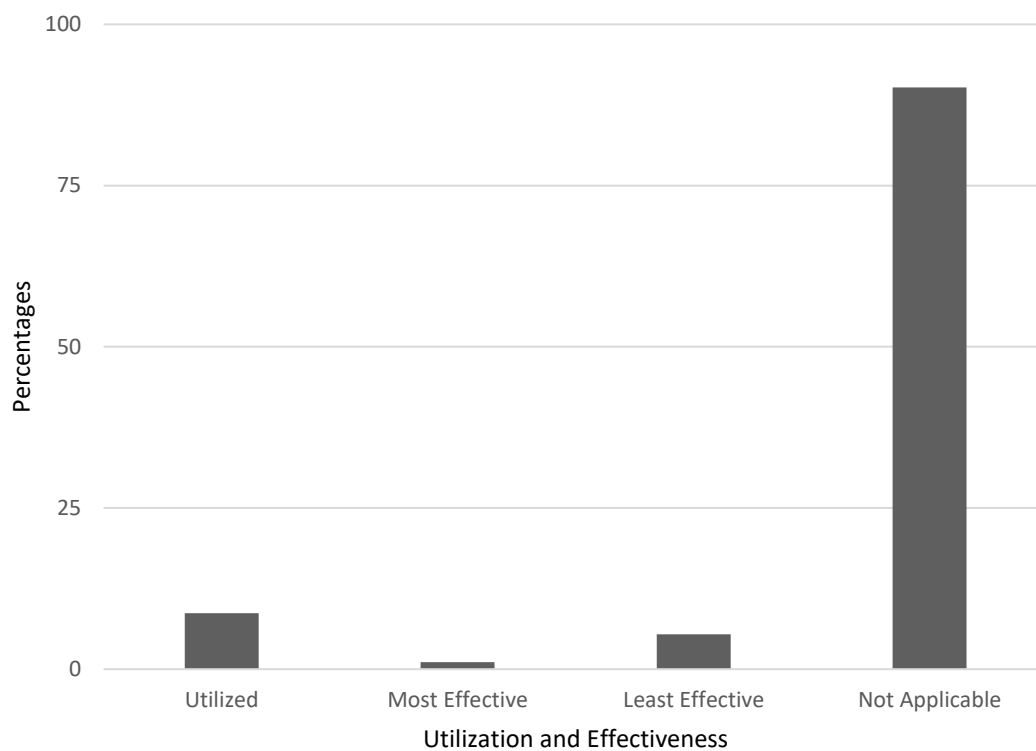


*Figure 22.* Impact of small class size on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

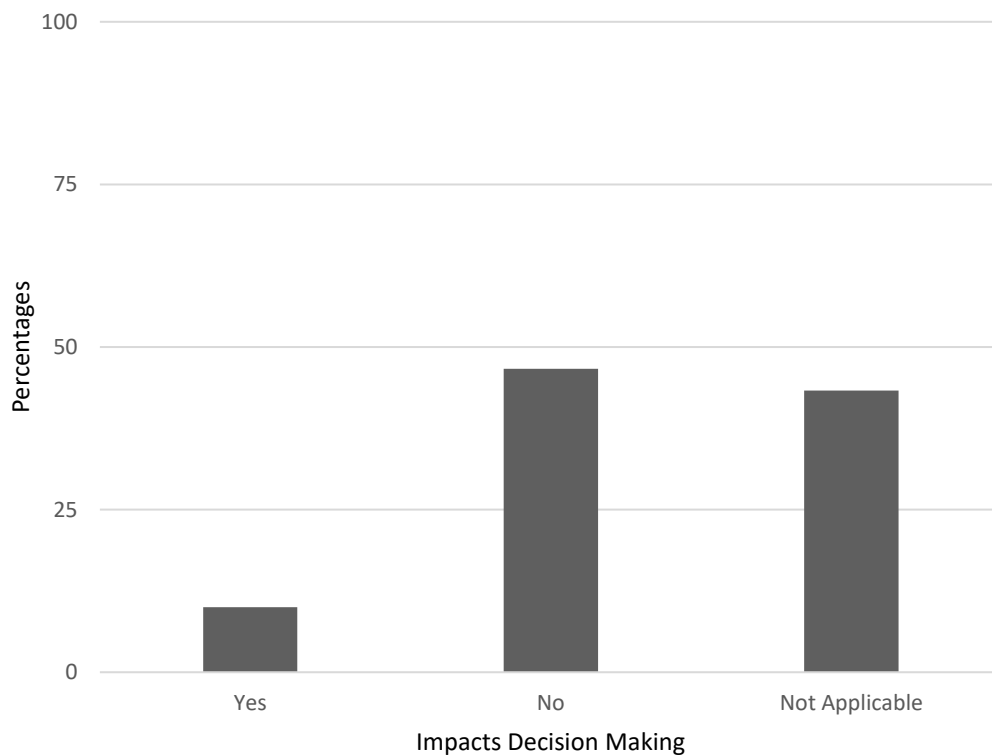
### **Childcare**

While many benefits are mentioned in research regarding recruitment and retention strategies, most commonly benefits are defined as monetary gain such as bonuses, tuition reimbursement, or stipends (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013; Yaffe, 2014). Childcare, while not found in current research as a valid recruitment and retention strategy in use in many public school systems, was considered in this study and included as an option on the survey questionnaires. A large sample of the teacher population, 43.33% of those surveyed for this study, indicated this was not applicable in their school districts, and 90.22% of the administrators indicated this as well. Only 10% of the

teachers surveyed indicated this recruitment and retention strategy impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. The lack of availability may impact the consideration of effectiveness of this strategy by teachers.



*Figure 23.* Utilization of childcare in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 92$ .



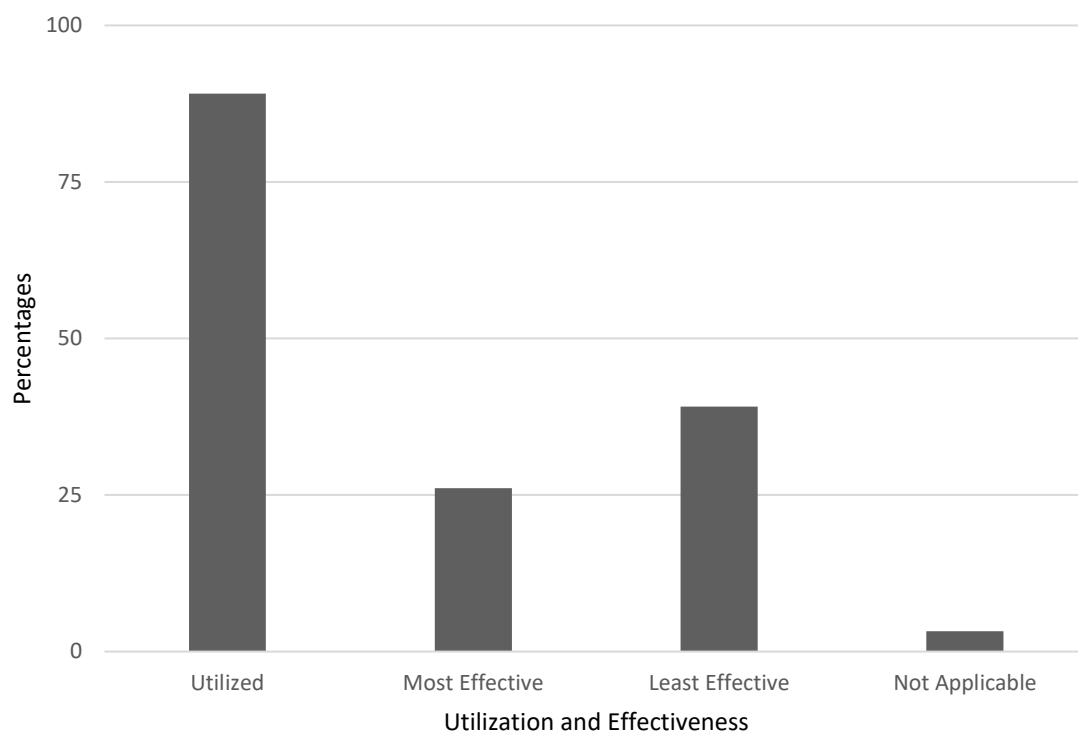
*Figure 24.* Impact of childcare on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Sick Leave/Personal Leave**

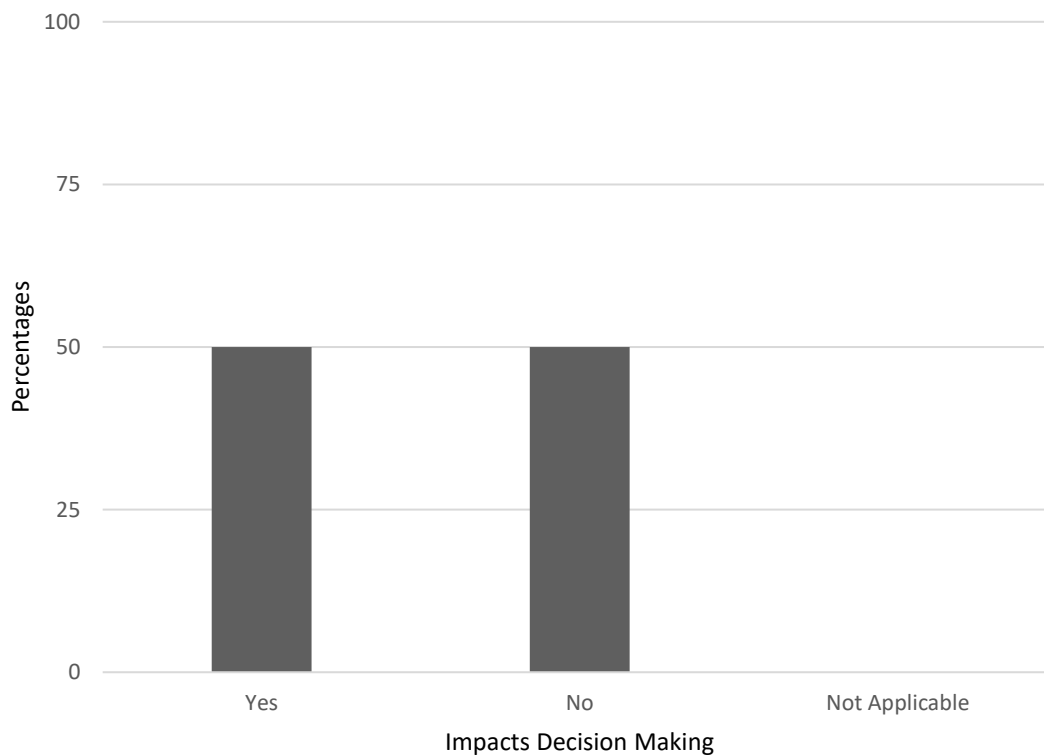
Although the perks of many packages have been touted as one of the most effective and most easily-addressed recruitment and retention strategies (Behrstock-Sherratt et al., 2013), often benefits can be the determining factor in placement of teachers in more disadvantaged school districts (Springer et al., 2015). The teachers included in this study indicated in a split response of 50% stating sick and/or personal leave directly impacted their decisions to remain in their current districts, while 50% stated it did not. The administrators heavily indicated (89.13%) this recruitment and retention strategy was utilized, but only 26.09% felt it was most effective in recruiting



and retaining effective teachers. The teacher responses, half feeling this was an important consideration while the other half feeling it did not impact their decisions at all, makes this an important factor to consider in the retention efforts of the nation's teachers.



*Figure 25.* Utilization of sick leave/personal leave in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public school as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 92$ .

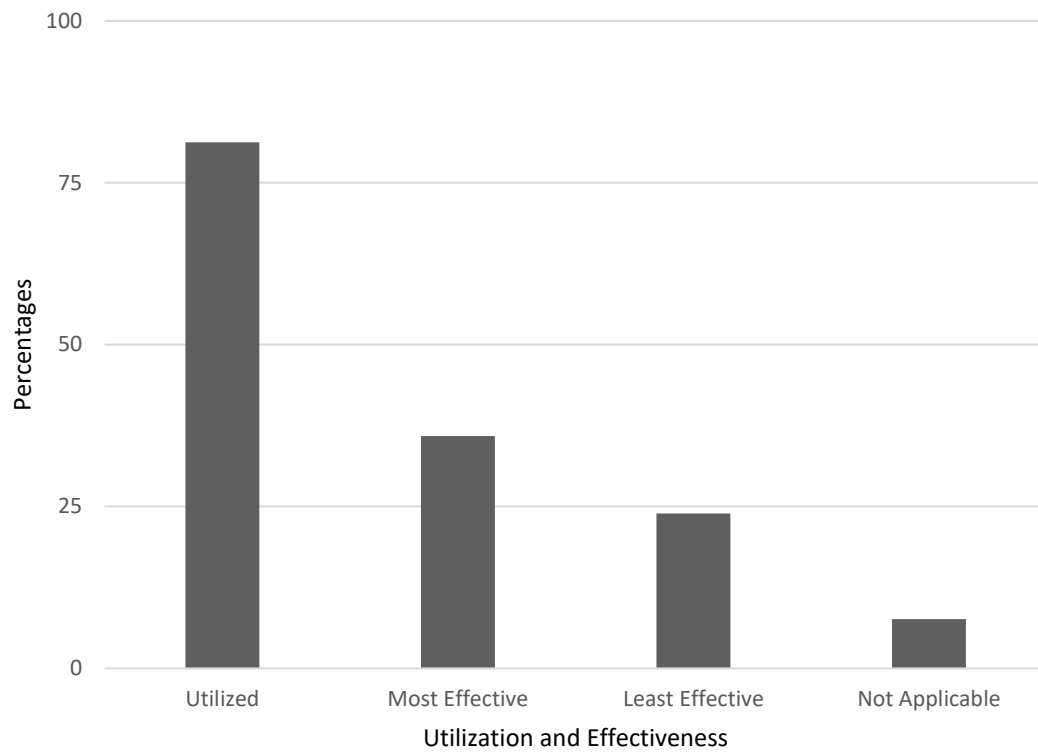


*Figure 26.* Impact of sick leave/personal leave on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

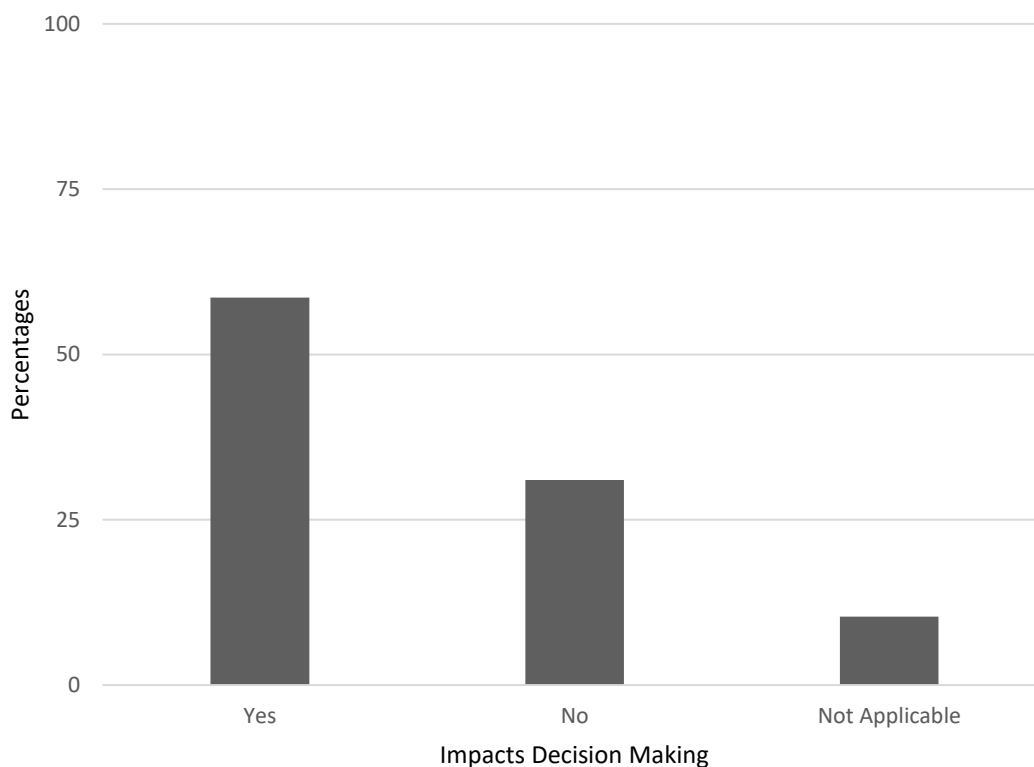
### **Access to Innovative Technology**

The lack of materials, including equipment and technology, is a problem faced by many beginning teachers (Menon, 2012). Of teachers surveyed for this study, 58.62% felt access to innovative technology impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. The administrators surveyed for this study indicated innovative technology was in use in 81.52% of the school districts; however, only 35.87% felt it was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.

As shown in the figures, teachers clearly desired access to innovative technology, and this strategy is a useful tool in the recruitment and retention process.



*Figure 27.* Utilization of access to innovative technology in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 92$ .



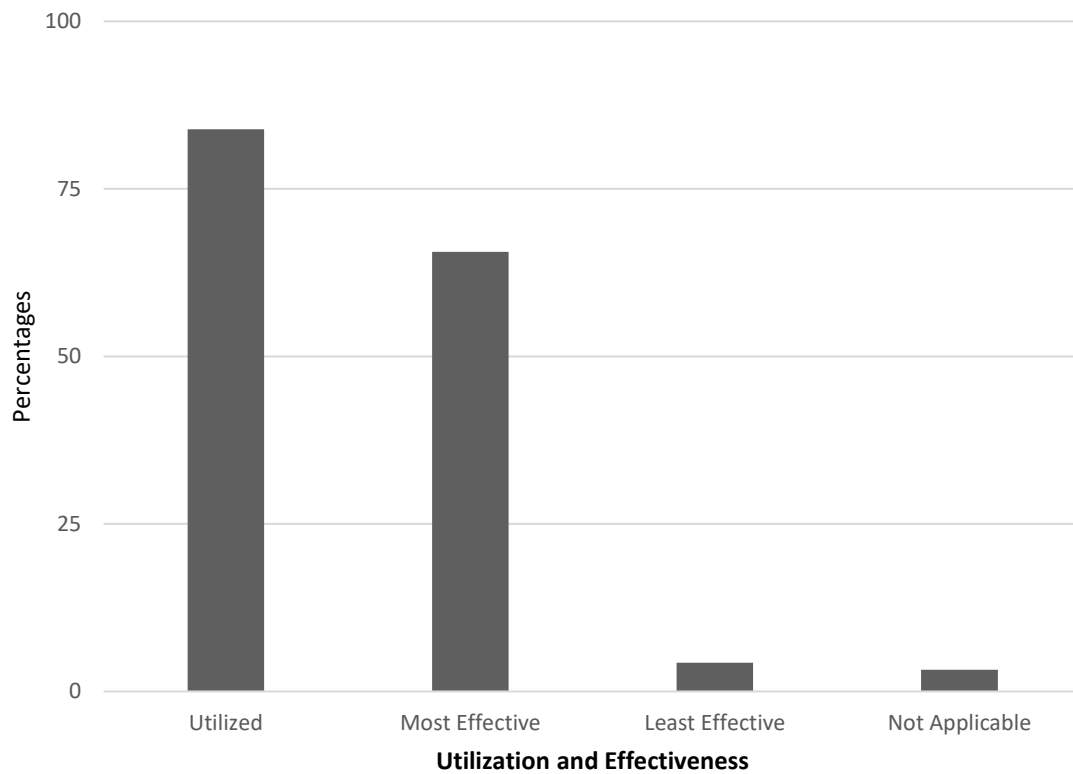
*Figure 28.* Impact of access to innovative technology on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Positive, Supportive School Culture**

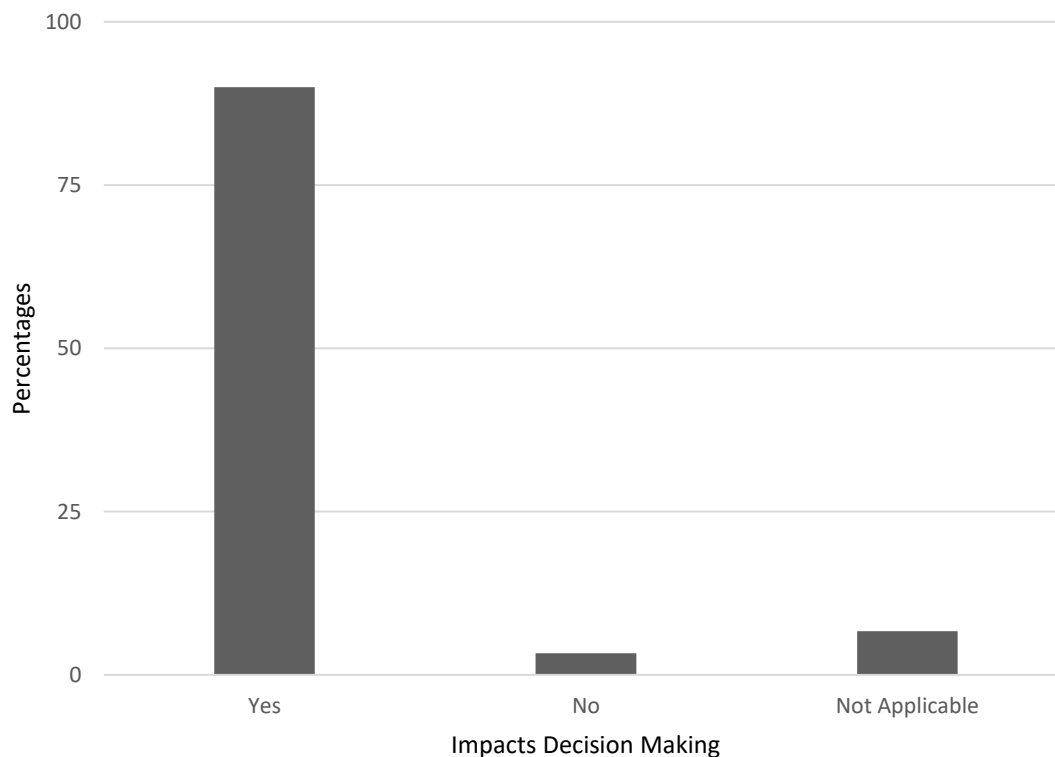
School culture is evident in Schein's (2010) research as directly affecting teacher retention. The school culture is also an attributive factor in creating effective teachers (Schein, 2010). This study substantiates this in the eyes of teachers, with 90% reporting school culture impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts.

Additionally, 65.59% of administrators surveyed for this study indicated this was one of the most effective recruitment and retention strategies.

As indicated in the figures, this recruitment and retention strategy was one of the most important tools used to attract and retain quality teachers.



*Figure 29.* Utilization of positive, supportive school culture in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 93$ .

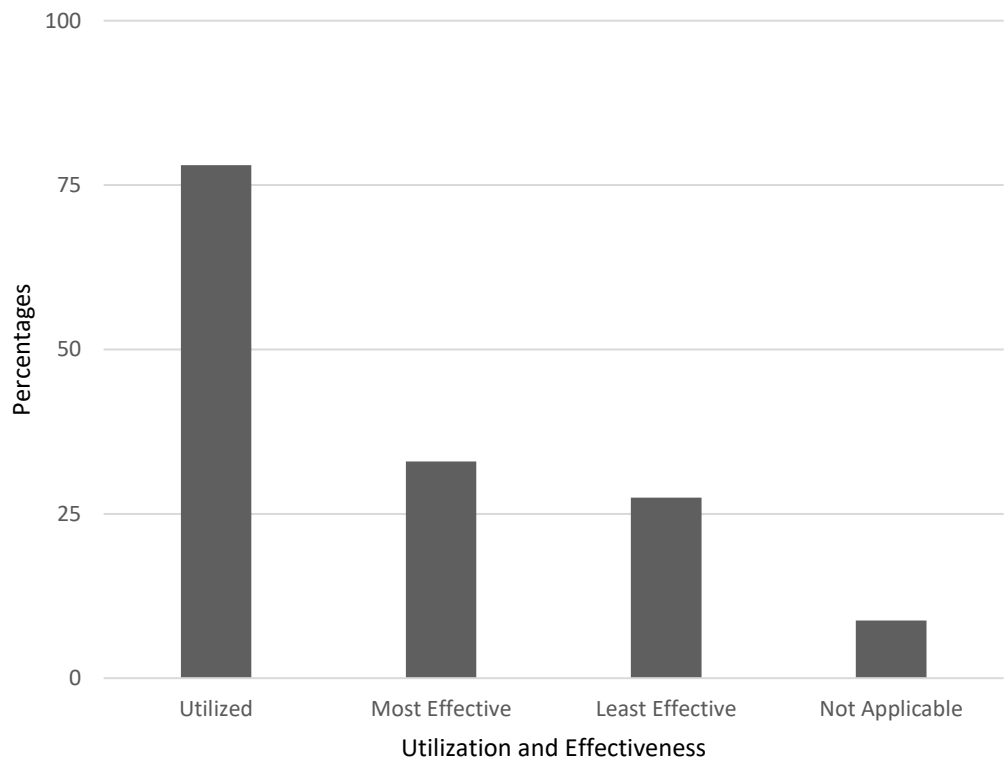


*Figure 30.* Impact of positive, supportive school culture on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

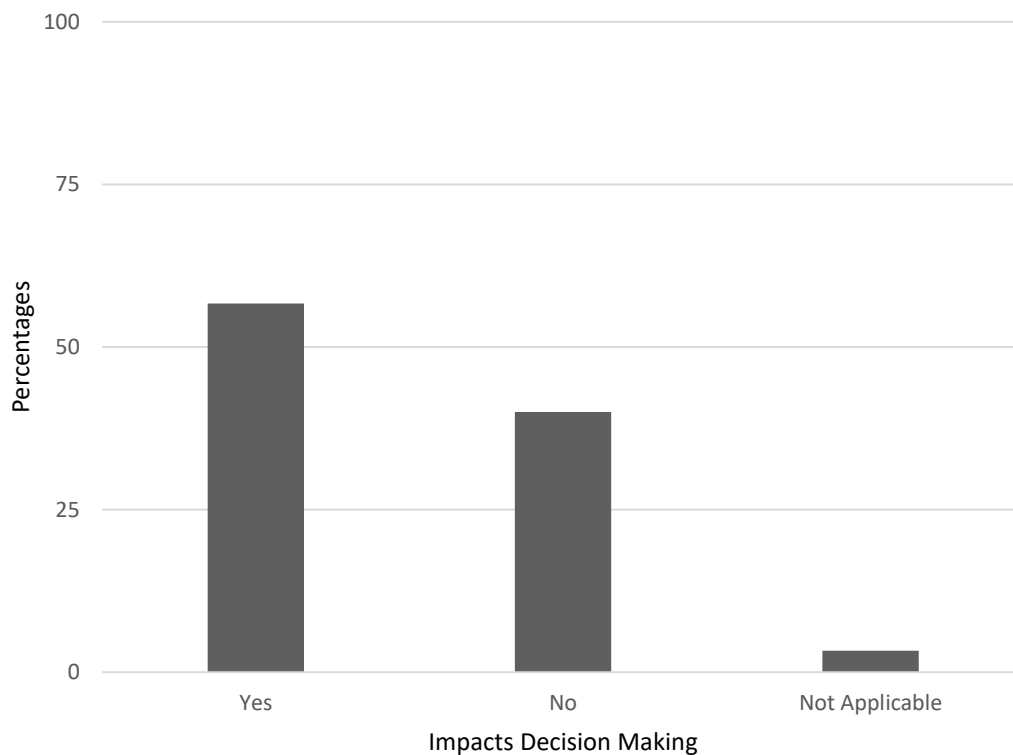
### **Adequate and Functional School Facilities**

Pogodzinski (2014) examined the relationship between teachers' working conditions and happiness and determined worker satisfaction and productivity are directly related. The teachers surveyed for this study, at a rate of 56.67%, reported the adequacy and functionality of school facilities impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. Of the administrators surveyed, 32.97% indicated this was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.

As illustrated in the following figures, this strategy is highly utilized in rural public school districts in Missouri. More than half (56.67%) of teachers indicated it affected their decisions to remain in their current school districts.



*Figure 31.* Utilization of adequate and functional school facilities in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 91$ .



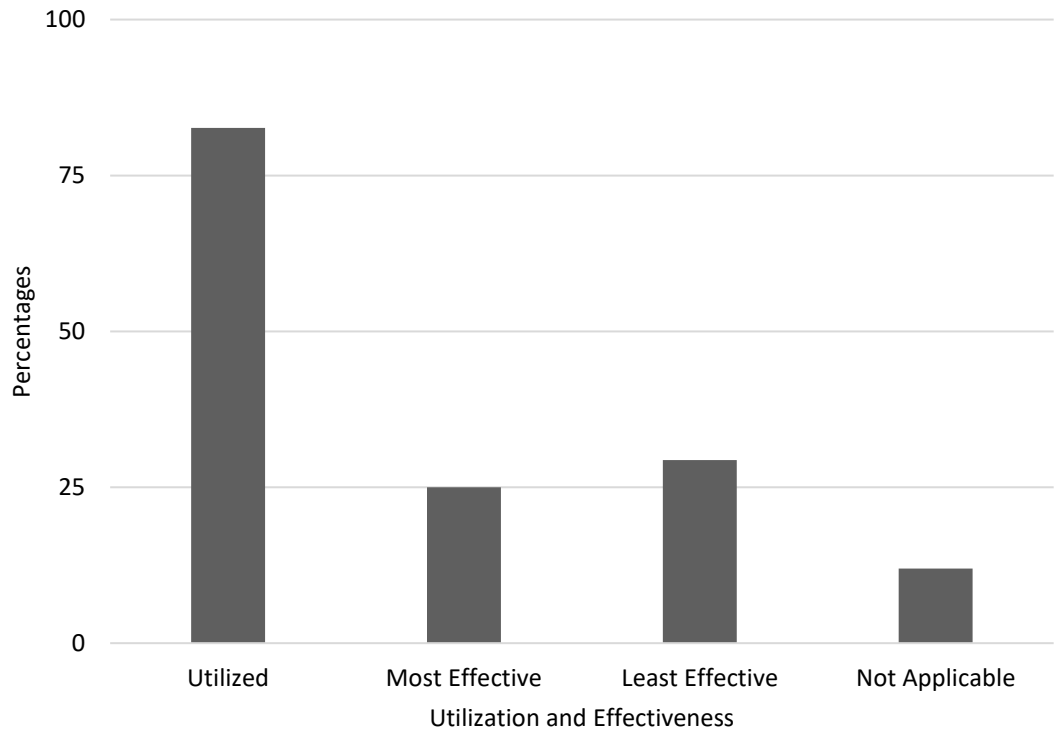
*Figure 32.* Impact of adequate and functional school facilities on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Skilled Coworkers**

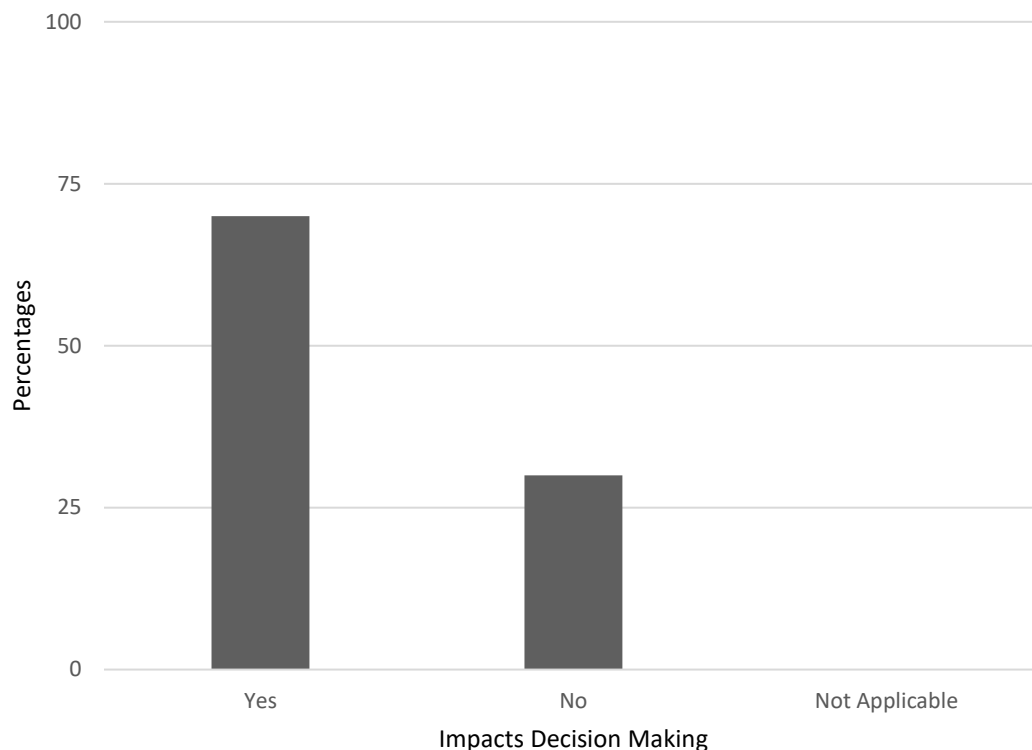
Berry and Hess (2013) referenced skilled coworkers as an effective strategy in attracting and retaining high quality teachers. In this study, 70% of the teacher population indicated this impacted their decisions to remain in their current school districts. While the strategy of having skilled coworkers was highly utilized by the administrators surveyed (82.16%), only 25% felt this was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.



As indicated in the figures, this strategy was quite important to teachers in the decision-making process. This recruitment and retention strategy was also widely utilized (82.16% of school districts surveyed) as a tool to attract and retain effective teachers.



*Figure 33.* Utilization of skilled coworkers in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 92$ .



*Figure 34.* Impact of skilled coworkers on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### **Quality Mentoring Program**

Research has indicated the impact of an effective mentoring program strongly influences the decisions of teachers to remain in a school district long-term (Loeb et al., 2012). The trickle-down effect of a quality mentoring program leads to job satisfaction, better classroom management skills, and ultimately higher student academic achievement (DeAngelis et al., 2013). This, however, was not necessarily purported within the sample population of the administrators and teachers involved in this study, as only 27.59% of the teachers felt a quality mentoring program impacted their decisions to remain in their

current districts and 27.17% of the administrative responses indicated this was a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.

Although required by law in the Missouri teacher certification process, this recruitment and retention strategy was not seen as an integrally important part of the decision-making process by the teachers surveyed for this particular study. Less than one-third of both teachers and administrators considered it a most effective recruitment and retention strategy.

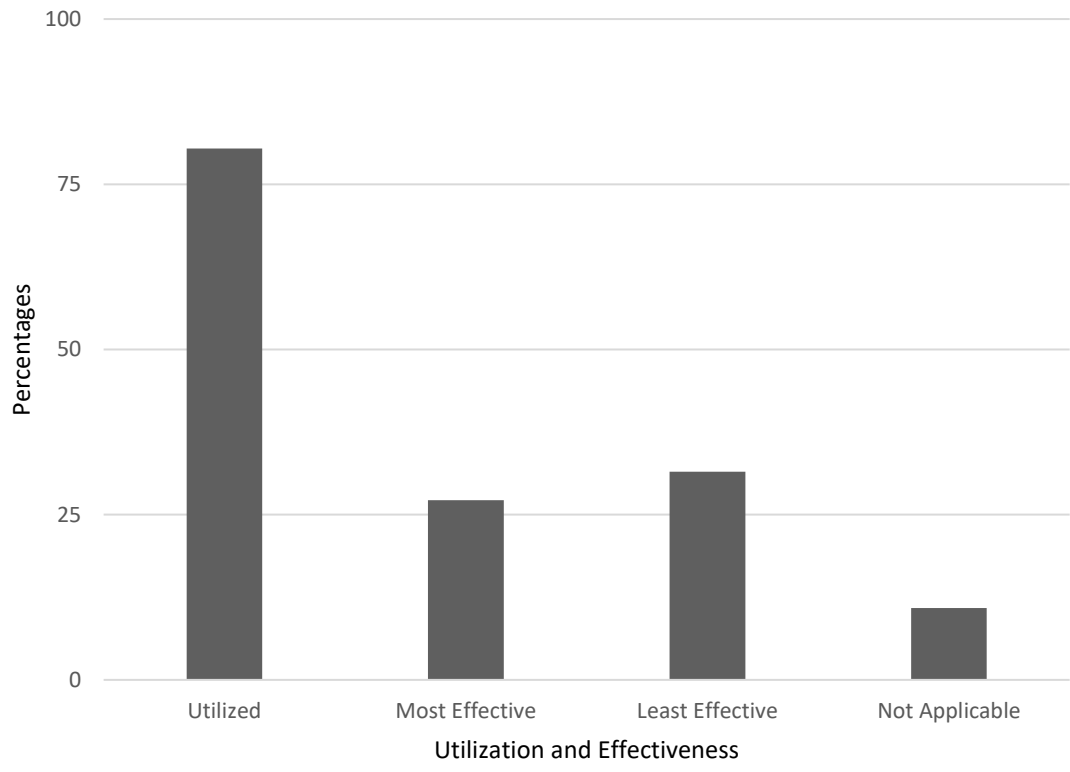
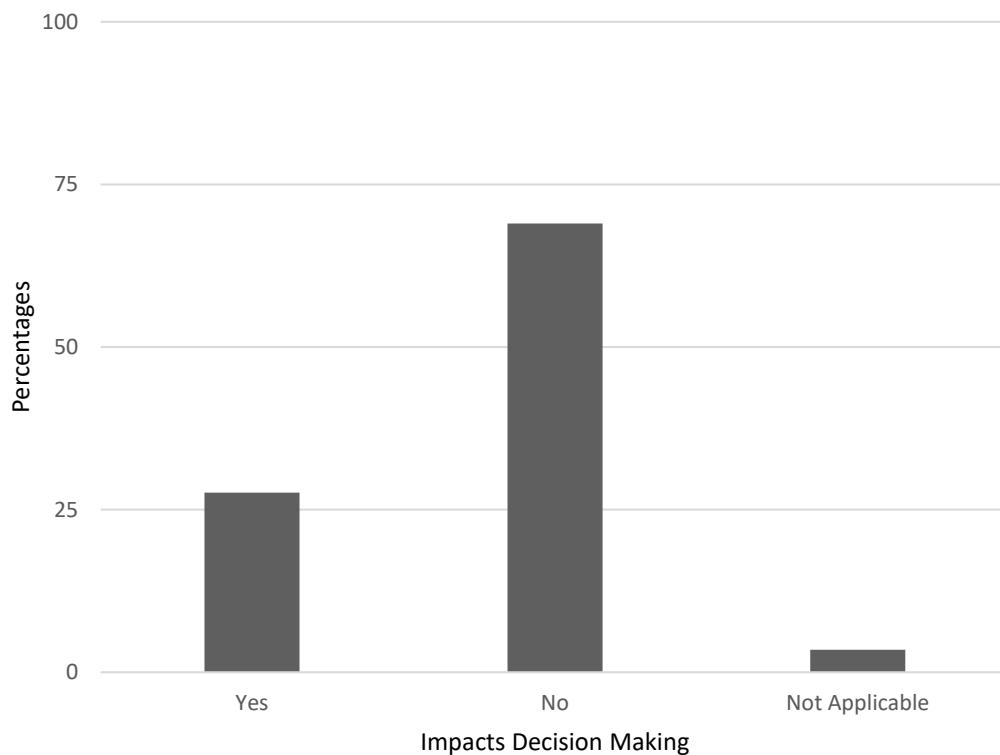


Figure 35. Utilization of quality mentoring programs in regard to recruitment and retention strategies in Missouri rural public schools as perceived by administrators involved in the hiring process.  $n = 92$ .



*Figure 36.* Impact of quality mentoring programs on tenured teachers' decisions to remain with their current school districts in Missouri rural public schools.  $n = 30$ .

### Summary

The design of this research study involved surveying administrators and teachers in rural public schools in Missouri. Each group was asked to consider the recruitment and retention strategies regarded by educational literature as most effective and to rate these for further analysis and evaluation. The data were then used to identify administrative and teacher viewpoints.

The sample included 95 administrator participants and 33 tenured teacher participants from rural public school districts in Missouri. Distribution across Missouri was attained including all regions identified by the MODESE in the state's Area of

Supervisors of Instruction model with the exception of Region A which included Jefferson County, St. Charles, St. Louis County, and St. Louis. Only tenured teachers were included in the survey, and administrators directly involved in the hiring process in their respective districts were asked to participate.

Results indicated administrators and teachers agreed on the effectiveness of most recruitment and retention strategies. However, it was discovered teachers allocated more importance to the community and/or hometown during the decision-making process of remaining within their current school districts. This area of consideration was not a part of the literature review; therefore, it was not included in the survey options but was discovered through the open-ended responses provided by the teachers. Tables and figures illustrated the findings and offered further discussion of each recruitment and retention strategy from both the administrator and teacher survey responses.

In Chapter Five, the findings are presented in detail, which includes responses to each research question. Conclusions and implications for practice are discussed. Recommendations for future research are suggested.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations**

As America enters the end of the Obama era, consideration of the pathway from NCLB to the ESSA has led to many challenges faced by every district in the nation (Klein, 2015). There is more accountability for schools (Klein, 2015). The necessity of equipping the nation's school districts with quality teachers to overcome the achievement gap has forced the government to offer alternative pathways to achieving teacher certification (Blazer, 2012). Teacher shortages have led to a disconnect between public schools and higher education institutions in preparing quality teachers to enter the workforce (Darling-Hammond, 2012; Ravitch, 2016). The increased awareness of best practices in recruitment and retention has become invaluable in attracting and retaining the best teachers available (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

The theoretical frameworks of Bruner's (1966) constructivist theory partnered with Vygotsky's (1962) social development theory describe the necessity of experience and interaction with colleagues. This confirms the need for new teachers to examine new information and to gain support from colleagues to have a meaningful mentoring experience (Vygotsky, 1962). This is further substantiated by Schein (2010), who stated support from colleagues and valuable mentoring experiences are necessary to cultivate effective teachers.

School districts are tasked with finding and hiring the best teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2012); therefore, the most effective recruitment and retention practices must be considered (Berry & Hess, 2013). This study involved surveys of both tenured teachers and administrators involved in the hiring process in regard to recruitment and

retention practices. The following topics, as well as additional variations of these topics, have been repeatedly discussed throughout the literature review: Leadership and Mentoring, School Culture and Climate, Professional Development, Salary and Benefits, Small Class Size, and Resources and Facilities. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations of this study are presented in Chapter Five.

## **Findings**

**Research question one.** What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by public school administrators?

Research has indicated recruitment and retention strategies overall are versatile and include varying aspects of the process leading to and arriving at the teaching profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Areas such as teacher preparation, familiarity with a school district and its staff, salaries and benefits, and professional development all play a role in recruitment and retention efforts (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). Schargel (2013) considered salary an important factor in recruiting and retaining quality teachers.

When asked to determine the most effective recruitment and retention strategies in use in their school districts, administrators responded with compelling agreement the most effective strategies are as follows: School Culture/Climate (65.59%), Administrative Support (60.22%), Small Class Size (58.06%), and Salaries/Benefits (38.68%).

**Research question two.** What are the most effective recruitment and retention strategies used in rural public schools in Missouri as perceived by rural public school teachers?

Berry and Hess (2013) found salary alone offers little incentive for effective teachers in regard to recruitment and retention efforts. Tompkins and Beauchamp (2006) indicated neither salary supplements nor additional pay for extra training were mentioned by educators during research discussion. The likelihood of teachers remaining in school districts is in direct correlation to their feelings of worth and value in the role of student success (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Inadequate facilities, larger class sizes, and lack of necessary resources are an obstacle and offer a direct correlation to the lack of quality teachers available and attracted to rural areas (Gallo & Beckman, 2016).

The teachers were asked to indicate which of the recruitment and retention strategies most strongly influenced their decisions to remain in their current school districts. The responses of the teachers correspond with the administrator responses. The teacher responses were as follows: School Culture/Climate (90%), Administrative Support (86.67%), and Small Class Size (80%).

The last indicator of importance to the teacher decision-making process was that of the community in which they reside, with 52% of the teacher participants indicating this as their first open-ended response answer, 46% of the teacher participants indicating this as their second open-ended response answer, and 32% of the teacher respondents indicating this as their third open-ended response answer. Several of the teacher respondents gave variations of an answer involving community, including the following:



where they live, children attend this school, love of community, love the rural area, similar to the rural area where they grew up as a child, love small town atmosphere, and want my children to go to school in this community.

Teachers also indicated additional areas of importance in their decision-making process to remain in a particular school district as follows: Skilled Coworkers (70%), Access to Innovative Technology (58.62%), and Adequate and Functional Facilities (56.67%).

**Research question three.** What are the perceived reasons for teachers leaving the rural public school districts of Missouri?

Administrator responses as to the perceived reasons for teachers leaving the rural public school districts of Missouri were as follows: Retired (60%), Higher Salary (57.89%), and Accepted Position at another rural district/neighborhood district or school (52.63%). As open-ended responses, administrators offered the following as reasons why teachers have left rural public school districts of Missouri: less drive time, closer to where they live, chose to stay home after had children of their own, and relocated closer to where they live.

**Research question four.** What are the strategies of teacher retention used in rural public schools in Missouri as identified by administrators and tenured teachers?

Although there were similarities in the responses of both the administrators and teachers surveyed for this study, there were discrepancies in additional areas of importance to teachers in the decision-making process, as well as the lack of support for salaries/benefits in the decision-making process for teachers. When asked to determine if the listed recruitment and retention strategies were utilized within their school districts

and to indicate if they were effective, administrators responded the most effective recruitment and retention strategies were School Culture/Climate, Administrative Support, Small Class Sizes, and Salaries/Benefits.

This coincides with the tenured teachers' responses in that the recruitment and retention strategies impacting their decisions to remain within districts were School Culture/Climate, Administrative Support, Small Class Size, and Community/Love Where They Live. The exception was that Salaries/Benefits were less important to the tenured teachers in decision making versus choosing a community they love. Three additional areas teachers considered of substantial importance in the decision-making process were Coworkers, Technology, and Facilities. Each of these received the lowest response of effectiveness on the administrator survey.

### **Conclusions**

It is clear through the comparative results of the administrators' survey responses and the teachers' survey responses there is commonality between what is currently in use within rural Missouri public schools and those strategies teachers respond to as integral parts of their decision-making process. School Culture/Climate was the top pick for both administrators and teachers; Administrative Support was the second-mentioned strategy and held considerable importance to both administrators and teachers; and the third-mentioned recruitment and retention strategy by both administrators and teachers was Small Class Size.

These were the most important factors mentioned in both surveys. The additional mention of living and working in a community they love was of elevated importance to

teachers and is worthy of additional research. The three other areas of recruitment and retention strategies warranting additional attention through the eyes of the teachers include the following: Skilled Coworkers, Access to Innovative Technology, and Adequate and Functioning Facilities. Each of these areas earned substantial reactions from the teachers and should be a part of recruitment and retention practices within Missouri rural public school districts.

### **Implications for Practice**

According to research referenced in Chapter One, creating a positive school culture conducive to a constructive student learning atmosphere has become increasingly difficult due to teacher shortages and high turnover rates in the teaching profession (Hudson, 2013). The results of this study may assist educators in understanding the practices currently in use in rural public Missouri schools and in developing plans regarding recruitment and retention of effective teachers. Clearly, the outlook of tenured teachers in rural public schools of Missouri has variables to be considered not found within the research completed for this study.

The implication of teachers being where they are because they love the community and where they live was discussed by 52% of tenured teachers in their first open-ended response, 46% in their second open-ended response, and 32% in their third open-ended response, and was considered a very influential motivator in the decision-making process. This item is left unsupported through the literature review. This item was therefore not incorporated into the strategies listed as choices for reasons teachers remain within their current school districts.

This is significant in that school districts cannot offer promises outside the realm of their capabilities. The communities surrounding the school districts of rural Missouri are in place and may serve as either a benefit for joining a school district or as a deterrent and something a school district is unable to control. Rural public schools should consider reaching out beyond the barriers of the walls of their buildings to increase community awareness and involvement in attracting quality teachers to their area. A partnership among local community organizations or groups could offer assistance in creating a more welcoming community to attract possible teaching candidates and enhance long-term retention efforts.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based upon the 43% of tenured teachers who indicated their love of the community and where they live as a strong motivation for why they remain in their current school districts, this study might indicate further research into the surrounding areas of rural public schools as a consideration and benefit to drawing quality teachers to an area. Another area of discrepancy was found in the comparisons of the effectiveness of Facilities, Technology, and Skilled Coworkers. Each of these factors was listed as an important consideration for teachers, yet they were on the bottom of the list of strategies noted as effective by administrators surveyed.

Although Salary/Benefits plays a clear role in the field of education, this was of lesser importance to the tenured teacher participants of this study and should possibly garner less attention during the interview process by administrators involved in hiring in rural public schools of Missouri. More attention could be paid to opportunities available

in relation to facilities, technology, and potential coworkers in order to have a greater impact on teacher decisions to join a district and remain long-term.

Further research into the feelings of tenured teachers across the nation would be a recommendation as well. A more in-depth study involving interviews with tenured teachers would allow a more thorough examination of why many remain in rural public schools when salaries and benefits may be more attractive in an urban area. If rural public schools are to attract and retain quality teachers to further impact the achievement of students, the strategies in place to do so must be identified and put into practice (Feistritzer, 2011).

The accountability measures put into place by the government, as well as the high-stakes testing used to determine the quality of teaching staff in place, will continue to drive the need for hiring the best available teachers (Clifton, 2013). Offering what these teachers want and need to join a rural school district could provide the answer to meeting measures set in place by the government and meeting the needs of all students as well (Feistritzer, 2011).

### **Summary**

The federal government continues to share the burden of addressing the needs of students in regard to achievement with local and state governments (Rhor, 2013). Through this effort, local school districts work to attract and retain the most qualified teachers (R. A. Peterson, 2016). The school culture itself works to provide adequate mentoring opportunities and experiences, as discussed in the constructivist theory (Bruner, 1966) and the social development theory (Vygotsky, 1962) as integral elements

of the necessary groundwork of teacher retention efforts (Schein, 2010).

Many aspects of recruitment and retention endeavors in America's schools are impacted by policies and procedures (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). These include teacher preparation, mentoring processes, and working conditions (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). It was one purpose of this study to consider the many aspects of recruitment and retention strategies in schools and to further distinguish what is most effective in the eyes of the administrators as well as the tenured teachers currently working in rural Missouri districts.

Several topics were discussed further within the literature review including recruitment and retention strategies and the role of leadership and mentors on retention. Also discussed were the role of school culture and climate on retention, and the roles of professional development on retention. Other topics included teacher quality, alternative certification, and the impact high-stakes testing has on teacher retention.

Of the topics of interest regarding recruitment and retention strategies specifically, many researchers indicated salaries, bonuses, and other monetary programs as important considerations when working to recruit and retain the best teaching candidates (Schargel, 2013; Tompkins & Beauchamp, 2006). However, through this particular study, salaries and benefits played a much lesser role according to the reactions of the tenured teacher population who participated in this survey. Administrators felt this was an important recruitment and retention strategy, but teachers did not rate this area as an important factor in the decision-making process.

Other researchers focused upon the role of leadership and mentoring as it impacts recruitment and retention in the nation's schools. Loeb et al. (2012) found support from

effective leaders, or lack thereof, can determine whether or not teachers will remain in a district. This was also supported by DeAngelis et al. (2013) as being an integral part of the success teachers feel that impacts additional aspects of teacher performance. This was substantiated through this study by both administrators and teachers indicating strongly that administrative support is an important recruitment and retention factor.

Another important element indicated through the literature review was the role of school culture and climate as it relates to retention efforts. Wilson (2014) reported nearly half of departing teachers leave due to the mismanagement of a school system. This study further substantiates the importance of school culture and climate as the most important element stated by both administrators and teachers in regard to recruitment and retention practices. Darling-Hammond (2012) reminded school leaders of the vital role of creating a culture in which teachers feel effective and a part of the decision-making process.

An additional recruitment and retention strategy found to be of great importance to both administrators and teachers alike is the role of small class sizes. Researchers have repeatedly identified small class size as a necessary element in the recruitment and retention process (Schanzenbach, 2014). Some benefits of small class size include but are not limited to student achievement, teacher satisfaction, classroom management, and most importantly, positive student outcomes (Biddle & Berliner, 2014; Schanzenbach, 2014).

These recruitment and retention strategies were further analyzed through administrator and teacher surveys. Further evaluation was completed to determine what

strategies were the most effective. This study also included evaluation of which strategies were in use in rural public schools of Missouri.

It was also important to determine if recruitment and retention strategies in use are effective and influential parts of the decision-making process for rural public school teachers in Missouri. The top three recruitment and retention strategies for both the administrators and teachers involved in this study were School Culture/Climate, Administrative Support, and Small Class Size. Additionally, administrators felt Salaries/Benefits were important to recruitment and retention factors and one of the most effective tools. Teachers, however, listed Community Live/Work/Love as being an important factor in their decision-making process.

Salaries and benefits were not regarded as an important element in decisions to remain in current districts. Teachers instead purported Skilled Coworkers, Access to Innovative Technology, and Adequately Functioning Facilities were important to their decisions to remain in their current districts.

There is a direct connection between the recruitment and retention strategies in use in Missouri rural public school districts and those found to be most important to the teachers in these same districts. However, further consideration should be given to research involving the surrounding communities of these rural public school districts in Missouri and how the surrounding communities can influence the recruitment and retention of effective teachers in their schools.

More in-depth research could also open new avenues of importance to teachers when they are faced with decisions regarding staying in a rural area or leaving. The educational literature review is somewhat supported by the findings of this study, but



further research investigating the teachers of rural schools should be considered, as ultimately the teachers decide whether they will stay in rural public schools or go elsewhere for employment opportunities.

## Appendix A

### Administrator Survey

#### Administrator/Human Resources Personnel Survey Questions

The intent of this survey is to gather information regarding the recruitment and retention strategies utilized and the effectiveness of these strategies in Missouri rural public school districts. Your participation is much appreciated.

**Part 1: Determine if the recruitment/retention strategy is utilized in your district/building and then determine if this choice would be considered one of the most effective or least effective strategies. If the strategy is not utilized in your district, please choose the not applicable option.**

Strategies	Utilized	Most Effective	Least Effective	Not Applicable
Signing bonuses				
Relocation assistance				
Paid Insurance Benefits				
Accountability				
Tuition reimbursement				
Professional Development				
Competitive beginning salaries				
Competitive salaries				
Administrative support				
Shared plan time with teaching cohorts				
Small class sizes				
Childcare				
Access to innovative technology				
Positive, supportive school culture				
School facilities adequate and functional				
Skilled coworkers				
Quality mentoring program				

**Part Two: Please check all appropriate items below when considering why tenured teachers have left your district.**

√	<b>When teachers choose to leave your district, indicate what you feel drives this decision.</b>
	Accepted position at another rural district/neighboring district or school
	Spouse relocation
	Moved to different area
	Higher salary
	'Recruited' to another location
	Staff reduction
	Retired
	Other: Please describe

## Appendix B

### Teacher Survey

**Part One: Please answer the following questions to help determine your status as a tenured teacher.**

1. How long have you been teaching?

- a) 1-4 years
- b) 5-7 years
- c) 8-15 years
- d) 16-20+ years

2. How long have you been teaching in your current school district?

- a) 1-4 years
- b) 5-7 years
- c) 8-15 years
- d) 16-20+ years

**Part Two: Please answer the following questions to help determine the retention strategies in place in your district.**

3. Please provide three reasons you have stayed in this school district.

1)

2)

3)

4. Have any of the following had an impact on your decision to stay in this school district? Please answer yes or no.

<b>Recruitment &amp; Retention Strategies</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Signing bonuses			
Relocation assistance			
Paid Insurance Benefits			
Accountability			
Tuition reimbursement			
Professional Development			
Competitive beginning salaries			
Competitive salaries			
Administrative support			
Shared plan time with teaching cohorts			
Small class sizes			
Childcare			
Sick leave/personal leave			
Access to innovative technology			
Positive, supportive school culture			
School facilities adequate and functional			
Skilled coworkers			
Quality mentoring program			

## Appendix C

### Cover Letter for Recruitment/Participation

<Date>

Dear <Title and/or name of participant>,

I am writing to request your participation in my doctoral dissertation research project at Lindenwood University. I believe the information gathered through this study will positively contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding the recruitment and retention of highly-qualified teachers in rural school districts in Missouri.

Attached is an electronic document survey for you to complete. Also, please provide the contact information for tenured teachers in your district or forward the *Tenured Teacher Survey* to tenured teachers in your district. The teachers will complete the survey to determine the most popularized retention practices used in rural areas.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity are assured. Additional information is contained in the letter of informed consent.

Thank you for your time,

<Your Name/Contact Information>

Doctoral Candidate

Lindenwood University

## Appendix D

### Letter of Informed Consent for Administrators

#### Lindenwood University

School of Education

209 S. Kingshighway

St. Charles, Missouri 63301

<Administrator/Human Resources Personnel>

#### **Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities**

“Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural  
Public Schools”

Principal Investigator: Christine Kay Butler

Telephone: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Christine K. Butler under the guidance of Dr. Patricia Conner. The purpose of this research is to explore the teacher recruitment and retention strategies most widely used in rural public schools in Missouri.
  
2. a) Your participation will involve
  - Completing an online survey, which allows you to indicate applicable recruitment and retention strategies.
  
  - You have been chosen because you fit the criteria of a superintendent, principal, or other human resources staff member involved in the hiring of certified teachers in a rural public school district in Missouri.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 10 minutes.

Approximately 500 administrators/human resources personnel will be involved in this research.
  
3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
  
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about effective recruitment and retention strategies and may help those involved in creating district improvement plans regarding recruitment and retention of effective teachers.
  
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any

questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the results, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Christine K. Butler (██████████) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Patricia Conner ██████████. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jan Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. By participating in the survey, you consent to participate in this study.**

Thank you for your time,

Christine K. Butler \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please click here <hyperlink> to complete the survey.**



## Appendix E

### Letter of Informed Consent for Teachers

#### Lindenwood University

School of Education

209 S. Kingshighway

St. Charles, Missouri 63301

<Administrator/Human Resources Personnel>

#### **Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities**

<Tenured Teachers>

“Administrative Strategies to Improve Teacher Recruitment and Retention in Rural Public Schools”

Principal Investigator: Christine Kay Butler

Telephone: [REDACTED] E-mail: [REDACTED]

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Christine K. Butler under the guidance of Dr. Patricia Conner. The purpose of this research is to explore the teacher recruitment and retention strategies most widely used in rural public schools in Missouri.
2. a) Your participation will involve:
  - Completing an online survey, which allows you to indicate applicable recruitment and retention strategies and provide responses to open-ended questions.
  - You have been chosen because you fit the criteria of a full-time, tenured teacher in a rural public school district in Missouri.

b) The amount of time involved in your participation will be approximately 10 minutes.

Approximately 500 tenured teachers will be involved in this research.
3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about effective recruitment and retention strategies and may help those involved in creating district improvement plans regarding recruitment and retention of effective teachers.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any

questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the results, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, Christine K. Butler (██████████) or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Patricia Conner ██████████. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jan Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs, at 636-949-4846.

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. By participating in the survey, you consent to participate in this study.**

Thank you for your time,

Christine K. Butler \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please click here <hyperlink> to complete the survey.**

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Lancaster, PA: Author.
- Araya, D. (2015). Education policy and the Obama administration. In *Rethinking U.S. Education Policy* (pp. 77-105). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan U.S.
- Bassett, K., Kajitani, A., & Stewart, P. (2014). Teacher leaders not just a buzz phrase. *Scholastic Instructor*, (Holiday), 35-38.
- Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Bassett, K., Olson, D., & Jacques, C. (2014). *From good to great: Exemplary teachers share perspectives on increasing teacher effectiveness across the career continuum*. Washington, DC: Center on Great Teachers and Leaders.
- Behrstock-Sherratt, E., Rizzolo, A., Laine, S. W., & Friedman, W. (2013). *Everyone at the table: Engaging teachers in evaluation reform*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Berliner, D. (2013). Effects of inequality and poverty vs. teachers and schooling on America's youth. *Teachers College Record*, 115(12), 1-26.
- Berry, B., & Hess, F. M. (2013). Expanded learning, expansive teacher leadership: Done well, providing more time for students to learn can be a lever for forcing schools to rethink how teachers teach and how they lead. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 94(5), 58.
- Biddle, B. J., & Berliner, D. C. (2014). Small class size and its effects. In J. H. Ballantine & J. Z. Spade (Eds.), *Schools and society: A sociological approach to education* (pp. 76-85). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Blazer, C. (2012). *What the research says about alternative teacher certification programs* (Information Capsule, Vol. 1104). Miami, FL: Research Services, Miami-Dade County Public Schools.
- Bluman, A. G. (2014). *Elementary statistics: A step by step approach: A brief version* (9th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Bruner, J. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Chan, T. C. (2014). Effective induction and mentoring programs for K-12 teachers and teacher education faculty: Perspectives of an operational model. *New Waves*, 17(2), 45.
- Clifton, P. (2013). Effective teacher evaluation process is key to improved student achievement. *School & Community*. Retrieved from <http://www.ourdigitalmags.com/article/Effective+teacher+evaluation+process+is+key+to+improved+student+achievement/1271305/0/article.html>
- Collins, J., Deist, B., & Riethmeier, J. (2009). *The development of a standards-based guide for high quality teacher induction programs* (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University).
- Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., Hayes, K., & Theobald, R. (2016). Missing elements in the discussion of teacher shortages. *Educational Researcher*. Retrieved from <http://edr.sagepub.com/content/early/2016/11/03/0013189X16679145.full>
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2012). *Powerful teacher education: Lessons from exemplary programs*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

DeAngelis, K. J., Wall, A. F., & Che, J. (2013). The impact of preservice preparation and early career support on novice teachers' career intentions and decisions. *Journal of Teacher Education, 64*(4), 338-355.

DeMonte, J., & Hanna, R. (2014). Looking at the best teachers and who they teach.

Retrieved from

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education/report/2014/04/11/87683/looking-at-the-best-teachers-and-who-they-teach/>

DeNisco, A. (2014). Removing weak links from K12 classrooms. *District*

*Administration*. Retrieved from

<http://www.districtadministration.com/article/removing-weak-links-k12-classrooms>

DeNisco, A. (2015a). Republicans to push NCLB in 2015. *District Administration*.

Retrieved from <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/republicans-push-no-child-left-behind-2015>

DeNisco, A. (2015b). Teacher shortage at 'crisis' levels. *District Administration*.

Retrieved from <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/teacher-shortage-%E2%80%98crisis%E2%80%99-levels>

DuFour, R., & Mattos, M. (2013). Improve schools? *Educational Leadership, 70*(7), 34-40.

Dynarski, M. (2015). Using research to improve education under the Every Student

Succeeds Act. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/using-research-to-improve-education-under-the-every-student-succeeds-act/>

- Dyril, O. E. (2013). Students rating teachers: Assessing quality requires measures beyond test scores. *District Administration*. Retrieved from <https://www.districtadministration.com/article/students-rating-teachers>
- Ermeling, B. A., & Graff-Ermeling, G. (2016). *Teaching better: Igniting and sustaining instructional improvement*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Feiman-Nemser, S. (2012). Beyond solo teaching. *Educational Leadership*, 69(8), 10-16.
- Feistritzer, C. E. (2011). *Profile of teachers in the U.S. 2011*. New York, NY: National Center for Education Information. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/media/pot2011final-blog.pdf>
- Feng, L., & Sass, T. R. (2012). *Teacher quality and teacher mobility* (Research Paper Series 12-08). Atlanta, GA: Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.
- Fertig, B., & Garland, S. (2012). Millions spent on improving teachers, but little done to make sure it's working. *The Hechinger Report*. Retrieved from <http://hechingerreport.org/millions-spent-on-improving-teachers-but-little-done-to-make-sure-its-working/>
- Gallo, J., & Beckman, P. (2016). A global view of rural education: Teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention. *Global Education Review*, 3(1), 1-4.
- Glennie, E. J., Mason, M., & Edmunds, J. A. (2016). Retention and satisfaction of novice teachers: Lessons from a school reform model. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 4(4), 244-258.
- Goldhaber, D. (2015). Exploring the potential of value-added performance measures to affect the quality of the teacher workforce. *Educational Researcher*, 44(2), 87-95. doi:10.3102/0013189x15574905

- Graham, D. (2014). Collegial administrative support: Reflections from a principal at an at-risk public high school. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 81(1), 40.
- Greenberg, J., Walsh, K., & McKee, A. (2014). *Appendix C: Background and methodology for alternative certification pilot* [2014 Teacher Prep Review]. Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality.
- Greene, K. (2014). Twitter for teachers: Powerful PD in 140 characters or fewer. *Scholastic Instructor*. Retrieved from <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/twitter-teachers>
- Hawks, C. R. (2016). *The relationship between satisfaction, motivation, and caseload and teacher retention* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University).
- Herbert, M. (2012). Telling teachers they are irreplaceable. *District Administration*. Retrieved from <http://tntp.org/news-and-press/view/telling-teachers-they-are-irreplaceable>
- Hill, H. C. (2015). *Resources for teaching: Examining personal and institutional predictors of high-quality instruction* (Doctoral dissertation, Harvard College).
- Hudson, P. (2013). Beginning teachers' achievements and challenges: Implications for induction and mentoring. *Curriculum & Leadership Journal*, 11(3). Retrieved from [http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/beginning\\_teachers\\_achievements\\_and\\_challenges,36020.html?issueID=12721](http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/beginning_teachers_achievements_and_challenges,36020.html?issueID=12721)
- Hughes, G. D. (2012). Teacher retention: Teacher characteristics, school characteristics, organizational characteristics, and teacher efficacy. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 105(4), 245-255.

- Hung, L. C., & Smith, C. S. (2012). Common problems experienced by first year alternatively certified teachers: A qualitative study. *Journal of the National Association for Alternative Certification*, 7(2), 3-17.
- Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., & Stuckey, D. (2014). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force* (CPRE Research Report # RR-80). Philadelphia, PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education. doi:10.12698/cpre.2014.rr80
- Kamenetz, A. (2014, September 12). For teachers, many paths into the classroom... Some say too many. *NPR*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/09/12/347375798/for-teachers-many-paths-into-the-classroom-some-say-too-many>
- Klein, A. (2015, November 30). *ESEA reauthorization: The Every Student Succeeds Act explained* [Web log post]. Retrieved from [http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/11/esea\\_reauthorization\\_the\\_every.html](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2015/11/esea_reauthorization_the_every.html)
- Koehler, A., Feldhaus, C. R., Fernandez, E., & Hundley, S. P. (2013). Alternative certification programs & pre-service teacher preparedness. *Journal of STEM Education: Innovations and Research*, 14(4), 45.
- Lacey, K. (2015). Primed to teach: How the top teaching colleges prepare students for today's classrooms. *District Administration*. Retrieved from <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/primed-teach>
- Larrivee, B. (2012). *Cultivating teacher renewal: Guarding against stress and burnout*. Lanham, MD: R&L Education.



- Loeb, S., Kalogrides, D., & Béteille, T. (2012). Effective schools: Teacher hiring, assignment, development, and retention. *Education*, 7(3), 269-304.
- McGuinn, P. (2016). From No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act: Federalism and the education legacy of the Obama administration. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* *Publius*, 46(3), 392-415. doi:10.1093/publius/pjw014
- Menken, K. (2013). Restrictive language education policies and emergent bilingual youth: A perfect storm with imperfect outcomes. *Theory into Practice*, 52(3), 160-168.
- Menon, M. E. (2012). Do beginning teachers receive adequate support from their headteachers? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(2), 217-231.
- Mihaly, K., McCaffrey, D., Sass, T. R., & Lockwood, J. R. (2013). Where you come from or where you go? Distinguishing between school quality and the effectiveness of teacher preparation program graduates. *Education*, 8(4), 459-493.
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). Highly qualified teacher. Retrieved from [https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/HQ\\_defined.pdf](https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/HQ_defined.pdf)
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2013). *Recruitment and retention of teachers in Missouri public schools* (Report to the Missouri General Assembly). Retrieved from <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/pictures/2013RRReport.pdf>
- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2016a). Allocation criteria. Retrieved from <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/ffm-Allocation-Criteria-2016-2017.pdf>

- Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2016b). Area supervisors of instruction. Retrieved from <https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/area-supervisors-instruction>
- Morel, N. J. (2014). Setting the stage for collaboration: An essential skill for professional growth. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 81(1), 36-39.
- Nichols, S., Glass, G., & Berliner, D. (2012). High-stakes testing and student achievement: Updated analyses with NAEP data. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 20(2012), 20. doi:10.14507/epaa.v20n20.2012
- Pascopella, A. (2013). A conversation on “cage-busting leadership”: Manager editor Angela Pascopella speaks with author Frederick M. Hess. *District Administration*, 49(5), 53-55.
- Peterson, P. E. (2016). The end of the Bush-Obama regulatory approach to school reform. *Education Next*, 16(3), 22-32.
- Peterson, R. A. (2016). *Perceptions of administrative support: The view from the classroom and the office* (Doctoral dissertation, Frostburg State University).
- Phillips, O. (2015, March 30). Revolving door of teachers costs schools billions each year. *NPR*. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/03/30/395322012/the-hidden-costs-of-teacher-turnover>
- Pogodzinski, B. (2014). Collegial support and novice teachers’ perceptions of working conditions. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(4), 467-489.
- Ravitch, D. (2016). *The death and life of the great American school system: How testing and choice are undermining education*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

- Redding, C., & Smith, T. M. (2016). Easy in, easy out: Are alternatively certified teachers turning over at increased rates? *American Educational Research Journal*. Retrieved from <http://aer.sagepub.com/content/53/4/1086.full>
- Rhor, M. (2013). Are teacher evaluations making the grade? *District Administration*. Retrieved from <http://www.districtadministration.com/article/are-teacher-evaluations-making-grade>
- Schanzenbach, D. W. (2014). *Does class size matter?* (Policy Brief). Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center, School of Education, University of Colorado.
- Schargel, F. (2013). *162 keys to school success: Be the best, hire the best, train, inspire and retain the best*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Springer, M. G., Swain, W. A., & Rodriguez, L. A. (2015). Effective teacher retention bonuses: Evidence from Tennessee. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(2), 199-221.
- Statistics Solutions. (2016). Intellectus statistics (Version 1.01) [Online computer software]. Retrieved from <http://analyze.intellectusstatistics.com/>
- Stronge, J. (2013). *Evaluating what good teachers do: Eight research-based standards for assessing teacher excellence*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Struyven, K., & Vanthournout, G. (2014). Teachers' exit decisions: An investigation into the reasons why newly qualified teachers fail to enter the teaching profession or why those who do enter do not continue teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 43, 37-45.

- Tenure. (2012). In *Merriam-Webster dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tenure>
- Thibodeaux, A. K., Labat, M. B., Lee, D. E., & Labat, C. A. (2015). The effects of leadership and high-stakes testing on teacher retention. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 19(1), 227.
- Tompkins, A., & Beauchamp, A. S. (2006). How are states responding to the issue of teacher recruitment and retention, and what more needs to be done? Retrieved from [http://www.pearsonnes.info/assets/download/2006\\_03TompkinsBeauchamp\\_434\\_1.pdf](http://www.pearsonnes.info/assets/download/2006_03TompkinsBeauchamp_434_1.pdf)
- Vinovskis, M. (2015). *From A Nation at Risk to No Child Left Behind: National education goals and the creation of federal education policy*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Warr, D. L. (2013). *Negotiated agreements, student achievement and teacher retention* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University).
- Watson, A. (2015). *Unshakeable: 20 ways to enjoy teaching every day – No matter what*. Brooklyn, NY: Due Season Press and Educational Services.
- Westfall, P. H., & Henning, K. S. S. (2013). *Texts in statistical science: Understanding advanced statistical methods*. Boca Raton, FL: Taylor & Francis.
- Whitaker, T., Whitaker, B., & Lumpa, D. (2013). *Motivating & inspiring teachers: The educational leader's guide for building staff morale*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wilson, S. M. (2014). Innovation and the evolving system of U.S. teacher preparation. *Theory into Practice*, 53(3), 183-195.

Yaffe, D. (2014). Leadership lifts teachers. *District Administration*. Retrieved from  
<https://www.districtadministration.com/article/leadership-lifts-teachers>

Yager, S. (2012, March 27). Arne Duncan: 'We have to get better faster than we ever have.' *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/print/2012/03/arne-duncan-we-have-to-get-better-faster-than-we-ever-have/255142>

### **Vita**

Mrs. Christine Butler graduated from Blue Eye High School in 1989. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri, in 1995. She received her Master of Arts degree in education in 2003, her Master of Arts degree in educational administration in 2007, and her Specialist degree in educational administration in 2008 from Lindenwood University. She earned additional certification as a Reading Specialist for grades K-12 at Lindenwood University in 2013.

Mrs. Butler began her teaching career in the Blue Eye R-V School District in Blue Eye, Missouri, in 1995. Following nine years of teaching in elementary classrooms, she transitioned into the role of Title I Director and Federal Programs Coordinator in 2004. She serves her district in many capacities. She is the chairperson for the Professional Development Committee, as well as the At-Risk Student Assistance Team. She coordinates and serves as a tutoring teacher for the after-school Title I tutoring program. She provides children preschool through eighth grade with free books through coordination of the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) program as well as providing many other parent involvement opportunities through literacy and learning for the Blue Eye School District. She is an active member of the Alpha Psi Chapter of Delta State and Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, a society for outstanding women educators. She has served as the Alpha Psi Chapter President for two consecutive bienniums, 2012-2014 and 2014-2016. She also serves as a mentor to teachers and staff in her school district and offers a listening ear, assistance with materials and supplies, and guidance and advice when needed.